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TITLE OF THESIS

'The experience of moving from mainstream to special school: A case study of eight teacher's transformative learning.'

By

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for the Degree of Doctor of Education**

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ABSTRACT

This is a case study of eight teachers who have transferred from mainstream schools to special schools. It uses their reflections on the transition process gained through a series of interviews and tasks that illuminate their perceptions of their change process. These reflections are then analysed using a model that differentiates between the professional practice of the teacher, the school's culture and Community of Practice and the wider educational system consisting of, for example, Teaching Standards, performance management and Ofsted inspections. It looks to answer some of the questions raised by the Salt Review (2010) about the quality of the supply of teachers into special schools. It addresses the issue of whether specialist skills are required for teaching in special schools and proposes a way to understand the key difference between the demands placed upon teachers in each if the two different sectors by looking in detail at the teachers' understandings of their teaching practices. It finally proposes an induction model that can be individualised for the teacher which will support the transition process for them. It is located within a qualitative research approach and assumes the social construction of a shared cultural reality.

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<u>INTRODUCTION</u>

1.1 Background

I have been a teacher and then a headteacher in schools for pupils with special needs for thirty years. The educational world has constantly changed throughout that period and this study is a reflection on that changing world because as I research the experience of the teachers who move from mainstream school to special school I appreciate how those changes are seen by others and have impacted on them. Those perceptions of the changes in the notions of teacher professionalism, pupil diversity and the purposes of education, held by teachers and then the contested 'narratives' of those changes held by politicians, academics and policy makers make up the background for this research.

I work currently in the south-east of England and the research takes place in four special schools in this area for children and young people with learning difficulties. Special education itself has also undergone many changes in the last thirty years and these also impact upon this research. I have taken a group of eight teachers in those four special schools that have recently moved from mainstream school to the special school (including my own) and asked them about that experience. This thesis is a study of how these teachers adapted their practice to the demands of the new teaching situation ctice to the demands of the new learning occurred within the institutional framework of the special school. I describe this change process as one of 'transformative learning' for the teachers and set it within the context of teacher's professional development and learning. These teachers had made a choice to change the sector within which they worked. They had decided to teach in a special

school and apply their personality, skills and understanding to the pupils there. These

teachers were motivated to face this change and this is was key to the way that they

understood their experience as they underwent the transition and to their overall assessment

of their functioning as a teacher. The study looked at the teachers' experience of that change

and their expressed motivations for that change and the teachers' self-awareness of the

process they were undergoing. By looking at those aspects of the transition the study

investigated the dynamic process that occurs as a teacher applies their professional practice

to a new situation. Currently the definitions of successful teaching are those set on behalf of

the government by the agencies that train, license and inspect teaching. These frameworks

delimit stages in the teacher's career path and the development of greater expertise on their

part. These expectations are then mediated by the school as an institution through the

structures established and then maintained by the management of the school. An important

part of this research will be looking at the theories and discussions about adult learning and

specifically teacher professional learning. This will help throw light upon the way in which

teacher 'competence' is produced by bringing together theories of learning (Sutherland 1997,

Mezirow 2000, Kolb 1984, Knowles 2005, Jarvis 2006, Hargreaves 2010, Hart 2004, and

Eraut 1994) with the current orthodoxy (held anecdotally by myself and colleague

headteachers) that schools through their management supervision, training and the

facilitation of practical experience produce effective teachers.

This research tested a framework to better understand the transition the teacher undergoes

when they move from the mainstream school to the special school. It looked at the complex

interconnected worlds of the individual teacher's personal career trajectory, the world of the

school and its culture and the way it shapes teaching practice and the wider world of

educational policy and accountability. I used the following as the model to assist the

understanding of all these influences upon the teacher,

Policy and
culture

Teacher's personal
and professional
history
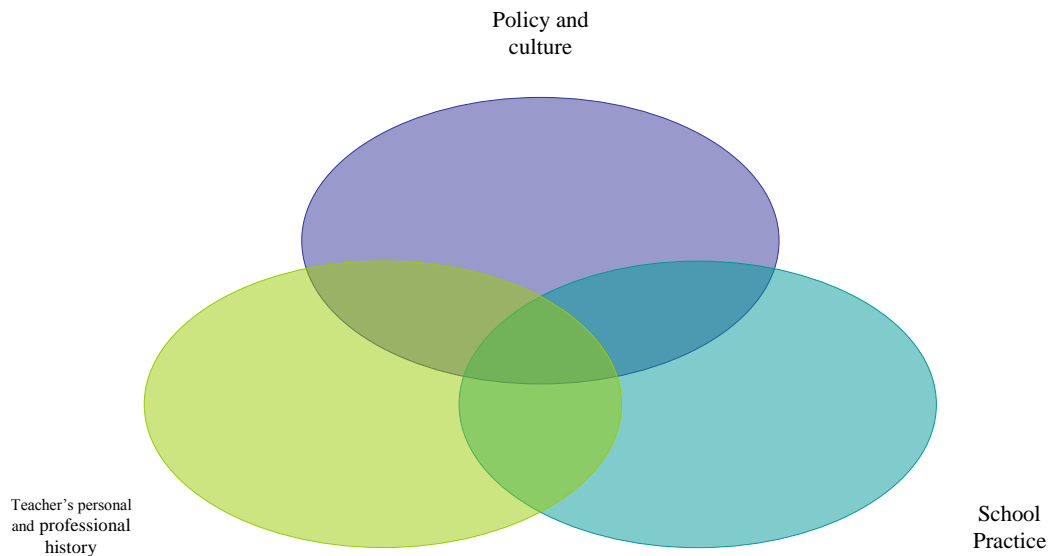
School
Practice

Figure 1: Influences on the Teacher – The Model

Through this research I argue that these three elements in the diagram form the sources for

the teachers' self-perception of their role and effectiveness within the school and the

educational system. There is the policy framework and educational accountability framework

that sets the political context within which the school operates, there is the educational

practice of the school which the teacher must in some way 'fit' in order to function within the

school and there is the teacher's personal pathway which they have followed which brings

them to the school and which mediates the educational meanings and practices around them

through the unique biography they have. The teacher sits in the middle where the sectors

overlap.

The change process is similarly seen to be concerned with the ways in which the teachers'

perceptions of their world develop within the new setting. It is essentially one of 'undoing'

the way that they saw matters in their previous school, realising the salient aspects of their

new setting and moving to understand and incorporate into their practice the new elements

that are required so that they then become able to relax back into a settled way of operating

as a competent practitioner. It is therefore a series of case- stories of adults learning in the

specific context of the changed environment, consequent on moving from a mainstream

school to a special school, within which they carry out their professional practice as a

teacher.

1.2   What this research is about?

The Salt Review (2010) focussed on how the supply and quality of teachers for pupils with

severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties could be improved. It noted a current lack

of status and value for teaching in this sector, allied to poor preparation for entering the

profession through the established teacher training routes; it recognised the need for

improved Continuing Professional Development (CPD is the generic term for the training

and learning a teacher undergoes once they are qualified) and for its wider access to potential

teachers from the pool of Non-Qualified Teachers (NQTs) and high quality staff working

within the mainstream school sector. Underlying these recommendations was the concern

that the teaching workforce in the special schools was skewed towards the older end of the profession. Consequently the Review highlighted problems that may occur over the next five to ten years as the 45% aged over 50 made retirement decisions. This would have a significant impact on the special schools capacity to adapt to the changing needs of their learners and manage and develop as institutions.

This research involved a study of a group of teachers who had made the move from mainstream teaching to special school teaching in four special schools for those pupils referred to in the Salt Review. It investigated those teachers' experience of their transition from mainstream teaching to teaching in a special school. It looked at their reflections and the key issues they raised including what they saw as the key differences between mainstream teaching and special school teaching and how they were experienced by the teachers. It looked at how the change process affected their teaching roles and identity at the time, later and how they understood the transition as an aspect of their own changing professional knowledge and personal development. It looked at what they had learnt over the transition period and how it was applied in their current practice. And it looked to find conclusions, based upon what the interviewees had said about the most effective ways of supporting teachers learning and professional development as they experienced it in their transition from mainstream education to special education, with their recommendations for improving this transition process.

Central to this research is the notion of teacher competency and where that comes from and the teacher'eacherre that comes from competency to special educatio

This study sets out to test whether the out to test whetherage s a teacher applies by Ball

(2008), is the dominant policy driver within the schooling system in the current 'globalised

society' is what describes teacheretyactual experiences. Sahlberg (2011) describes this as part

of the GERM or the Global Education Reform Movement. Sir Michael Wilshaw (2013), the

current Chief Inspector of Ofsted said recently to an audience of headteachers,

> I also believe that the changes to the school inspection framework have really
> supported the good and ambitious head, who wants to challenge the school to do
> better; who wants to tackle the underperforming department; who wants to take action
> against the member of staff who consistently teaches poorly.

And,

> We need to up our game as a nation if we are going to compete economically, and
> even more importantly, if we are going to build a more cohesive society.

The political pressure to match or better the test scores of other educational systems has led

to a standardised view as to how to direct change in schools. This study examined the

arguments for the to maormativityrgof the teacher's practice or the teacher's practicismi the

teacher's practice match or bet. These critiques of educational policy and the changes in the

way teachers experience their professionalism were present in the experiences of the teachers

in the study – and this was explored. This illuminated many aspects of the teacher o personal

teaching creed that had motivated their move from mainstream to special. The continuation

of these clear 'motivators' identified in the literature (Mackenzie, 2013) added to the ways in

which performativity and managed professionalism are mediated within the special school

sector.

Crucially it explored how the teacherys value system underlies their experience of that

transition and developed a theory and methodology that recognised the importance of the

teacherexppersonal values to their experience of change and transition. This enabled a

potentially rich evaluative theoretical framework to be built around the testimony of the teachers involved in the study which can be used to support the future induction of teachers in similar circumstances. This framework brings together the subjective understanding of the change process with the more objective concepts of professional competences and developing professional practices.

The notion of chool is a special school will be explored and the question as to whether its meaning changes from one school sector to the other will be explored. The contested notion of 'specialised'pecialisedsted notionteacher in the special school (Norwich and Lewis, 2007) will provide a perspective on the reflections of the teachers in the study.. The parameters for understanding this change are set across the education system as a whole as the broad policy framework does not differentiate between the two sectors. The arena for the debates about the differences between the sectors occurs within the contested notion of 'rena for theThe teacher in a special school has to set their professionalism and practice within the debate about inclusion and the definitions of diversity and special needs that apply to learners across the system. This debate will form the background to the teachers developing practice which is the foreground.

The themes of role, identity, professionalism and competence are followed throughout the study and are the four key concepts that are utilised to understand the processes under investigation.

1.3   Why it is important to investigate this issue in these schools followedcontextual factors

The investigation looked at two related issues central to the preparation of teachers who educate pupils with special educational needs. Firstly, it addressed the question as to whether there are agreed competences that are additional to those that are required for teaching in mainstream schools. The 2012 Teaching Standards (DfE, 2011) are now in place for all schools and form the basis for assessing all of the teacherasis for assessiIt also explored the differences between gaining competences and having competence and how teachers who do not then have these competences actually go about gaining them.

Secondly it looked at how the teacher's awareness of these competences related to their value systems and the ways in which they psychologically coped with change and learning as a consequence. This was then used to illustrate tensions between what the teacher perceives they are expected to do, what they are actually expected to do, how they feel about what they are expected to do and whether they can perform what they believe is expected of them. The study is based in and is therefore about special schools for children who have learning difficulties. These pupils are defined as those requiring additional support over and above that provided to children their own age in order to learn and access the school curriculum. Additionally these learning difficulties are formalised within the system of Special Educational Needs (SEN) which is seen by the educational system to be embedded in a range

of specialist practices which are labelled ised within cationd and often in specialist settings (special schools).

This system is intended to cover the multiplicity of combinations of deficits and)re labelled ised wse identified pupils face in contrast to their non-learning disabled peers. And the difference or o-typicalityce in contrast to their non-learning disabled peers. And the difference or 'af Special Educational Needs (SEN) which is nd abo as defined within the legislation and the code of practice that supports it. Consequently they have been placed in a special school to be alongside groups of other children with similar difficulties. As the educational systemve that provided to children their own age in order to learn and access theebate will form the baclearner. This process has been driven by the agenda of school improvement and the raising of pupil standards. The reforms of the last government (1997-2010) produced a system that, it has been argued by government's school inspection body (OFSTED 2010), through its proscribed curriculum, teaching approaches and assessment strategies, created a group of pupils for whom the label SEN (Special Educational Needs) had to be applied as they were not going to produce the outcomes that were intended for all pupils. The policy presumed that if a school did not meet the eforms and he outcomes that were intendedwith similar difficulties. As the educationathe quality of teaching within the school. In response to these changes the special school has had to adapt over time and is required to evolve its own particular learning culture to match the changing needs of the children that attend it. This includes a teaching practice that is agreed to be the effective one for the school. This can be reframed as the debate around educational inclusion as this notion

directly challenges the ideology of the he pical learner' and their 'normal educational

trajectory'. For Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2006),

> We are also concerned about the significant effects that categorisation has on the educational system as a whole. The practice of segregation within special schools involves a relatively small number of students, yet it exerts a disproportionate influence within the educational system. It perpetuates the view that some students es the view in the educabecause of their deficiency or defect. (p 16)

The schools in this study operate within this educational landscape. The pupils are already

tion has on the educational system as a whole. The practice of segregation -learning disabled

peers. Their teachers then have to develop a teaching strategy that will address their needs

based upon their perceptions of what those needs are which will be informed by a range of

factors including the details provided by the Statement of SEN. Given that this too is a

contested area it is the aim of the study to try to elucidate these issues and describe how they

are resolved within each particular case

As a result of their training and time in mainstream school teachers in special schools are

likely to have been acclimatised to these prevailing views on special educational needs. This

may well be a factor in their transition experience as they adjust their expectations for special

needs learners with the reality of the special school setting.

A wide range of well be a factor in their transition experience as they adjust their

expectations for special neion and the values attached to diversity and the comprehensive

ideal are still central to the ideologies of education and the political policy of governments in

the sense of the general entitlement and expectation of learning progress. By seeing the

variance in childrenion of ion experience as they adjust their expectations for special neionof

special educational needs is constructed. This then leads to a 'remedial' project of a specialist

professional delivering specialist programmes within a specialist pedagogy. This is

challenged on two levels. One sets out to show that the labelling process is political rather

than psychological. The second looks at the actual practice of the 'remedial' solution and

argues that it is not significantly different from the practice of the professionals in the non-

specialist sector. Both of these arguments tend to over simplify the situation that the teacher

finds themselves in and are explored in greater length within the literature review.

1.4   How the investigation will proceed using theoretical models

The study asked teachers to reflect on their transition experiences and explored the use of

possible tools for eliciting the assumptions and values that underlie the decisions and

strategies the teachers used as they adapted to the changes required in their practice. at the

changes required in twas initially introduced as a possible tool to be used for eliciting the

construct systems of the teachers and relating these to their narrative understandings of their

transition experiences. This approach was piloted and contrasted with alternatives and a

modified approach was selected as the preferred strategy. It examined the philosophical

assumptions that underlie the Personal Construct Theory and contrasted them with

alternatives and looked to see in what ways it offered a way of understanding teaching and

the role of the teacher through their transition experiences. The focus on teacher's practice or

heir transition experiences. ments rather than motivation – meant that this approach was

selected as the starting point. The detailed analysis of roach was selected as the so 'practice'

and 'learning' was the starting point for the case for Personal Construct Theory as a tool to investigate the transition process for these teachers.

Because Personal Construct Theory (PCT) presumes that we can only have a subjective knowledge of the world we are part of and that we construct our meanings of it, it is supportive of a philosophical view for the socially constructed reality approach. Kelly (2003) argues that we can understand the structure of the constructs that we use to make sense of our world and we use to predict and plan our and others behaviour through the use of his Repertory Grid technique. PCT theory is one that explains the subjective experience of change and it incorporates cognitive and affective aspects of the personality together. It is a constructivist approach in that it allows the constructivist approach in that it allow to mediate the individual's understanding of their 'objective' world.

Fransella (1981) writes,

> ransella (1981) writes,es cognitive and affective aspects of the personality together. It is a constructivist approach in that it allows the constructivist aplacing our own interpretations (theories) upon the world of events confronting us   and , from these personal theories, deriving hypotheses and making predictions   about future events. (p 148)

The Repertory Grid technique elicits the personal constructs of the teachers through structured interviews. Each individualrvi personal constructs can then be further explored by a process called achers throu(Butt, 2007) by which the interviewee is asked to order their constructs hierarchically. This exercise further elucidates the thinking and decision making processes of the teacher providing further insight into their understanding of their change process. In doing this it is argued that the subject's implicit value system is revealed. This is in contrast to an approach that explicitly asks for the subject to disclose their value system. This technique complements, by focusing on the individual person, the perspective of Wenger (1998) which is more institutionally focussed and looks at the social world of the

teachers more insti Wenger (1998) argues that the social world of the teacher is the source of

their learning and identity and studying them individually would not reveal the ways in

which their practice is developed or changed. This can only be understood within the

dynamic of the cultural framework of the institution as it defines through those that constitute

it - its situationally specific definition of competent practice.

This study will also look at the theory of Communities of Practice presented by Wenger

(1998) and investigate whether it provides a useful tool for understanding the reality of the

school and contrast this with the work of Eraut on ool and contrast this with the wtice

transfer' in the workplace. Eraut (1994) describes kprofessionalismwrovides a useful tool for

understanding the reality of the school and ified professional knowledge base. The ideology

of professionalism is therefore about the social control of expertise in a defined activity.

As Pring (2004) reminds us,

> To teach is to engage intentionally in those activities which bring about learning.
> (p 16)

This highlights the importance of recognising the conscious intent behind the selection of

actions that combine to make the practice of teaching. This then emphasises the importance

of the analysis of the teachertrol of expertise in a defined activys in which they combine

together to form an educational philosophy for that person. In turn this will be part of the

individual of recognising the conscious inprofessionalthe selection of actions that combine to

make the practice of teaching. T

Wenger'en(1998) starting point is the broader definition of learning that lifts it from the

formalised learning encounters of the school, college, university, and workplace and places it

within an existential definition of humankind. We are, in his view, learning beings h our

identities, actions and meanings are defined by our learning. He develops a broader social theory of learning and within a matrix of concepts uses Community of Practice as point of entry for explicating this theory. For Wenger learning is the transformation of knowing where knowing is defined as a change in the alignment between experience and competence. He defines experience and competence as separate elements of the learning situation explaining that any one point they can be in one of three positions. They can be in alignment (which is the optimal position) or competence may be driving experience (when someone is new to a practice) or experience is driving competence (when the problem faced is new and established practice isn't successful). This learning is developed from a practice which is recognised within a social grouping or community – that is a group of people who share a passion for something that they know how to do and who interact regularly to learn to do it better. A practice is an action or series of actions that have meaning. The meaning is constructed from the combination of the participation and the commodification of that participation (its reification) into abstract concepts or into artefacts. Identity reconciles aspects of competence in each community. The individual thus is a member of a number of communities who is at different points in their journeys or trajectories within these communities and for whom combination of these positions forms their notion of identity. The aim is for experience to be interpreted as competence and for the individual to understand their relationship to the community as one as aiming for an alignment which is maximising their belonging. A Community of Practice creates an 'economy of meaning' for its members and prospective members.

Erauth is the optimal position) or compe's in that it is less general and more circumscribed in its claims. Eraut focuses on the transfer of knowledge within the professions and how learning is enhanced in specific settings or environments. He is looking to develop a model of the nature of a 'good performance' and how that is attained. At one level it could be taken to be a more detailed outline of what might be occurring within a community of practice as the newer member develops towards the performance of an established member of the community. The issue is then whether the notion of Community of Practice is still required if the description of the detailed process is inclusive and furthermore if the criticisms of C of P are sustained. It could be that the two theories are complementary and describe a similar process. Mezirow (1997) also describes adult learning as 'transformative learning' and says it results in us,

> … Transforming our frame of reference to become more inclusive, differentiating, permeable and integrative of experience. (p. 7)

It is transformative because it prioritises the learning that is grounded in effective communication between people as it sees this as more significant for the person than instrumental learning that enables control of the person's environment. It resides in meaning schemes based upon prior learning that are in a state of flux and undergo change as they are tested against reality. It is thus a theory of how individuals come to reach their own understanding of their learning and how that is integrated into their overall notion of self-efficacy and further adds to our understanding of learning.

1.5   What methodology will be used?

The research was a series of case studies of the transitions of teachers within the four schools. Bassey (1999) argues, that an educational case study is an empirical enquiry which has a specific range of qualities in that it is takes place within a clearly defined time frame and location ; it looks into an interesting aspect of an educational activity or programme; it takes place mainly in its natural context; and finally it collects data so that the judgements of practitioners or policy makers can be informed by plausible, reliable and well-argued research evidence.

In order to be able to report on the teacherearcheerstandings the researcher needed to both interview the teachers in the school to gain narrative evidence of their experiences and also undertake the more structured Personal Construct Theory elucidation interviews that produced the focussed data on the teachertion interviews tthat illuminated their change process.

The researcher was already a part of one of the school communities and thus had access to the teachers there as well as an established awareness of the culture of the school and the framework within which the teachers' reflections were made. This setting provided the pilot study evidence which could then be duplicated in the other three schools.

The teachers' reflections were not eachers' reflections werehreemade. This setting ed awareness of the culture of the school and the framework within whiructured 8)fessional competence and learn their craft. This would militate against the ctions need then to be 'situated' so that they can be understood within the context they are uttered. This is true of

any research that is intending to establish some socially specific knowledge in which values, perceptions and judgements are being made.

Teachers were asked to take part in semi-structured interviews that invited them to reflect on their experiences and describe their learning trajectories within the school over the transition period.

From this interview a picture, or 'case-story', was built up of the ways in which the teacher after such reflection feels that they managed the transition. This was then followed up by a second interview that used a technique derived from the repertory grids approach from Personal Construct Theory. By this method it was possible to describe the key cognitive constructs that the teacher utilised in the process of making the necessary discriminations and judgements that allowed them to use and adapt their professional expertise within the classroom ations and judgd' the classroom environment or context for their teaching and then how they align their actions with those of the children and the other adults in the classroom. By displaying the habits, approaches and strategies which they were familiar with and then adapting them within the ey wertime' context their actions became the ontext their actions becaen the classroom ations and jud it so as to be effective within their own self-evaluations as teachers.

The interviews also attempted to delineate the parameters of the Communities of Practice within the school and how the ties of Pm atbetween them were crossed. It was anticipated that the ways in which the particular Communities of Practice had developed would be

described by the teachers although probably not explicitly in those terms. The nature of the

support systems within the school, both formal and informal, would constitute the building

blocks for piecing together the pattern of the communities of practice that operated within the

institution.

The research interviewed a small sample of 8 teachers who have followed a range of routes

into their teaching positions in the special school. It contrasted their experiences of gaining

competence within their roles and the cognitive constructs they used with each other.

It was a complex picture that was being investigated and it used a naturalistic, qualitative

approach and gradually built up through the case-studies a theoretical understanding of the

process.

By describing the teacherl experiences through a series of case studies it intended that

generalisations could be made that would be supported by the evidence of the findings such

that they would have a wider applicability than solely in the schools involved.

Educational settings are complex in the sense of the unpredictability of the social situations

they engender with their wide range of actors, intentions, beliefs and social experiences. The

social life of the school has a dual reality, one that can be described through the subjective

perceptions of the agents involved and a second that can be described through its formal

structures which would describe roles, functions, goals and timeframes for those same

agents. These two approaches to the same reality overlap and interact. This means that the

view that a set of causal relations can be determined such that prediction and control of such

outcomes can be socially engineered is not possible. For this reason positivistic approaches to

classroom research are difficult to devise and carry out. These are approaches to research that

utilise the model of the scientific experiment as the basis for their research methodology. The

range of educational research areas that lend themselves to this model is limited due to the

requirements to control variables, have comparable control groups and to facilitate the

potential for genuine replication. Were it possible to devise experimental research conditions

that met these criteria then the findings would have a level of validity and reliability that

would enable strong reliance on their findings. It is possible nevertheless to hypothesise

causal links of a weaker nature which account for aspects of the complexity as it is still

possible to come to conclusions that are stronger in possibility than others. These tentative

conclusions would bring together the dualistic aspect of the reality of the classroom and

render understandable the experience of the teacher. This is both a common-sense and a

research based aspect of knowledge because without it the possibility of teaching as defined

above would not be possible.

Pring (2000) says

> The background knowledge of social context and structure is a kind of causal
> factor as it enters into the determining intentions of the agent. But this will only
> explain what happens in a tentative and provisional way, since the growing
> consciousness if the learner enables him to overcome what otherwise would be
> determinants of his behaviour. (p. 70)

This applies both to the pupils and to the teachers as they are both learners within the

classroom. The teachers will operate with a range of common-sense and technical

explanations about their experiences which will need to be explored as the starting point of

the enquiry. Eraut's (1994) theories offer useful tools for the analysis of the teachers'

practices in the detail needed to explore the teacherteachers' both learners within the

classroom. The teachers will operate with a range of common-sense and technical

explanations about their experiences which will need to ence of the research. The theory that

is derived from the investigation of this discourse will need to enhance and illuminate the

practitioner derived discourse such that it can restructure and direct the understandings of the

teachers and improve practice.

For this to be happen research needs to be transparent, trustworthy, collaborative, useful and

critical. Without these elements clearly present the reader and potential e practitioner derived

discourse such that it can restructure and direct the understs their educational practice nor

that it could throw any light on that practice and illuminate their reflections.

Research needs to be both extending knowledge and be able to be thy, collaborative, useful

and critical. Without these elements clearly presennot so much an algorithm of statements

that describe and explain the reality but more a theorising of the teachers' reflections on that

reality. That theorising then in itself becomes a part of the process of reflection for those

teachers and so potentially evolves into further theory that is provisional and situational.

Pring (2000) argues,

> The teacher caught in the complex practical world of the classroom, needs to see
> where the theoretical account latches onto his or her quite different universe of
> discourse. The theorist needs to show where theory corrects or improves the
> common-sense beliefs that inform a teachere theory corrects or

1.6   Why is this research important?

How does this theory translate into the everyday life of the special schools in the study? And why might it be a useful tool to apply to the analysis of professional development and learning for teachers? The answer to these questions lies in the problem faced by special schools currently when they look to recruit teachers to their workforce. There is no professional training pathway for teachers who wish to work in special schools. They have to follow the ional training pathway for teachers who wish to work in special schools. They y might it be a usefulcial schools are often faced with fields of candidates for teacher posts within their schools made up of teachers without special school experience in their CVs.

In addition the work is useful in indicating the ways in which schools manage the induction process for their new teachers schools are the analysis of professional development and learning for teachers? The answer to these questst area and the challenge of articulating how that transformation in their teaching is to be achieved given the contested nature of the specific competences that are said to be required. It is in this area that the research has the greatest potential in that it can draw from the evidence of the teachers a model for managing the transition then that can be applied to new situations as they arise.

The specialised training route for teachers to work in special schools no longer exists in England and therefore teachers who teach in special schools now have to follow the generic teaching qualification and then train a specialis' as it were to learn the extra that is required in order for their competence in the non-special school to be replicated in the special school. This process of acquiring the professional competence is the object of the study but will in itself require some further explanation as there is no clearly articulated understanding of what constitutes that competence. There is an extended literature that has attempted to formalise

the s process of acquiring the professional competence is the object of the study but will in

itself require some further explanation as there is no clearly articulated understan

The Community of Practice theory would seem to position itself strongly to explain the

process by which the teachers develop their professional competence and learn their craft.

This would militate against the contested nature of the content of that learning and propose a

'situated practice' that the teacher is inducted into. But for it to be effective as a theory it

would need to explain the learning of the pupils within the schools – the objects as it were of

the teachers' teaching informed by their learning. Wenger is very clear that such examples of

'engineered' communities of practice like a school have inherent problems that may limit

their effectiveness in attaining the learning goals they have set themselves unlike those less

engineered that are intrinsically more successful. It is as both a theory of learning and a

theory of the processes by which learning occurs that will be explored and tested. It may

therefore have limitations as a general theory of learning but utility in explaining how the

teachers acquire their professional competences for the classroom in the special school.

1.7   Concluding remarks

The theorising of teacher theory would seem to position itself strongly to expl, with which

they are engaged, has been argued to be the most effective way to improvement of the quality

of teaching (James and Pollard 2011). The practice of teaching itself when it becomes the

object of a scientific enquiry, because of its inherent complexity, often fails to provide

anything beyond very general statements that do not translate easily to specific teaching

situations (Coe, 2009)   – but the evidence that teacherdence that not translate easily to specific teaching situations ocessesaiis more applicable to individual cases (Ainscow et al, 2006) and this is the focus and justification for this enquiry.

The study has the potential to say interesting things about what would be the process by which teachere process by which the teachers develop their professional competence and learn their craft. This would militate against the contested nature of the con the transition experience for those teachers moving from mainstream teaching to special school teaching which remains the main source for future teachers in this sector. This could then have implications for the direction of research, training and knowledge in special educational needs education in the future.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

To understand the complex world of the teacher and then how this is affected by the move from one school to another requires a framework that structures the key elements of that world and the ways in which they interact. In this study I am proposing one that looks like this;

Policy and culture

Teacher's personal and professional history

Practice
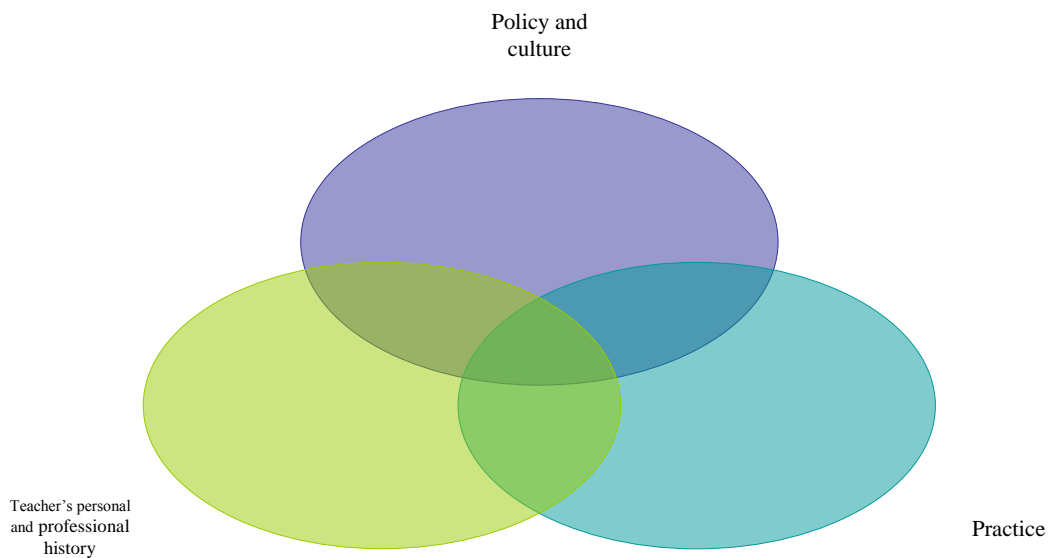
Figure 2: The complex world of the teacher

The three elements in the diagram form the sources for the teacherserself-perception of their role and effectiveness within the school and the educational system. The elements themselves are in turn complex and varied. Firstly there is the policy framework within which the educational system sits. The English educational system is in a constant process of change as government policy becomes legislation and programmes that are intended to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness for this large proportion of public expenditure. Special Educational Needs and the role of mainstream schools and special schools are part of that reform programme as is the nature of the expectations placed upon teachers within both sectors and consequently their notion of their professionalism. Lundt and Norwich (1999) summarise the 'policy' background from 1944,

> Before this, provision for pupils, referred to at the time as 'handicapped' in this country, followed a pattern similar to that in other countries. 'Handicapped' pupils were categorised according to disability under one of the 11 categories of handicap provided under the 1944 Act, and provision was usually made in segregated special schools. The most severely handicapped pupils were until the 1970 Education (Handicapped Children) Act deemed ineducable, and were the responsibility of the health rather than the education service. (p 2)

Following this major change in the responsibility for provision a Committee of Inquiry chaired by Mary Warnock was established into the 'Education of Handicapped Children and Young People'. This report provided the foundation for the 1981 Education Act which defined Special Educational Needs and began the impetus for integrative provision that then became 'inclusion'. The 1988 Education Act changed the overall educational structure within which SEN had to function and introduced the National Curriculum with its assessment requirements, local management of the budgets, parental choice and competition between schools.

As Warnock says,

> Special education in Britain has been locked for over three decades into the
> framework set out in the Education Act of 1981. (p 15)

Whilst the educational system has been changed by subsequent government policy after 1981

the special educational needs sector has been locked into the legislative mold set then. The

benign intention to end 'labeling' and recognise a continuum of obstacles to educational

achievement and then to facilitate those needs being met where possible in mainstream

educational settings became,

> both needlessly bureaucratic and liable to cause bad blood between parents, schools
> and LEAs. Children will lose out as long as these problems persist. (p 27)

Also the moves to include pupils with SEN in mainstream schools has led to confusion

around what is best for pupils, as Warnock argues,

> What is a manifest good in society, and what is my right to have, namely access to all
> the advantages that membership of society may bring, may not be what is best for me
> as a school-child. The original idea of special needs entails that children are not alike
> in all respects: some are, it is their right to learn that we must defend, not their right to
> learn in the same environment as everyone else. For them we must emphasise their
> differences (i.e. their needs) as learners, not their similarities with all the rest.
> Whatever may be the merits of deploying the rhetoric of human rights in the demand
> for inclusion for the disabled in society as a whole, it cannot be argued a priori that
> values within a school must be identical to values in the society of adults. And this
> rhetoric in the context of school-children may lead to insensitivity to their needs as
> well as culpable disregard for evidence of how children can flourish educationally
> and what factors may prevent their flourishing. (p 40-41)

Ainscow et al (2006) argue that this view of inclusion is not 'transformative' in that it focuses

on the needs of individual children still and does not address the wider systemic changes that

their view of inclusion should contain. They do not accept that school is different from

society and that it is appropriate to differentiate between goals and values that are right for

adult society and those for a school. The argument centres on the nsformative' in that it

focuses on the needs of individual children still and does not address the wider systemic

changes that their view of inclusion should contain. Thing rights and the possibility for

compromise rather seeing that as meeting the system's needs and not the individual learners.

Nussbaum (2006) proposes a version of justice that enables people with learning disabilities

to be recognized as having the same rights to rsapabilitieshe same rights to rsion of jhose

disabilities. This is important as the case for the rights for the disabled is framed mostly to

make the case that the effects of the disability are socially constructed such that the person

with the disability is restricted from exercising the same 'uch that the person with the

disability is restricted from other words that they are able to understand, articulate and

therefore fully accept their own social responsibility that comes from the exercise of their

'xercise of their heas part of social society. A person with a learning disability does not fit

this model because they are not able to demonstrate that they are aware of and understand the

rights that they wish to have access to and are consequently in the position of reliance on the

benevolence of those that are –those that arethe benevolence monstrate that theyThe learning

disabled child'ng disabled chile benevolence monstrate that they are aware of and understand

the rights that t ng disabled chile benevolence monstrate that they are aware of and

understand the rights that they the needs of indivi1970 and Mrs. Margaret Thatcher

announced it,

> On 1 April, local education authorities became responsible for the education of
> severely handicapped children hitherto considered to be 'unsuitable for education at
> school'. Now for the first time in history all children without exception are within the
> scope of the educational system. The Education (Handicapped Children) Act of 1970
> is the last milestone—along the road starting with the Education Act of 1870, which
> set out to establish a national system of education. (Speech in Bristol (16 April 1970)
> at the South West Regional Conference of the National Society for Mentally
> Handicapped Children)

The inclusion debate is then about how that right is interpreted except that it cannot be interpreted by those with a learning disability because it is the nature of their disability that they do not understand the concepts involved. Nussbaum'except that it cannot be intery postulating a bundle of interpreted by those with a learning disability because it is the nature of their disabili These capabilities are then exercised in the complex socio-political world where decisions have to be taken in the allocation of resources in a just way. They do not prescribe how the 'rights' of an individual should look rather they set out a minimum 'standard' that has to be met. This presents an ethical framework for teachers to operate within that is inclusive of themselves, their colleagues and the learners – placing them all within the same framework. Terzi (2005) argues along similar lines and makes the case for a 'threshold level' of capabilities (Terzi, 2007, p. 764) that should be a constitutional requirement in terms of equal entitlements to educational opportunities.

The teacher who moves between the mainstream school and the special school will bring these issues into sharp focus. Both schools are part of the same English educational system formed by the same policies determined centrally by the government. These policies form one level of the teacher's understanding of their professional role. Through policy, legislation and regulation the government and the state set out the parameters of the role that teachers are expected to fulfill. That role is described and discussed in the media and professional forums and impacts on the individual teacher in a range of ways.

At the same time, the teacherdiscussed in the media and professional practice within a school or a number of schools will have formed another level of that understanding and is therefore an element in the model. The content of their training, the experience of their own education and the ways in which each of the schools they may have worked in, institutionally and

through the relationships with other teachers, will have situated the broader governmental or state agenda for teaching within their personal professional understanding.

The teacherchool or a number of schools will have formed another level of that understanding and is therefore an element in the model. The content of their training, the experience of their own education and the ways inerstand the role they are fulfilling and will bring potentially unique aspects to their experience and the ways in which they adapt to change and maintain their personal identity and 'narrate' their career trajectory.

The first part of this literature review addresses this context in which we locate the teachernd is therefore an element in the model. The content of their training, the experience of their own education and the ways inerstand the role they are fulfilling r operates and the politicisation of the educational system under recent and current governments and how this affects the teacher's experience and understanding of their professional role.

The second part develops the concept of practice and specifically of educational practice. This will examine what the actual task of teaching is and discuss what the particular theoretical knowledge and skill base that define the content of the professional teacher's role is. It will look at the ways in which that skill and knowledge base is transferred to the teacher through the variety of 'training' and 'professional development' structures and experiences that the teacher may encounter. It will look at the 'communities of practice' theory and try to establish how helpful the concepts and analysis presented within it are.

The third section focuses on the notion of transitions and change and how they provide the windows as it were for our deeper understanding of the particular social world of the school and how this adds to the teachers understanding of themselves and their classroom situations. Within this section the technique of Repertory Grid Analysis will be explored as a theoretical

tool to investigate in greater detail the process of change for the teacher. Throughout the

teacher will be considered holistically – that is as having behavioural, attitudinal or emotional

and cognitive aspects to all of their actions and understandings of their social world. Thus

the complex reality that forms the backdrop to the many decisions and choices that the

teacher makes that together describe their professional practice will be explored to see where

the 'objective' factors impinge upon or become 'subjective' factors in what is experienced

(the teaching encounter). The latter is felt as an entirely 'subjective' experience although it

may be coloured with aspects of 'powerlessness', loss of 'autonomy' or 'integrity' which hint

at this wider social reality.

2.2 <u>Theoretical Perspective</u>

Before proceeding into each of these sections it is important to present in more detail the

theoretical basis for this way of looking at the reality in the classroom. The approach being

used is one that falls within the tradition that is built around the 'social construction of

reality'. This is based upon the sociology of Berger and Luckmann (1967) that in turn built

upon the work of Alfred Shutz and the Edmund Husserl and is in the phenomenological

tradition.

These sociologists and philosophers are looking to establish the basis for our knowledge

about the world that in which we live. . Their analysis begins from the argument that we as

human beings are cognitively structured such that we cannot think of our world without

thinking intentionally about an object. As Berger and Luckmann write,

> We can never apprehend some putative substratum of consciousness as such, only
> consciousness of something or other. This is so regardless of whether the object

of consciousness is experienced as belonging to an external physical world or apprehended as an element of an inner subjective reality. (p. 34)

The idea that all we can know are the objects of our minds is in contrast to the view that the world is directly known to us through our sensory experience of it and that our ever increasing knowledge of this objective world gives us greater and greater control over it. That there are people that may represent the world in that way in their discourse is itself just one way of socially constructing our reality – we do not have a an impartial position to judge which view is right. This relativism with regard to truth claims about our social world does not mean that we are in a position of ignorance or amorality but rather we have to situate our subjective knowledge within a broader framework that provides us with criteria for evaluating truth claims.

Searle (1995) has developed a theory that helps explain the means by which social 'facts' are 'created' and how they work. Searle (1999) provides us with three important arguments. Firstly, he argues that it is through language that our shared construction of social reality is constituted and he then outlines in detail how that happens. Secondly ontological subjectivity and ontological objectivity help explain the differences between the natural and the social worlds. Here he is talking about the challenge of agreeing knowledge about our material world and also of our social world and how the criteria for each necessarily need to be different as one depends on conscious subjects experiencing it for it to exist (the social world) and the other does not (the material world). And thirdly that epistemic objectivity and epistemic subjectivity help us to reach truthful accounts of the world that we live in.

This argument provides us with a 'cosmopolis' as explained by Toulmin (1990) as a reconciliation of our knowledge about the social and the natural worlds in an harmonious equilibrium.

Searle (1999) argues that the structure of human institutions is a structure of constitutive rules which the people who are involved within are often not conscious of but work within because of the 'background'. The 'background' is the necessary precondition for intentional states to function; it enables the actions that take place to be aligned with their 'context' so that they make sense, and operates like a 'resource bank' for the person to draw upon in order to help decision making and action. It is similar to that of Bourdieu's theory of 'habitus' (Jenkins, 1992) in that it contains abilities, dispositions, tendencies and general causal structures. And in a similar way it is experienced subjectively although it is derived from a shared social source which the conscious subject is unaware of. Importantly, the 'background' enables language to make sense given its ambiguities and complexities, and perceptions for similar reasons, it renders within consciousness the familiar so that people are again similarly constructing their worlds so that it becomes shared, it structures events into stories, it provides and makes sense of motivational dispositions, it prepares you for what may happen and it disposes you to certain types of behaviour. It operates as a culturally specific support for the person to operate within society enabling the flow of living with its ceaseless choices and decisions to occur smoothly and effectively.

Similarly Bourdieu's concept of 'field' (Jenkins, 1992) matches in many ways Searle's (1999) of 'status'. In this theory the school is a 'field' within which power or access to resources is allocated according to the formal structure of social relations or roles. For Searle (1999) status indicators label the roles that function within the institution which set out the formal

duties and obligations that enable the institution to work - which are acknowledged and

followed by all those involved within it. Status functions are the vehicles of power in a

society.

Bourdieu (Jenkins, 1992) provides a detailed analytical framework for the empirical

investigation of social practices like teaching. He argues for the importance of locating that

social practice within the broader power frameworks that structure its meanings for subjects

and also influence the ways in which they act. He believes that research activity is fieldwork

in philosophy (Jenkins, 1992). These concepts address a number of the key philosophical

issues relating to the study of social interactions and they provide us with an equation to

unpick complex social reality:

Maton (2008) explains,

$$[(habitus)(capital)] + field = practice$$
This equation can be unpacked as stating: practice results from relations between one's dispositions (habitus) and one's position in a field (capital), within the current state of play of that social arena (field) (p. 51)

The field structures the habitus, physically and socially, and the habitus in its turn is the basis

for the subjectes for the importance of locating that social practour ways of being, thinking,

feeling and acting. It's the active creation of the personal narratives that we tell ourselves

about our lives. The habitus is embodied in the sense that it is what we do in the situations we

are in – located in time and place. It gives us the subjective feeling of being 'in control' of

our lives and at the same time it is the way in which the experiences we have are formed into

the way we are – become habits of thought, action and feeling. And therefore in a way

constrain our choices and limit our free-will. Habitus is therefore sounding like the

cumulative outcome of a person's learning up until that moment. It is a combination of the

teachers practice and their consciousness of their practice. The habitus is constructed out of embodied cultural capital. Bourdieu's definition of capital (Jenkins, 1992) entails it being the driving force that develops the field through time and it can be realised in two ways. It can be objectified capital and be in apital ocial practour ways of bools, galleries) or it can be embodied in the person and thus be exhibited in their habitus directly in the gestures, stances, lifestyle choices or it can be inferred through realisations in practice – the attitudes and dispositions of the agent.

The challenge then within the school is to map the social space with the economic and the cultural capital for the individuals within the school and then see whether there are groups of individuals who because of their similar positions in the social space share similar habitus and then begin to understand the dynamics of how positions change and capital is increased, decreased or transferred. Bourdieu argues that clusters of individuals within a social space will develop distinct cultures and may then engage in because of their similar positions in the social space share similar habitus and then begin to understand the dys highly likely that such sub-groups will exist within the school sharing a common view that their 'way of doing things' is best for example. And there will be exemplars if an 'official' best way of doing things which will be part of the struggle for dominance played out within the social space depending on the relative strengths if the cultural or economic capital weightings for the groups.

Searle and Bourdieu are two theorists who have provided developed bodies of work to clarify how learning and education can be understood alongside the individual's sense of personal responsibility and moral being within a broad framework within which reality is 'socially constructed'.

The teachers's habitus is a complex construct but this study will examine it through the notions of professionalism, special education, school culture and self-identity.

2.3   Teacher Professionalism

2.3.1 .   Professionalism

Power (2008) argues,

> It is now widely accepted that the conventional conceptualisation of professionalism is no longer adequate. Traditionally, it was held that being a professional implied membership of an occupational group that could be distinguished from other (usually lesser) occupational groups on the basis of a number of characteristics… These include skill based on theoretical knowledge, trust-based client relationship, adherence to a professional code of conduct, independence and altruism. (p 144)

This picture of professionalism is confirmed by Eraut (1994) who argues that the work of professions can be viewed,

> … in terms of several interconnected sets of power relations: with service users, with managers of service-providing organisations, with government, with a range of special interest groups and with other professionals. Increasingly, however, all these relationships are being framed by a complex web of state regulation. (p 5)

Evans (2011) believes that the period since the late-1980s in England can be called the p 5) ions can be viewed,, special educatector reforms have redrawn the picture of what a teacher now does as they serve the 'standards agenda' or the government led drive to raise the educational outcomes for the pupils in state education. This involved a loss of professional autonomy under the guise of 'modernisation' with a clear expectation that state schools will be judged on the 'results' that their pupils achieve broken down into a narrow set of 'targets' that align closely with demonstrable performance indicators and that teachers will be judged by how closely they are seen to comply to the teaching model set out in a list of standards or

competences. These teacher standards were underpinned by the teacher training process and

the school performance management system. The NFER study commissioned by the

government and published in 2011 (Walker et al) called 'Making the links between the

teachers' professional standards, induction, performance management and continuing

professional development' called these workforce reforms 'the new professionalism' and

concluded,

> Overall, the survey data suggests that schools are implementing the four strands of the
> new professionalism, and that this is making a difference to aspects of teachers' and
> headteachers' working practices. Awareness of the four strands was high, and the
> majority of the respondents reported that each of the four strands led to improvements
> in teaching and learning practices. (p ii)

This statutory framework that schools have to operate in is part of the s statutory framework

that sc(1994) refers to and they are analysed in a more detailed manner in the sociological

framework set out by Ball (2008) who schematises the ogical framework set out by Beadings

spects of teachers' and headteachers' working practic

Ball (2008) describes et out by Ball (2008)

> … technology and a mode of regulation that employs judgments, comparisons
> and displays as measures of productivity or output or value of individuals and
> organisations (p 50)

He goes on to argue that this is more than a performance management system but relates to

the way that the individual teacher begins to understand their own self-efficacy in their role.

As he summarises it,

> The first-order effect of performativity is to re-orient pedagogical and scholarly
> activities towards those that are likely to have a positive impact on measurable
> performance outcomes and such a deflection away from aspects of social,
> emotional or moral development that have no immediate measurable performance
> value….The second-order effect is that for many teachers this changes the way in
> which they experience their work and their satisfactions they get from it – their
> sense of moral purpose and responsibility for their students is distorted. (p 54)

The ways in which these reforms have impacted upon schools and teachers has been varied and adds to the complexity. Each school could have a mix of teachers from pre-new professionalism times as well as those who as it were know no other form than the new professionalism for their professional identity. School leaderships will interpret the framework and directions in different ways allowing for inconsistency between schools which will be highlighted by those teachers who move between them.

Eraut (1994) explores the argument that a profession operates as a way of establishing the adds to the complexity. Each school could have a mix ofowledge base upon which that expertise is based is contested. There is a view that the teacher's knowledge base is of a more practical and 'tacit' nature than that of a clearly defined researched and 'scientifically' established form. Eraut argues for a wider notion of 'knowledge' that would capture the whole spectrum from tacit to academic and would include 'situational' knowledge that is

> … concerned with how people 'read' the situation they find themselves. What do they see as the significant features? Which aspects of the situation are more susceptible to change? How would it be affected by, or respond to, certain decisions or events? (p. 78)

The situational knowledge here referred to could be described as the pedagogy of the teacher although that is a term that Alexander (2004) suggests is still marginalised within English discussions of education in contrast to the tradition in countries in Europe where 'pedagogy' is recognised as the 'science of teaching'. Pedagogy which Alexander defines as the 'act and discourse of teaching' is not recognised as an element of the 'accountability' framework that is determining the ways in which teaching and learning are defined in the state educational system. Progress in learning and quality of teaching are the two elements within the framework that might be seen as covering some common ground. But as Ball argues by being framed in this way they lead towards 'performativity' – to observable and quantitatively

measurable aspects of the teachers practice rather than the far more complex judgments about

the interactions between the personalities of the teacher and the learner.

Hargreaves (2000) places these changes in the professional standing of teachers into an

historical perspective and as he argues,

> Images and ideas about teacher professionalism, and even about the nature of
> teaching itself, linger on from other agendas and other times suggests is still
> marginalised within English discussions of education in contrast to the tradition ithe
> public and many parts of the teaching profession itself. (p. 152)

He suggests that there has been a four-fold development in the notions of teacher

professionalism since mass education has been established in countries like Britain and

America. And these notions of professionalism exist as he argues in the social 'imaginaries'

(Taylor, 2004) which are a way of analyzing the 'background' or 'habitus' to our social

world that structures our thinking and decision making. The four ages for Hargreaves are, the

pre-professional age, the age of the autonomous professional, the age of the collegial

professional and the post-professional and current age. The pre-professional age was one of a

way of analyzing the n countries like Britain and America. And these notions of

professionalism exist as he argues in the social 'imagin the 1960s onwards this changed as

the status of the teaching profession rose and the quality of its training improved. The debates

around progressive and traditional pedagogies dominated the style of teaching that occurred.

The teacher was then an individualized autonomous professional in their classroom. By the

1980 this was challenged by the increased expectations on teachers and the outcomes of their

teaching. This pushed them towards a more collegiate model of the teaching profession. And

finally globalization and the pressures that this politically placed upon educational systems

has commercialized, marketised, technologized and performatised the teaching profession

and rendered it a combination of competencies and accountabilities. Each of these phases though carries on in the memories and ideologies of politicians, editors, policy makers, researchers, teachers and voters so that the teaching profession continues to be beset by conflicting and contradictory pressures. The teachers own personal view and attitude to their professionalism will be bound up with their feeling of self-efficacy in their job role. Self-efficacy for them will be the merging of their notion of their personal professionalism with the competencies expected by the government (DfE, 2011) and inspected by Ofsted and the craft knowledge of the community of practice of the teaching group in the school.

2.3.2 Special Education

The 1944 Education Act followed a pattern then well established in a number of countries of categorising 'handicapped' pupils into types and establishing special schools to cater for them - in England 11 and leaving the most severely disabled outside of the system as 'ineducable'. In 1970 this last group were brought into the system and then the 1981 Education Act following the Warnock Report the system reformed the process in order to bring the special and the mainstream sectors closer together through the notion of 'integration' and using the one category of 'Special Educational Needs'. It attempted to de-medicalise the process of identifying educational 'handicap' and argued for a spectrum of need and one which should be seen as time-limited or at least continually under review. The complex assessment system for Special Educational Needs with its stages and protocols was introduced with the aim of protecting the most vulnerable learners within schools. The 1988 Education Act centralised the school curriculum and its assessment and decentralised the financial management of education to the schools. The reforms since then have continued the two themes of improving

standards in schools and supporting development of integration between the special and

mainstream sectors which then became the push for 'inclusion'. Inclusion is the view that the

pupil with Special Educational Needs ought to be able to have their education provided

within a mainstream school as a right. Alongside this view is the as strongly argued view that

by making schools 'inclusive' of learners of all types then the school itself becomes a more

effective school as well as a microcosm for the 'good society' that fully accepts diversity. As

Ainscow et al (2006) argue,

> On the face of it, inclusion and the standards agenda are in conflict because they
> imply different views of what makes an improved school, different ways of
> thinking about achievements and different routes for raising them. (p 12)

Warnock (2005) reviewed the effects of the report she authored and emphasised the notion of

'vulnerability' in her criticisms of the way 'inclusion' has been conceptualised and from the

examples she provides is thinking of the wider group of learners who have fallen within the

remit of Special Educational Needs because their academic attainments are below the norms

expected for children their age often because of factors beyond the school's control to do with

social deprivation and disadvantage. Similarly the arguments for inclusion are often about

pupils who have the potential to attain well within the educational system but who are

demotivated or unsympathetically understood by the schools. This is the view of Ainscow et

al (2006) who draw attention to the ways in which special needs is a socially constructed

category which links to and may justify lowered expectations for educational achievement

and consequently poorer life chances into adulthood. They argue that the spread of good

teaching practice will facilitate the form of 'inclusion' they argue for through the development

of stronger links between practice, policy and research to support the acceptance of the pupil

and the adoption of teaching strategies that will enable this group of pupils to perform above the current lower expectations set for them.

The means by which this achieved is therefore twofold. Firstly there needs to be the political and moral acceptance of the possibility that the SEN is an arbitrary and discriminatory construct acting as an impediment to the learner realising their potential and secondly that there is available to the teacher a range of strategies that they can adopt within their teaching that will realise that outcome for the pupil.

What those strategies are and how they can be incorporated into the teacher's repertoire is the question that then presents itself.

Florian (2008) argues that politically the educational system is utilitarian in its approach as it presumes a bell shaped distribution curve for children arbitrary and discriminatory construct acting,

> Thus, in the familiar educational parlance, what is ordinarily provided will meet the needs of most learners, while a few at the tail ends of the distribution may require something 'omething   equire , while a few at the tail ends of the disprovided wi

Teachersg   equire , while a few at the tailinarily available. (p. 203)ll meet the proach as it presumes a bell shaped distribution curve for children arbitrary and discriminatory construct acting as an impediment to the lea is in fact widely held and acted upon by teachers although it has undergone a succession of sophisticated mutations so that it now incorporates notions of variance between sub-abilities and the view that attainment can be improved even when ability stays fixed. That it has such an influence suggests that it is useful for teachers to help structure their social world. Hagger, Mutton and Burn (2011) looked at teachers in mainstream school in their first year. They found that within the four main ew at the tased by

the teachers - the work of teachers, their professional status, professional relationships and

the students and their learning – it was the issues to do with teaching strategy, planning and

matching student need that was foremost. And the understanding of pupil need was ordered

around notions of 'top set', 'bottom set' which led to the teachers realizing that with regard

to their views of the students they were teaching,

> within the four main ew at the tased by the teachers - the work of ttereotypical
> misconceptions about particular groups; the amount they had to learn about
> individuals; and the importance of teacher/student relationships in learning. (p 396)

For Florian (2010) these /student relationships in learning. (p 396)s form when in training

can be challenged by a programme that is based upon the premise that,

> …or Florian (2010) these /studenhallenged by a prograether they have the necessary
> knowledge and skills to teach in inclusive classrooms (classrooms containing
> mainstream and special needs pupils), but how to make best use of what they already
> know when learners experience a difficulty. (p. 370)

Florian (2008) argues that there are not specific teaching methods or procedures that are

different between special and mainstream education although the context certainly is

different. And,

> …lorian (2008) argues that there are not specific teaching methods or procedures that
> are different between special and mainstream education although the context certal
> diagnostic criteria that have been used to categorise them in order to determine their
> eligibility for additional support. (p. 204)

That there is a unique knowledge base for special educational needs and its specialised

pedagogy are disputed similarly by Lewis and Norwich (2007) who argues that the notion of

a continua of teaching approaches is more useful (2001) as it makes possible to distinguish

between the 'normal' adaptions in class teaching for most pupils and the greater degree of

adaptions required for those with severe difficulties in learning, those designated as having

SEN. The adaptions that the authors refer to are in themselves placed upon a further

continuum that goes from 'low density' to 'high density' forms of teaching. As a consequence

of this argument it is possible to argue that the 'national' curriculum or some agreed version

of it is applicable as a common curriculum for all learners. Teaching standards therefore

apply to a similar 'common' pedagogy that is set out in the statutory framework and which

forms the basis for the training of teachers and their subsequent performance management

and career development within the profession.

Norwich and Lewis understand pedagogy to be the series of decisions and actions that the

teacher takes in order to promote school learning. In a sense then it is the 'craft ' knowledge

that a teacher carries within them 'tacitly'. It is possible to argue that the basis of the teacher's

actions when they relate to the learnererbe the series of decisions and actions that the tee

purpose of making such judgments is to justify the adoption of 'special' teaching methods that

do not have any justification in either their rationale nor their outcomes. Rather the argument

is that teachers fail to differentiate between pedagogy and instruction (2001)

> Pedagogy encompasses a wide range of variables about teaching (including, for
> example, sequencing of lessons, grouping arrangements, promotion of particular
> attitudes, selection of content etc.) instruction is narrower and relates to teaching
> of a particular target skill or set of knowledge. (316)

In this argument the 'specialness' of the pedagogy of the teacher in the special school is seen

as an aspect of the particular instructional strategies adopted by the teacher that are nested

within a common pedagogic framework. They challenge the view that it is possible to

determine a clear sub-group of special needs learners that require a distinct pedagogy rather

than a series of instructional programmes. The criteria for such sub-groups is contested and

would be based on 'medicalised' or deficit models of learner functioning. Florian (2010)

following Hart et al (2004) proposes an alternative model for a teacher pedagogy that has

different principles. The first is co-agency, then transformability, and finally trust which

together place the responsibility for learning as being shared between the teacher and the

learner. A central assumption of transformability is that teachers cannot be successful alone

in other words they are powerless without the active participation of the learners. For learners

to take up the invitation to co-agency teachers must trust that the learners make meaning and

find relevance and purpose through their learning experience.

Trust enables a shared responsibility for the transformability of young people's capacity to

learn – and the sharing is seen in the coming together, not the dividing of responsibility.

This fits well with a philosophical view about the social construction of reality and the

psychological view that personal constructs powerfully influence the framing of that social

reality for the individual. This perspective foregrounds the importance of the teacher-learner

relationship and sees this as a constitutive factor in the teacher's pedagogy.

2.3.3 The school as a cultural institution

Bruner (1996) argues,

> Culture, then, though itself man-made, both forms and makes possible the workings
> of a distinctively human mind. On this view learning and thinking are always situated
> in a cultural setting and always dependent upon the utilisation of cultural resources.
> (p 4)

The school is the situation or context within which the individuals construct 'realities' and

meanings and adapt them to the institutional life they find themselves in. For Searle (1999)

the school makes a clear sub-group of institutional facts from the total social facts that form

the 'background' to the meaning making world we inhabit. In Bourdieu (Jenkins, 1992) the

school provides a 'habitus' that is structured by and helps to structure its reality for the

individuals. How this works and is understood is a challenge to explicate. Because, by

definition, it operates in a way that is not directly experienced but is inferred- then there

necessarily are a range of configurations. The range of conceptual models proposed

originates from stakeholders within the educational sector - policy makers, academics,

trainers, teachers and their professional organisations. The controversies that centre around

understanding school culture are illustrating the 'field' or the play of social power within the

school. Currently the school culture models that are most widely presented are those that

derive from the school improvement/effectiveness research, policy and practice.

For Bruner (1996),

> Life in culture is, then, an interplay between the various versions of the world that
> people form under its institutional sway and the versions of it that are their individual
> histories. (p 14)

Bruner (1996) refers to 'canonical' beliefs that are powerful within a society and which aim to

secure adherence but individuals always retain some independence in their stance toward

them and indeed the social world operates such that it can tolerate divergence, adaption,

misunderstanding, partial agreement and ignorance as the canonical formulations are social

constructs themselves. They are then when examined subject to contested interpretations and

critical evaluations.

Hargreaves (1999) proposes a typology to understand the school culture which works across

two dimensions - social cohesion and social control. It produces four broad types of school

culture which he labels the hothouse, the formal, the welfarist and the survivalist. He then

provides a pen portrait of how these schools operate according to which 'type' they are. He

describes how this typology can be effectively used as a tool to help teachers reflect on the

school culture they are part of and help them understand how change processes then operate

within their school. Fielding (2006) updates this typology within his own analysis of how

school cultures operate within the wider 'field' of government policy, accountability

structures and market forces that impinge on the operation of a school. His typologies

recognizes the importance of 'community' as a concept to explain how school cultures differ

and how that underlies in a causative sense the development of the effectiveness of the

teachers and hence the success of the school.

Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2006) make two core points about a school's organisational

culture. The first is that this culture will be about the basic assumptions, beliefs and values of

its members and secondly there will be a close relationship between these and the social

structures and patterns of relationships that operate within the organisation. These two facets

of the organisation's cultural existence are in some form of tension and therefore this will

contribute to the ways in which the organisation copes with change at all levels from the

macro to the micro – that is from the transformative as it undergoes change in structure as an

institution to adaptive as it accepts a new member of staff (or the loss of another). This is as

Fielding (2006) has pointed out another way of describing the school as a dynamic

community as well as a form of bureaucratic institution. Noddings (1996) sees this

distinction as being similar to the one originally described by Tonnies in 1887 when he

contrasted Gemeinschaft, the informal kinds of collective relationships associated with

community, with Gesellschaft, which are more formal contractual relationships. The school's

culture will then mediate the external demands on the school and will operate to define roles

and expectations broadly within a typology in order that social continuity and operational

predictability is reproduced.

The exact configurations of these elements of the cultures of special schools will differ from those of mainstream schools as they differ from each other. The policy demands are the same though and the expectations upon schools and teachers similar secondly there will be a close relationship between thes. Williams and Gersch (2004) confirm this when they concluded that the stresses of working in both were similar although the causes of these stresses differed.

2.3.4 The teacher as a psychological being

Within the socially constructed reality of the classroom the teacher is the centre of a complex series of interactions that frame the pupilough and the expectations upon schools and tit can be understood as a game of anticipations - of what is going to happen next. This game is situated within a socially agreed framework of how a classroom works and the roles within that of teacher and pupil. The teacher's skill is in how accurately they are able to predict the next steps in what is likely to happen and are able to respond to or create ways that maintain the classroom game. The classroom game is set by the amalgamation of forces that are influencing the minds of the actors within it and the power balance that sets the limits to what can happen. In being successful at predicting what is happening, maintaining the classroom game and using the power balance the teacher will be able to maintain classroom control (all pupils looking like they are learning) and promote learning (all pupils actually learning). The dynamic process underlying these anticipating and predicting judgments takes place within the teacher's mind. Personal Construct Theory fits well in helping to explain this process. The intuitive decision making process than flows from the teacher's perception, understanding and interpretation of the events unfolding before them then becomes an amalgam of 'coping'

strategies, skill applications and hypothesis testing.   The personal constructs operate between

the 'reality' of the external world and the personalised understanding that the teacher has

constructed of that world which contains its reliability and therefore its ability to be re-

construed in predictable forms for the teacher. The teacher knows both that there may be

some tension between the two and also that others are doing something similar as well. In

this way the classroom is socially constructed and negotiated in time.

Kelly (2003) outlines a theory that explains a personcations and hypothesis testing.   The

personal constructs operate between the 'reality' of the external worlding themselves. A

person does this by having a number of dichotomous constructs that are used very quickly to

judge the similarities and differences between the event occurring and others in the person

external world andsuccess of the person'of the perss will be tested in how they cope with the

range of new events they encounter. Obviously events donn the event occurring and

otconstructs need to have some flexibility within them and they also need to align with other

peoples constructs so that social co-operation and co-construction can occur.

PCT provides a systematic language for describing these constructs and the construing

processes (Bannister and Fransella,1986),

> He classified constructs according to the nature of their control over their
> elements, into pre-emptive, constellatory and propositional. (p 18)

A person can therefore use their constructs in a limiting and restrictive way (pre-emptive), in

a stereotyped way (constellatory) or a hypothetical and flexible way (propositional). They

can use their constructs to broaden their view of their world or to constrict it and they can be

tight or loose with their constructs. Crucially the theory allows for the 'sociality corollary'

which explains how one person plays a role in a social process involving others. Bannister

and Fransella (1986) say,

> In terms of our ideas about people's construct systems we may seek to inspire them, confuse them, amuse them, change them, win their affection, help them to pass the time of day or defeat them. But in all these and in many other ways we are playing a role in a social process with them. Conversely, if we cannot understand other people, that is we cannot construe their construction, then we may do things to them but we cannot relate to them. (p. 18)

Importantly PCT explained emotions as being the experience of construct systems in a state

of change. In this way the theory brings together the affective and cognitive aspects of

experiencing the world. A construct is not a thought or a feeling – it is a discrimination

(Bannister and Fransella, p.21) and specific constructs describe construct systems in states of

change,

Anxiety	An awareness that the events with which one is confronted lie mostly outside the range of convenience of one's construct system – too much is 'unknown'
Hostility	Is the continued effort to extort validation evidence in favour of a type of social prediction which has already been recognised as failure – when we cannot afford to be wrong
Guilt	Is the awareness of dislodgement of the self from one's core role structure – we cannot understand and predict ourselves
Threat	Is the awareness of an imminent comprehensive change in one's core structures – the world about us appears about to become chaotic
Fear	Is the awareness of an imminent incidental change in one's core structures – a more peripheral part of our world becomes meaningless and unpredictable
Aggressiveness	Is the active elaboration of one's perceptual field – when we actively experiment to check the validity of our construing and extend the range of our construing in new directions

(adapted from Bannister and Fransella, p. 22-24)

Figure 3: Linking Personal Construct Theory to Emotions

The PCT theory of emotions is therefore premised upon a 'cognitive dissonance' model which looks at the tensions present in the person following a decision that has produced tensions for them because of inconsistencies between their view of themselves and what they have subsequently done (Festinger, 1964). This in turn links to the learning theory in Communities of Practice that sees a tension for the individual between their experience and their competence and the resolution in 'transformative learning' when the new experience is matched by new learning that enables a reformulation of the individual's self-concept – that is a congruence between who they are and what they do.

This view of the teacher's learning process is developed by Day (2004, p72) who presents a model of teacher self-efficacy, which is the teacher's beliefs about the control they have over their lives and specifically their positive effect on their pupil's success in school, that he argues helps to explain the teacher's emotional well-being and hence their motivation to be an effective teacher. This is affected by the teacher's beliefs about why their teaching may not be going as well as they would want – particularly when facing new challenges and all of the teacher's in this study were in that position. The model takes the form (p150),

Teachers' self-
efficacy

Pupil's learning

School culture
and communities
of practice
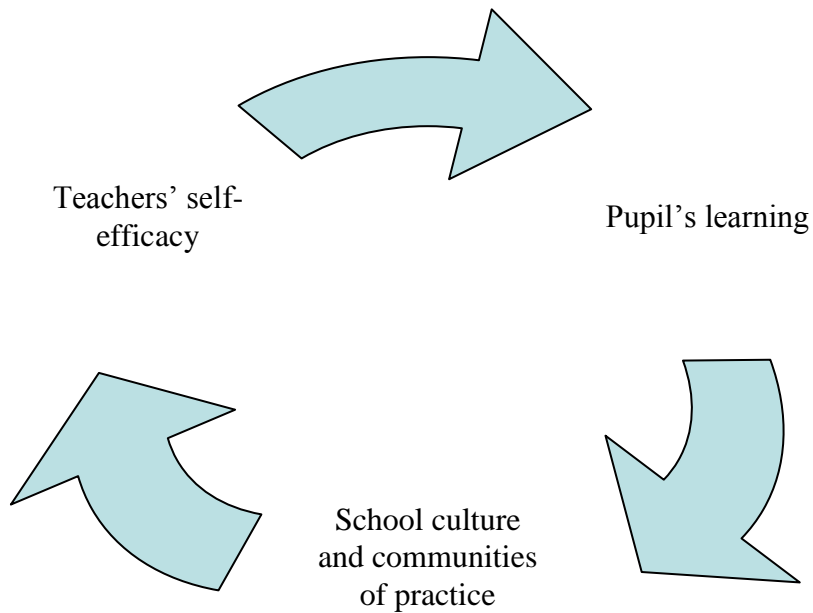
Figure 4: Teacher Self-Efficacy

The interactions between the teacher's understandings of the demands of the school, the

practice of their colleagues and the feedback they receive from the pupils they are teaching

combines to construct their judgment that they are doing well in their role. The process by

which this happens, the transformative learning process, is the focus of this study.

2.4   Educational Practice

Educational practice is the place where the teacherdoing well in their role. The process by

which this happenseagues and the feedback they receive from the pupils they are teaf pupils

(learners) in the classroom who are to be taught through the dynamic interactions that then

occur.

Pring, (2000) says

> An educational practice, therefore, is a transaction between a teacher and a learner within a framework of agreed purposes and underlying procedural values. Such a transaction respects the learning needs of the learner, on the one hand, and, on the other, mediates the aspects of the culture which meet those needs (p. 28)

Pring is arguing that the teacher has the socially constructed role of initiating into agreed areas of culture the pupils in their charge and they have also the expectation that they will achieve this through a process that finds a way of engaging with the pupils such that it will be successful. And furthermore that this involves moral judgments on the part of the teacher so as to ensure that the f initiating into agreed areas of culture the pupils in their charge and they have also the expectation that they will achieve this through a process that finds a way

Carr (1995) reminds us that in using the term as to ensure that the f initiating into agreed areas of culture the pupils in their charge and they have also the expectation that they will achieve this through a process that finds a way of engaging with thels and competencies that are agreed to comprise 'teaching'. The second is the where an educational practice is evaluated as exemplar practice which demonstrates an approved level of competence in the skills required for teaching effectively. The first is a more dynamic concept allowing for the variation and change in the competencies that might come from the new teaching situation the teacher faces. The latter sets up an ideal although 'static' model which the teacher needs to aspire to in order to be affirmed a successful teacher.

For Carr (1995) the problem for both views rests in their assumption that it is possible to separate from the practice the theory (the structured reflection on and analysis of the strategy) of what that practice should be. And that the situation facing the teacher in both cases is a deficit of appropriate educational theory. But Carr (1995) argues,

> … educational practice can never be guided by theory alone. This is because 'theory' whether implicit or tacit or explicit and overt, is always a set of general beliefs, while 'practice' always involves taking action in a particular situation. (p. 63)

The argument is that it is not possible to derive action for a particular situation from a general belief the practice the theory (td be caught in an infinite regress as they attempted to match the general with the specific. This adds support to the philosophical view argued by Ryle (1978) that it is by first 'knowing how' to do something that a person gets to 'know that' something is right. In other words the practice comes before the theory. This view makes the application of a set of 'teacher standards' difficult to realise beyond a 'performativity' definition. That is the standards become competences that can be evidenced in a series of 'behaviours' that can then be seen occurring in the classroom when the teacher is 'inspected'. The teacher's practice then becomes the behaviours required by the standards except that the 'events' that actual practice has to respond to are not so determined and therefore the teacher will also need to be able to call upon a set of teacher skills that are beyond the competencies in order to deal with these everyday events in the classroom and then if possible return to the competencies. In a way then the teacher's practice mediates their reality with the competencies they need to be able to demonstrate within the classroom to observers. This difference Evans (2011) describes as that between a 'demanded professionalism' and an 'enacted professionalism' (p. 863). Evans distinguishes between professionalism that is demanded (which includes the prescriptions of government policy), that which is prescribed (which may reflect a more public service ethos for the teachers role), that which is enacted (the actual practice that is observed) and assumed professionalism (the outcome of an analysis of the range of professionalisms operating). Enacted professionalism is made up of the individual teachers different practices and thus allows for variability in performance.

Eraut (1994) summarises the background to the use of the term 'competences' in understanding and developing work practices as a strategy that attempts to describe general and specific information about what a person can do. The tradition associated with McClelland (1964) and the Hay/McBer Organisation (which advised the English government on teacher competences, HayMcBer 2000) is based on the differences between 'average' and 'superior' performance and generates a list that can be used in a normative way to evaluate a person in a role. In this model the effective teacher creates the optimum 'classroom climate' through their combination of professional characteristics (macro-competences) and their teaching skills (micro-competences). For the Hay/McBer Organisation (Boulter, Dalziel and Hill, 1998) a competency is,

> … an underlying characteristic of a person which enables them to deliver superior performance in a given job role or situation. (p51)

Following from this definition is the consequence that a teacher's performance does not directly confirm whether they have or do not have the competency identified. It is evidence towards inferring that they may have it when added to further evidence that would illustrate the 'underlying' characteristic or as Eraut describes it – the macro-competency. This enables the notion of 'micro-competences' which can be formulated as exemplars of the types of practice 'expected' by the Teachers' Standards document. Then when the teacher's performance or practice is competent in the sense that it is meeting the expectations of the school then it can be inferred that they have the meta-competencies and are skilled practitioners.

The Teacher Standards are not in this sense therefore a list of competences as they were formulated by the Review Body (Coates, 2011) with a different remit,

> The new standards are intended to set out a clear baseline of
> expectations for the practice of all teachers, from the point of qualification
> onwards. (p8)

and,

> The Review has been clear that it is not the task of standards to
> prescribe in detail what "good" or "outstanding" teaching should look like; that
> decision is best made by ITT providers, teachers and headteachers
> themselves. The standards should provide a clear framework within which
> those users can exercise their professional judgement as relevant to context,
> roles and responsibilities. (p9)

The Teaching Standards (2011) document itself states,

> Following the period of induction, the standards continue to define the level of
> practice at which all qualified teachers are expected to perform. Teachers'
> performance is assessed against the standards as part of the new appraisal
> arrangements in maintained schools. (p 3)

Standards as described in the document therefore describe 'expectations' which are to be

interpreted in a normative way in relation to the teacher's performance – in other words the

school management determines what counts as 'a good performance of the teachers'

standards here'.

The knowledge base for teaching that makes its professional status and training requirements

apparent is difficult to clearly describe. One way, as suggested above, is to set it out as a list

of competencies with criteria by which a practitioner becomes a 'master' performer. An

alternative is the more hierarchical structuring of levels of expertise for the practitioner.

It can be argues that much professional structuring of levels of expertise for the practitioner.

rent is difficult As Eraut (1994) says,

Teachers' early experiences are characterized by the gradual routinisation of their teaching and this is necessary for them to be able to cope with what would otherwise be a highly stressful situation with a continuing 'information overload'. This routinisation is accompanied by a diminution of self-consciousness and a focusing of perceptual awareness on particular phenomena. Hence, knowledge of how to teach becomes tacit knowledge, something which is not easily explained to others or even to oneself. (p 111)

Oakeshott (2001) makes a clear distinction between two types of knowledge. Knowledge that is derived from practice is described as practical knowledge and knowledge that is technical is that which is capable of written codification. This distinction is then built on by Argyris and Schon (1974) who argue that 'theories-in-use' based on practical knowledge are different from the 'espoused-theories' that the teacher would use to explain their actions to others and even to themselves when they are in the 'reflective' mode. This 'gap' between theory and practice is an unavoidable characteristic of the teacher reality. Eraut (1994) makes use of Buchleres a clear dis Method to make clear how teaching fits into each of the types depending upon the res a clear dis Method to make clear how teaching fits into each of the types ved from practice is described as practical knowledge and knowledge that is technical is that whnd time. Eraut (1994) summarises Buchler in the following way (p66),

Mode of conduct	Established Practice	Established Practice Modified idiosyncratically	Idiosyncratic Private Practice
Mode of Use	As Prescribed	Prescribed with Discretion to Adapt	Unique and Intuitive
Context of Use	Definable Expected Circumstances	Acknowledged Range of Situations	Any situation where feasible

Expected Outcomes	Particular outcomes envisaged	Wide Range of Familiar Outcomes Expected	Relatively novel outcomes
	TECHNOLOGY	CRAFT	ART

Figure *5: The 'Gap' between Theory and Practice*

Eraut (1994) argues for the middle column (nd Practice to make clear how teaching fits into each of the types ved from practice is described as practical knowledgxt of a classroom. He goes on to argue:

> Learning to read a situation and adapt one's behaviour accordingly is likely to be promoted by reflective theorizing, whether or not the behaviour is perceived as principle-based or rule-following. (p.67)

The 'craft' view of teaching is further supported by the Communities of Practice approach which argues for an agreed version of competent performance that the new teacher is inducted into through a form of apprenticeship. It is not a 'technology' because it is clearly a practice that has to be individually translated into a practical reality - there always exists an evaluative and normative aspect to it. This is made explicit in the 'reflective-practitioner' view of teaching. The distinction that Eraut (1994) draws between actions that may be ly translated into a practical reality - there always exists an evaluative and normative aspect to it. This is made explicit in the individually translated into a practical reality - there always exists an evaluative afitness' to the practitioners belief systems is not developed but it is important in that it could be argued that much of educational practice is an amalgam of both. Educational practices cannot be solely viewed in e and normative aspect to it. Thisvalue judgements on the part of the teacher as part of their realisation. Nor would it be appropriate to see educational decision making as 'an idiosyncratic private practice' as teaching is clearly

a socially agreed 'discipline' with its approved repertoire of strategies. The complex range of

decisions that the teacher makes as they interact with the class they teach is infused with

value judgements as priorities and selections are made. Each individual decision is embedded

in a wider n codification. This ue laden. The speed in which the decision has to be made and

the cognitive and affective aspects of that judgment are considered in Eraut's model (p. 149)

elaborated (2005) as:

Type of Process	TIME		
	Mode of Cognition	Mode of Cognition	Mode of Cognition
Reading the Situation	Pattern recognition	Rapid interpretation	Review involving discussions and/or analysis
Decision-making	Instant response	Intuitive	Deliberative with some analysis or discussion
Overt activity	Routinised action	Routines punctuated by rapid decisions	Planned actions with periodic progress reviews
Metacognitive	Situational awareness	Implicit monitoring Short, reactive reflections	Conscious monitoring of though and activity. Self-management. Evaluation

Figure 6: Teacher Decision Making

The teacher has a repertoire of educational practices that defines their professionalism. When they move between schools they need to, through the transition period, adapt their repertoire to the new situation. Some aspects may be able to be directly transferred, others may need some alterations whilst there may be some that no longer apply and there may be more that the teacher is initially unfamiliar with and will need to learn. This understanding will occur within the frameworks introduced above, in the actual teaching situation, and will be experienced subjectively as a 'change experience' and will then need to be further analysed as a process in itself beyond the content of the practices as they are modified or added to. This is the teacher's reflective practitioner thought processes.

2.5   Transitions between mainstream and special schools

Transitions are recognizable movements that involve a new environment and role for the teachers and are understood as events that mark changes in their professional career 'journey' and can be distinguished from more localized movements or transfers as they impact on that teacher's identity and sense of agency as well as their knowledge and skill base. The transition can be seen externally as the movement of the teacher from one setting to another and then, as this study aims to do, and internally – as transformational learning experienced by the teacher. Jarvis (2006) writes,

> Our experience occurs at the intersection of the inner self and the outer world and so learning always occurs at this point of interaction, usually when the two are in some tension, even dissonance, which I have called …. 'disjuncture'. In fact, the desire to overcome this sense of dissonance and to return to a state of harmony might be seen as a fundamental motivating force in learning, and the disjunctural state may be said to be one in which a need has to be satisfied. (p. 7)

So for Jarvis (2006),

> It is clear that almost all learning is experiential, the only exception being pre-conscious learning. (p. 184)

Kolb (1993) locates theories of learning that are based on experience as being a third group distinct from those that are derived from empirical or behavioural principles and those that are rationalist or idealist (cognitive or constructivist). Kolb (1993) sets out a number of axioms that set the framework for experiential theories, he has an emphasis on the here-and ms that set t experience of the agent as a means to validate their ideas or abstract conceptualisations of the process so that it can be shared and re-used and then he highlights the importance of feedback processes. He then selects the developmental or transformational nature of the learning that shifts the agenthat shifts the transformational nature of the lear.

The teacher experiences a disjunction, a cognitive dissonance, between their expectation of the   teaching situation and the professional practice they can utilise from the repertoire they have at their disposal. This will occur at different levels as they appraise their practice and self-review in terms of their self-efficacy in their role.

Eraut (1994) elaborates on the concept of 'skill' in order to explain in more detail the type of practice that is being explored. Eraut defines skilled behaviour as,

> ... A complex sequence of actions which has become so routinised through practice that experience that it is performed almost automatically. For example, much of what a teacher does is skilled behaviour. This is largely acquired through practice with feedback, mainly feedback from the effect of one's actions on classes and individuals... Teachers' early experiences are characterised by the gradual routinisation of their teaching and this is necessary for them to be able to cope with what would otherwise be a highly stressful situation with a continuing 'information overload'. This routinisation is accompanied by a diminution of self-consciousness and a focusing of perceptual awareness on particular phenomenon. Hence, knowledge of how to teach becomes tacit knowledge, something which is not easily explained to others. (p 111)

Eraut (2004) refers to transfers of skills that are straightforward as there is a communality of contextual factors as a 'low road transfer' and a transfer where this is not possible and which requires the teacher to use higher order cognitive processes in order to rework and adapt their skills as a 'high road transfer'. Transferring from mainstream teaching into special school teaching would be a 'high road transfer'. This would lead to the teacher needing to go through a series of cognitive processes that puts together previous knowledge into an abstract generalised system with an understanding of the new situation so that it can be re-framed to fit these circumstances.

It is this process that forms the core of this study. For the individual teacher it will be experienced psychologically as a 'stressful' period because of the complexity of the teaching situation with its information overload and their own less efficient 'tacit' knowledge that is not providing them with the strategies that help them to adjust to the novel teaching situation they face. In Personal Construct Theory terms their constructs are being challenged by their new teaching situation and consequently they will experience a range of emotions until they amend their constructs. This process of change takes the teacher beyond the conventional learning cycle set out by Dewey (1938) and developed by Kolb (1984).

Observe   Reflect

Act   Plan
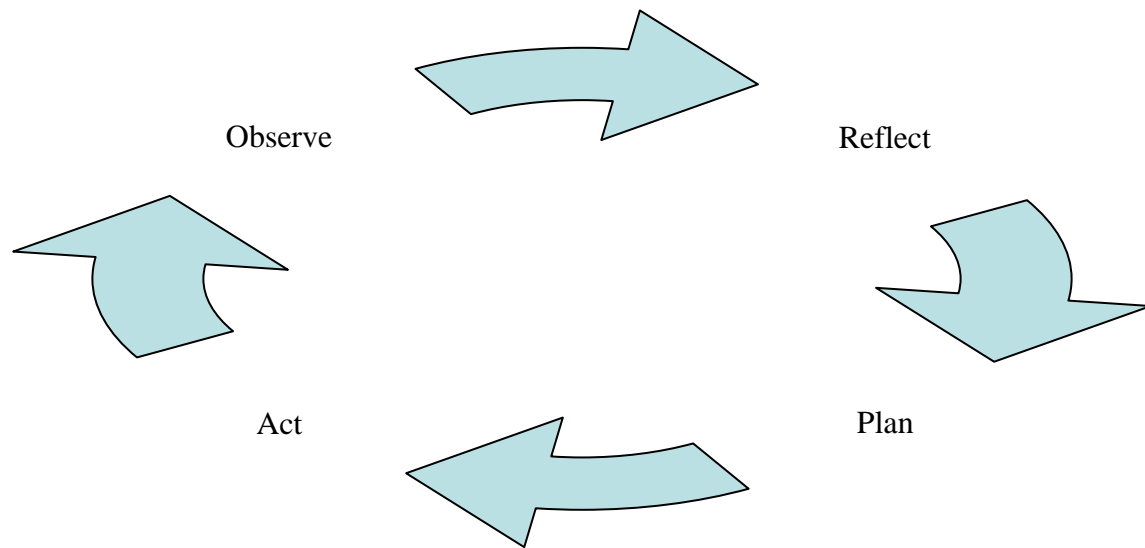
Figure *7: Kolb's Learning Cycle*

The teacherLearning Cycle and plans need to extend beyond the repertoire they have available to them based upon their experience in the mainstream school. Argyris and Schon (1978) introduce the addition of 'double -loop learning' to illustrate the additional work that the teacher must do in questioning their assumptions and the basis for what they have been doing given that it's not effective in the new situation. Argyris and Schon (1974) argue that the internal models that the teacher may have will be described in two ways – as a 'theory of action' and as a 'theory in use'. The former is the espoused theory that the teacher believes they adhere to and the latter is the actual theory to which their behavior accords. Reflection by the teacher on their behavior would reveal the differences. The process the teacher would undergo is,
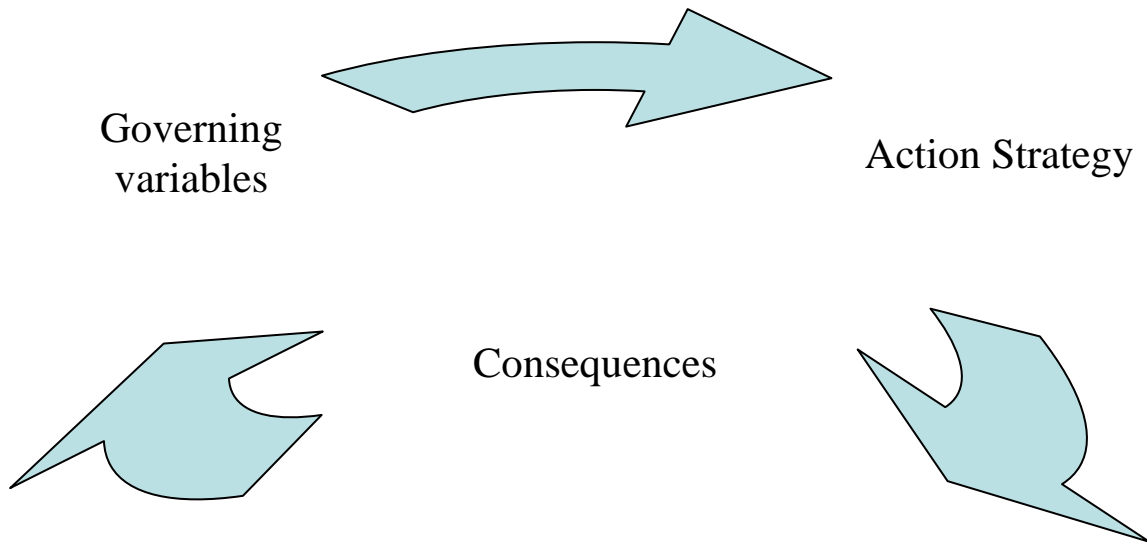
Figure 8: Single-Loop learning

This is single-loop learning as the teacher corrects their mistakes within the classroom when their application of their teaching competencies has consequences they did not intend. Double-loop learning occurs when the teacher changes the governing variables that frame the teaching strategies and begin to transform their mental models that are applied in the classroom as a consequence of the needs of the learners before them.

Senge et al (2005) believe that even double loop learning will not seriously change a teacher's behaviour because they believe it will stay reactive to the perceived reality. The change required needs to go beyond the current reality and imagine or visualize a future reality. This is to take seriously the question that arises from the theory that the teacher's reality is socially constructed in which they play a part and therefore it is changed by the joint commitment of individual people to bring about a differently 'socially constructed' future. It takes up Martin Buber's (1958) argument that 'experience' is always felt as having happened and is reflected upon and n double loop learning will not seriously change a teacher's behaviour because they beof thinking the approach is always one of roach is

reflected upon and n double loop learning will. In contrast Buber and Senge are looking to the moment when the educational practice occurs which is when the teacher is in a direct relationship with the learners and they are together shaping the social reality of the classroom. The choice making that the teacher undertakes in that moment is determined primarily by their ethical commitment to teaching and this will then bring into play their range of strategies and programmes that they can apply to their educational practice. This immediacy relates to the ethical content of teaching within which the teachers' decision making and is formed by their notions of worthwhileness. The ethical dimension to teaching is realised in the co-construction of the social reality if the classroom. The teacher leads this and that gives them the moral responsibility to act in within an educational ethic. Otherwise they are manipulators of a power imbalance between themselves and the learners which could then be used to attain non-educational objectives.

Elliot (2001) reminds us of Stenhouse's breakdown of teaching into four interrelated processes which enable the teacher to understand and work within an ethical framework that values education and the role they play in the lives of the pupils in their classrooms. This analysis links to the one made earlier that differentiated between pedagogy and instruction. For Stenhouse the four processes are; training, instruction, initiation and induction. Training relates to acquisition of specific skills and is very relevant within the special school curriculum where clear targets are important in enabling successful learning to occur. Instruction is more concepts based and requires the retention of information and again clear target setting is required within the special school for learners to be able to progress. Training and instruction together are the 'instruction' mentioned earlier. Then initiation and induction are the pedagogy. Initiation relates to the personal and social learning that underpins the

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learner functioning independently and confidently in the range of learning environments they may find themselves in. Induction refers to the deeper thought systems of the culture that underlies the curriculum disciplines both in content and processes in other words both a critical understanding of the conceptual frameworks of the

academic disciplines and a meta-cognitive awareness of the skills and aptitudes needed to operate within them. For teachers in special schools for pupils with learning difficulties this aspect of teaching is the most challenging and has to build upon the other processes first. Invariably the school curriculum and the specialist educational programmes for the learners will place on the teacher the task of judging how to use their teaching to maximise the pupil of judging hoThis learning takes place in the interaction between the learner and the teacher and they both co-create the future in the sense that the learner is able to demonstrate having 'invented' and 'produced' new actions in Dewey's (1938) model of active learning. This process has been re-formulated by Senge et al (2005) as the following model which they argue is a deeper level of learning than the more superficial one described by Dewey,

Sensing

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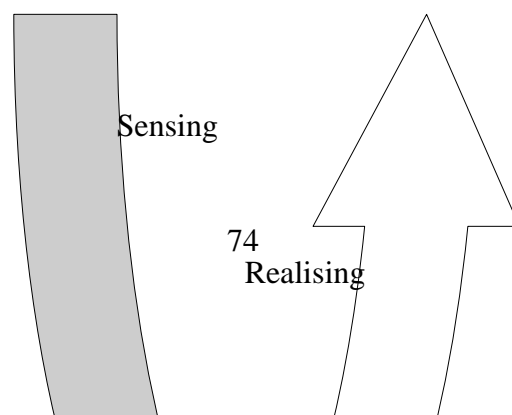
Realising

Figure 9: The Sensing, Presencing and Realising Model

In this model the learner follows a process that begins with attending, listening and concentrating in the problem, stimulus or task, what is called her and they both co-create the future in the sense that the learner is able to demonstrate having arner isd' and 'produced' new actions in Dewey's (1938encing'. Finally they work their way to realizing the new learning in their performances through taking action and testing out and enacting what the new learning is like and how it feels. This model is about 'transformative' learning in that the learner and the teacher are both in a changed relationship and a shared understanding of their world as a consequence and this requires the teacher to utilize their pedagogic resources for its achievement. This is contrasted with the teacher equipping the learner with new skills (training) or knowledge (instruction) that has increased their capacity to be successful but has not changed them in terms of their self-identity as a person.

This is a helpful model for the situation of the teacher faced with a new learning environment. When for them it could be that the many if not all of the variables in the teaching context are changed ' new actions in Dewey's (1938encing'. Finally they workg outcomes, the community of practice and so forth. The learning process for them will be one of a practical e of ul model, as that is the nature of teaching, but how it feels personally to the

teacher may well be like this model which is representative of the them it could be that the

many if not all of the variables in the teaching es,

> The changed and more experienced person is the major outcome of learning hich is
> representative of the them it could be that the many if not all of the variables in the
> teaching es,text are changed – the learners, the teacher, the curriculum, the lea an
> existential phenomenon. (p. 132)

Mezirow (2009) who has developed the concept of 'transformative learning' in his work

describes it as a metacognitive process of understanding that involves both the learner's

reflective experience and their reasoned dialogue with colleagues (p 93). The learner has to

reflect critically on the beliefs and assumptions they hold about their practice, they have to

engage with the practical 'trying out' and learn by experience 'what works' and this happens

as they participate in discussions with more experienced practitioners.

3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This study focused on the experiences of teachers making the change from mainstream

teaching to special school teaching. The transition was explored through the reflections of the

teachers who had undergone this change in their career through a series of semi-structured

interviews. The purpose of this research was to present the findings in such a way as they can

inform the process for the teachers in the future and support a more effective transition

experience. The justification for this approach will be made through a series of in-depth

explorations of the nature of the forms of explanation provided by this method and the

advantages and disadvantages of the means undertaken to collect it.

Elliot (2001) argues,

> The primary role of educational research, when understood as research directed towards the improvement of educational practice, is not to discover contingent connections between a set of classroom activities and pre-standardised learning outputs, but to investigate the conditions for realizing a coherent educational process in particular practical contexts. (p 567)

This study uses of a form of 'case- study' or series of case studies which provides for Elliot

(2001),

> … the context of research directed towards the improvement of educational practice, teachers need to be involved in prioritising their educational aims in a given situation, in defining what is to count as relevant evidence of the extent to which they are being realized and interpreting its practical significance for them. (p 567)

The case for researching educational practice is that it provides good quality evidence, that in

its interpretation, offers a chance of being useful to teachers in the future because it is framed

in a language and a context that they can relate to.

Two issues are at stake here, firstly the relation of educational research to teacher's practice

and secondly what form educational research ought to take to be of potential value to the

practice of teachers.

McIntyre (2005) argues that at the heart of these problems lie the different kinds of

knowledge that teachers use in their teaching in contrast to the type of knowledge that

research produces. The distinction between knowledge that relates to curriculum, assessment,

child development, special educational needs and other contextual issues that relate to the

children in the class are different from the knowledge that the teacher utilizes in their

pedagogy.

> The pedagogical knowledge required by teachers … has to be such as to enable them
> to address the context specific and indeed unique characteristics of every class, pupil,
> lesson and situation with which they have to deal. (p. 359)

And

> Teachers depend on their own, often very individual 'schemata' for recognizing
> classes or pupils in situations as being similar to others they have dealt with before,
> each schema incorporating a range of more-or-less remembered individual cases, and
> on corresponding repertoires of actions that have seemed to work in some
> circumstances in the past. (p.359)

This notion of 'schemata' is similar to 'personal construct theory' and is linked to Laird-

Johnson's (1983) theory of 'mental models' in that they have a predictive function in the

problem solving strategies of the teacher.

Norwich and Lewis (2005) similarly recognised the differences between pedagogy and the

knowledge base of the teacher that informs their practice. There is an interplay between the

two and there are sub-divisions in the non-pedagogic knowledge base that the teacher draws

upon but the essential point is that research informs the knowledge base rather than the

teacher's pedagogy. This means that the teacher's 'knowledge how' to, for example improve

their transition experience from one setting to another, is not informed by research that is

'knowledge that' for example an induction programme containing certain elements derived

from a survey of such programmes is successful when measured by certain criteria. Research

is impersonal and simplifies whereas the teacher's practice is personal and complex. This

research attempts to overcome this dilemma by recognizing the continuum in teacher's

reflections on their practice which McIntyre (2005) lists as,

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    i.   Craft knowledge for classroom teaching

    ii.   Articulation of craft knowledge

    iii.   Deliberative or reflective thinking for classroom teaching

    iv.   Classroom action research

    v.   Knowledge generated by research schools and networks

    vi.   Practical suggestions for teaching based on research

    vii.   Reviews of research on particular themes

    viii. Research findings and conclusions (p. 361)

The research presented here will make some practical suggestions for the support of the transition experience for teachers, as perceived by these teachers, moving from mainstream schools to special schools that are based on the evidence collected within the research. Day's 'Four modes of reflective practice' (2004, p 119-122) that a teacher might use adds a further dimension to the formalized frame   work set out above which locates the teacher's reflection on a continuum that extends towards structured research. For Day the committed professional teacher necessarily reflects on their teaching day as the means by which their practice is embedded in their actions and the reality of the classroom is maintained – this level of reflection is unlikely to lead to changes in practice and is non-critical. The second level is based on the teacher reflecting on 'critical incidents' and this is when the teacher does undertake critical thought in terms of their practice, their assumptions, opinions or theories because of an event or series of events within their teaching experience. The third level is when the teacher turns their reflections on their practice into a narrative to make sense of a series of complex events over time. The research is looking at this level of teacher reflection and probing it. The fourth level is the formalized action research process which

includes rigorous reflection and critical dialogue with the teacher's perceptions of their practice.

'Evidence-based practice' has been the aim of educational research since Hargreaves (1996) set the challenge and argued that the teaching professional ought to learn from the medical profession and explicitly prioritise and replicate 'what works best' based upon research evidence. This has been repeated recently by Goldacre (2013) and Haynes et al (2012) who strongly believe that the model of the randomized controlled trial provides the best guidance as to which interventions work best. The examples provided to support their case tend to be non-educational and are simply comparing a group who had the 'intervention' with a group who carried on with the programme that had been in place previously. Pre and post intervention measures were taken and a conclusion drawn on the effectiveness of the intervention. The ethical issue remains as to whether in an educational intervention you can 'deprive' one group, irrespective of the theoretical defense that you do not know the outcomes when you begin, because you cannot regain the time lost to the learners nor undo the outcomes of the experiment. It seems unlikely that the trouble would be gone to undertake a full randomized controlled trial if the intervention was not thought to be of any benefit, consequently the ethical dilemma cannot be resolved. In addition there would always remain the problem of the interpretation of the data as education is necessarily a complex process that for the trial would have to be simplified for measurement purposes. This then leads to worries that the tools that measure the outcomes are inadequate to the claims of the intervention and that it could be argued that the outcomes were a consequence of other factors external to the trial itself.

Thomas (2011) argues that the process of 'abduction' or abductive reasoning leads the

researcher to an explanation resulting from the close examination of the particular cases in

the study. He says,

> Abduction is making a judgement concerning the best explanation for the facts you
> are collecting. (p.212)

Evers and Wu (in Bridges and Smith , 2007) add,

> In this type of reasoning, the justification of a generalization relies on the fact that it
> explains the observed empirical data and no other alternative hypothesis offers a
> better explanation of what has been observed. (p 200)

Gorard and Taylor (2004) call this a 'warrant' for the validity of the argument that leads from

the evidence to the conclusion. To be warranted it needs to move from a valid data set to the

conclusion and for it to be able to stand up to criticism.

This research moves teacher's craft based knowledge to more deliberative and reflective

thinking and then feeds back to them some of the research based knowledge that the study

has evidenced. This cycle of knowledge production is supportive of the impact the research

can have in the practice of the teachers and through their impact on the management of their

schools in relation to future teachers undergoing a transition from mainstream teaching to the

special school.

This leads on to the challenging issue that questions the objectivity and reliability of the

conclusions drawn from it and this can be at a number of levels – philosophical, the

sociological, psychological and the methodological. The following sections outline the

rationale for this approach.
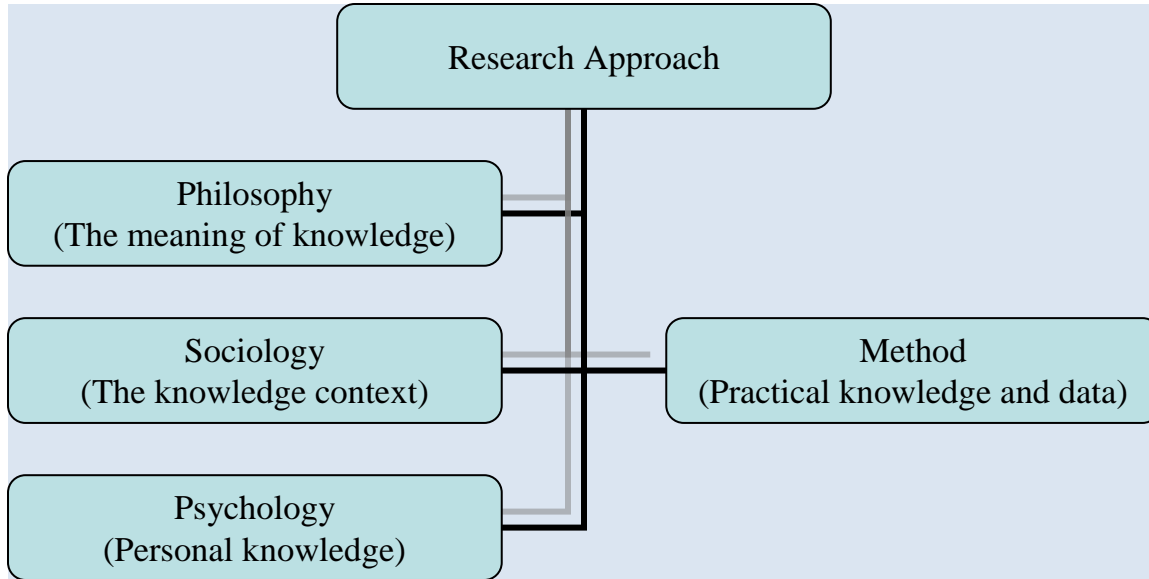
Figure 10: The Research Approach

3.2 Philosophy and the meaning of knowledge

As Pring (2000) states the object of study within educational research is 'educational

practice'. W. Carr (1995) draws attention to the way that 'educational practice' is used to

refer to,

> … an activity undertaken in order to acquire certain capacities and skills
> ('teaching practice') and to an activity which demonstrates that these
> competencies and skills have been acquired ('good practice') (p 61)

It is further contrasted with a third view, that of taking a purely 'theoretical' view of

education which W. Carr (1995) demonstrates is incoherent unless it is recognized that all

practice is necessarily theory-laden – in two ways, in that a teacher has to operate within a

conceptual framework and that also a teacher can be guided by a theory which they believe

will be helpful in their practice.

W. Carr (1995) further concludes,

> … educational practice can never be guided by theory alone. This is because
> 'theory', whether implicit and tacit or explicit and overt, is always a set of

general beliefs, while 'practice' always involves taking action in a particular situation. Although practice may be guided by some implicit theoretical principles about what, in general, ought to be done, the decision to invoke or apply such principles in any particular situation cannot itself be guided or determined by theoretical beliefs. (p63)

W. Carr (1995) then goes on to argue that an educational practice is not a matter of 'knowing how' to do something (teach) in the form that Ryle (1978) sets out. Ryle (1978) makes the distinction between 'knowing how' and 'knowing that' with the former being in a sense prior to the latter so that the formulation of knowledge in language about educational practice follows the demonstration of that knowledge in the actions of the teacher. Additionally W. Carr (1995) argues that educational practice is an ethical activity in that it intrinsically relates to notions of 'good'. The teacher's practice needs to be a series of actions that are both efficacious and worthwhile. This point is reiterated by D. Carr (2003),

> … good education and teaching are expressive not of some theory-based repertoire of technical skills and competences, but of a fundamental form of moral association in which all human agents are engaged by virtue of social membership. (p266)

Taking as the basic unit of educational research the 'educational practice' might well mean to posit this as the 'fact' that is to be explained. This entails claims about a social reality containing social 'facts' that exist independently of the observer and therefore need to be shown to be based on evidence. However this social reality might also be described as complex. Radford (2008) describes the social reality of the school classroom as multifaceted with a multitude of levels of analysis including parts that are unstructured, parts with an historical context and containing elements within it of 'causal' or explanatory type relations. Pring (2000) argues,

> An educational practice … is a transaction between a teacher and a learner within

a framework of agreed purposes and underlying procedural values (p.28)

This builds upon the framework set by Peters (1974) who defines education as the,

> … intentional bringing about of a desirable state of mind in a morally unobjectionable manner. (p.27)

and

> … for 'education' implies that a man's outlook is transformed by what he knows. (p.31)

This is also repeated in D. Carr (2003),

> … education and teaching are construed as moral relations in which positive self-transformation is presupposed to improvement of others … (p266)

Social reality is distinct from physical reality in the sense argued by Searle (1999) as it is 'observer-dependent'. Searle (1999) has three components for a social reality that then becomes an institutional reality (as would be occurring within a school – the setting for the educational practices) that together describe how it can be observer-dependent and also in a meaningful way – objective. Searle (1999) begins with the concept of intentionality. Intentionality is the,

> … general term for all the various forms by which the mind can be directed at, or be about, or of, objects and states of affairs in the world. (p. 85)

And then he adds,

> Whenever you have people co-operating, you have collective intentionality. (p. 120)

Then by giving a relationship, or an object, or a set of social arrangements a function we assign meanings to our social world that combine a form of causal explanation with a teleological one – a purpose. In this way argues Searle (1999) we build up the picture of our social world such that it is meaningful to us in the way that the physical world is causally

meaningful. Finally we then assign rules and define the activity by the rules that operate

within it. Thus, as a consequence of these three moves we have a 'constructed' social world

that is 'real'.

Thus Searle (1999) and Pring (2004) have argued that it is possible to have a social reality

that is both independent and observer-dependent. It is independent in the sense that Pring

describes namely that there is an objective process that must be followed in order to make

truthful claims about that social reality. Pring (2004) argues these that,

> First, it signifies that what is said is in tune with the world as it really is; it is not
> product of my (purely subjective) whim or wishes. Second, an enquiry is
> 'objective' in that it takes the necessary and appropriate steps to get at that
> objective state of affairs … they include, for example, examination of the   evidence,
> testing one's conclusions against experience, ensuring that the account   is coherent
> and not self-contradictory, subjecting it to the critical scrutiny of   others. (p.213)

This meshes with the case made by Searle (1999) that the nature of social reality necessarily

contains the notion that it is structured by human minds but in a way that is not the

personalised achievement of each of us. As Searle (1999) describes the issue in its

philosophically technical terms,

> Our main problem … is to explain how there can be an epistemically objective social
> reality that is partly constituted by an ontologically subjective set of attitudes. (p.113)

Searle (1999) develops the theory of 'background' to explain how socially constructed reality

operates without an existence independent of agents.

Evidence means the presentation of empirical data to justify, refute or verify knowledge

claims. These knowledge claims will be presented in the form of theory and will need to be

tested once they are translated into the discourse that enables them to be situated within the

teacher's reflective practice. As Pring (2000) says there is a need to 'institutionalise

criticism' to enable this process to occur.

Then to justify what sorts of evidence support such claims there needs to be an agreed process. A process that sets out the agreed rules for matching and justifying the forms that evidence can take which answer the arguments that the sceptical or critical reader would make.

Therefore the presentation of the evidence must have both an internal coherence and an external one – it must be true to itself and to the shared social reality.

Key to the nature of the claims is the status of their truth and therefore what knowledge we gain from accepting them as substantiated. It is a qualified correspondence view of truth in the sense that although it is the case that the reality being investigated may be so complex that any one person's view necessarily may be discrepant with another's nevertheless there still remains a reality to which all the knowledge claims are directed.

Peters (1977) describes Dewey's combination of a 'structured' reality within an 'intentionalist' framework as a restructuring of experiences which add to the meaning of the experience and which also increase the ability for the experiencing agent to direct the course of subsequent experiences.

This adds the final piece to the complicated jigsaw puzzle that makes the educational research rationale. This links the 'what' to the 'how' and the 'why'.

Intentionality – the
giving of a function to an
aspect of our reality – an
educational practice

Making the function
meaningful in a
purposeful as well as
causal way – making
sense of the educational
practice

Assigning rules to the
educational practice that
are a shared
understanding with
others – constructing the
educational practice
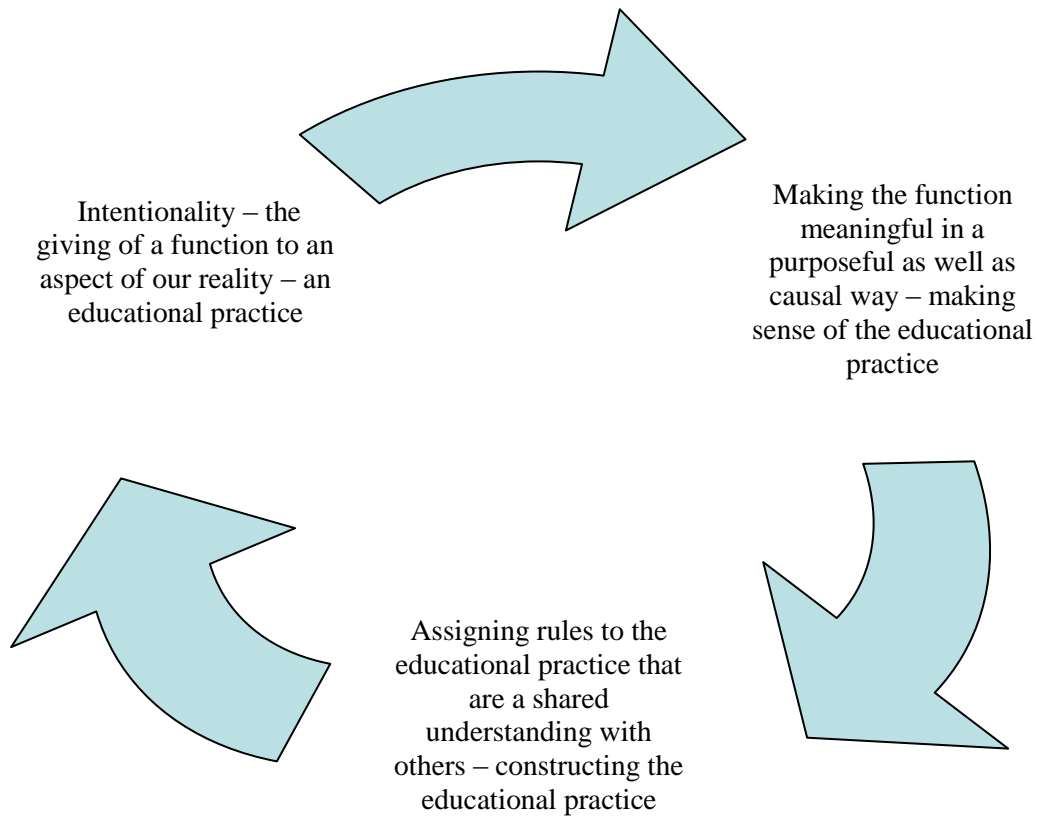
Figure 11: The Educational Research Rationale

Research needs to be practitioner orientated so that it both utilises the 'insider' knowledge of

the teacher and it is 'useful' for the development and improvement of the profession. Being

useful need not mean 'what works' rather it could just as well mean that which clarifies a

problematic area or re-defines a situation – an increase in knowledge may not lead directly to

a measurable outcome as it may impact in a different time-frame and in an altered context to

that directly referred to in the research.

Educational settings are complex in the sense that the unpredictability of these social

situations with their range of actors, intentions, beliefs, social experiences means that the

view that clear causal relations can be predicted and controlled such that outcomes can be

socially engineered is not possible. It is possible nevertheless to hypothesise causal links of a

weaker nature which account for aspects of the complexity as it is still possible to come to

conclusions that are stronger in possibility than others. This is both a common-sense and a

research based aspect of knowledge because without it the possibility of teaching as defined

above would not be possible.

Pring (2000) says

> The background knowledge of social context and structure is a kind of causal factor
> as it enters into the determining intentions of the agent. But this will only explain
> what happens in a tentative and provisional way, since the growing consciousness if
> the learner enables him to overcome what otherwise would be determinants of his
> behaviour. (p. 70)

This applies both to the pupils and to the teachers as they are both learners within the

classroom. The teachers will operate with a range of common-sense and technical

explanations about their experiences which will need to be explored as the starting point of

the enquiry. The development of this discourse so that it describes, explores and investigates

the shared social reality of the educational practice will become the evidence of the research.

The theory that is derived from the investigation of this discourse will need to enhance and

illuminate the practitioner derived discourse such that it can restructure and direct the

understandings of the teachers and improve practice.

This form of practical knowledge that is in a form of flux, the teacher co-constructs with

others in their learning environment through the interplay of formal codified knowledge,

contextual, shared experience and reflection at different levels of sophistication is also

referred to as 'praxis' – Aristotle's practical knowledge in the tripartite division of

knowledge that he described (Barnes, 2000)

3.3 Sociology and the context for knowledge

It is possible to make greater sense of this philosophical background by using Bourdieu's (Jenkins, 1992) sociological concept of 'habitus'. Atkinson (2010) summarises habitus as,

> ... the agent's action-generating predispositions and schemes of perception based on a tacit anticipation of objective probability. (p 331)

This study intends to use the notions of teacher professionalism, special education, the culture of the school and self-identity as the means to illuminate how the teacher adapts to the changes in their educational practice that follow from the transfer from mainstream to special school education. These are the teacher's 'schemes of perception' that they use to make sense of their world and also that frames their actions in that world.

The 'communities of practice' theory of Wenger (1998) helps to provide a way of realising how the 'habitus' structures actions and also works to support the 're-structuring' of future actions. The dispositions are both durable in that they last over time and are transposable across a range of settings (Maton, p 51). This dynamic process is situated within the 'field' or school and is affected by the power relationships that determine the roles of the teachers and their access to resources and control. This in turn will be moderated by the individual teachers 'store' of cultural capital which is used by them to negotiate within the school's culture. This process will be experienced by the teacher as the way in which they understand their teaching role within the school and then how they evaluate their effectiveness in that role.

In Communities of Practice theory this process is explored in depth as it focusses on both

these aspects of the teacher's practice - their identity and their competence. Wenger (1998)

states,

> ... The primary focus of this theory is on learning as social participation.
> Participation here refers not just to local events of engagement in certain activities
> with certain people, but to a   more encompassing process of being active
> participants in the practices of social communities and constructing identities in
> relation to these communities. (p 4)

It is through the membership of a social community and participating in its practices that a

person constructs their identity and develops competency.

> Becoming good at something involves developing specialised sensitivities, an
> aesthetic sense, and refined perceptions that are brought to bear on making
> judgements about the qualities of a product or action. That these are shared in a
> community of practice is what allows participants to negotiate the appropriateness
> of what they do. (p 81)

and

> ... a community of practice acts as a locally negotiated regime of competence.
> (p137)

Wenger (1998) is arguing that the teacher joins the community of practice that is the school

through their on-going engagement with their colleagues in what might be a number of sub-

communities. They then develop both their identity as a fellow teacher and their competence

in their professional role. Both are structured within the community of practice. The

community of practice therefore operates as the 'habitus' or the institutional 'background' to

the individual teachers development ' trajectory' as they begin as the new comer and through

time become the experienced hand. This helps Wenger's (1998) theory as the Community of

Practice theory does not explicitly situate or contextualize itself into the politicized

environments when it plays out where differentiated roles, meanings and access to resources

are factors in the 'learning process'.

Wenger (1998) describes three dimensions of competence which are also dimensions of

identity. They help to illustrate how the 'habitus' operates. Firstly there is the skills and

knowledge that enable social interactions to take place and then through which help can be

asked, support sought and feedback provided. The power relationships that roles provide

within the school will also affect this process - the 'field'.

For Wenger (1998),

> We become who we are by being able to play a part in relations of engagement that
> constitute our community. (p 152)

The second dimension is one that relates to the task that the teacher has. This places a very

clear perspective and boundary what they have to do and be. Wenger (1998) says,

> ... an identity in this sense manifests as a tendency to come up with certain
> interpretations, to engage in certain actions, to make certain choices, to value
> certain experiences - all by virtue of participating in certain enterprises. (p 153)

The third dimension is one that refers to the availability of a shared repertoire of actions that

the teacher can draw upon and then adapt for themselves. Wenger (1998) says,

> As an identity, this translates into a personal set of events, references, memories,
> and experiences that create individual relations of negotiability with respect to
> the repertoire of a practice. (p 153)

The study will then explore teacher's responses in interviews to their reflections on the

change processes and how they affected these two central concepts, the teacher's identity and

their competence in their evaluations of their personal experiences.
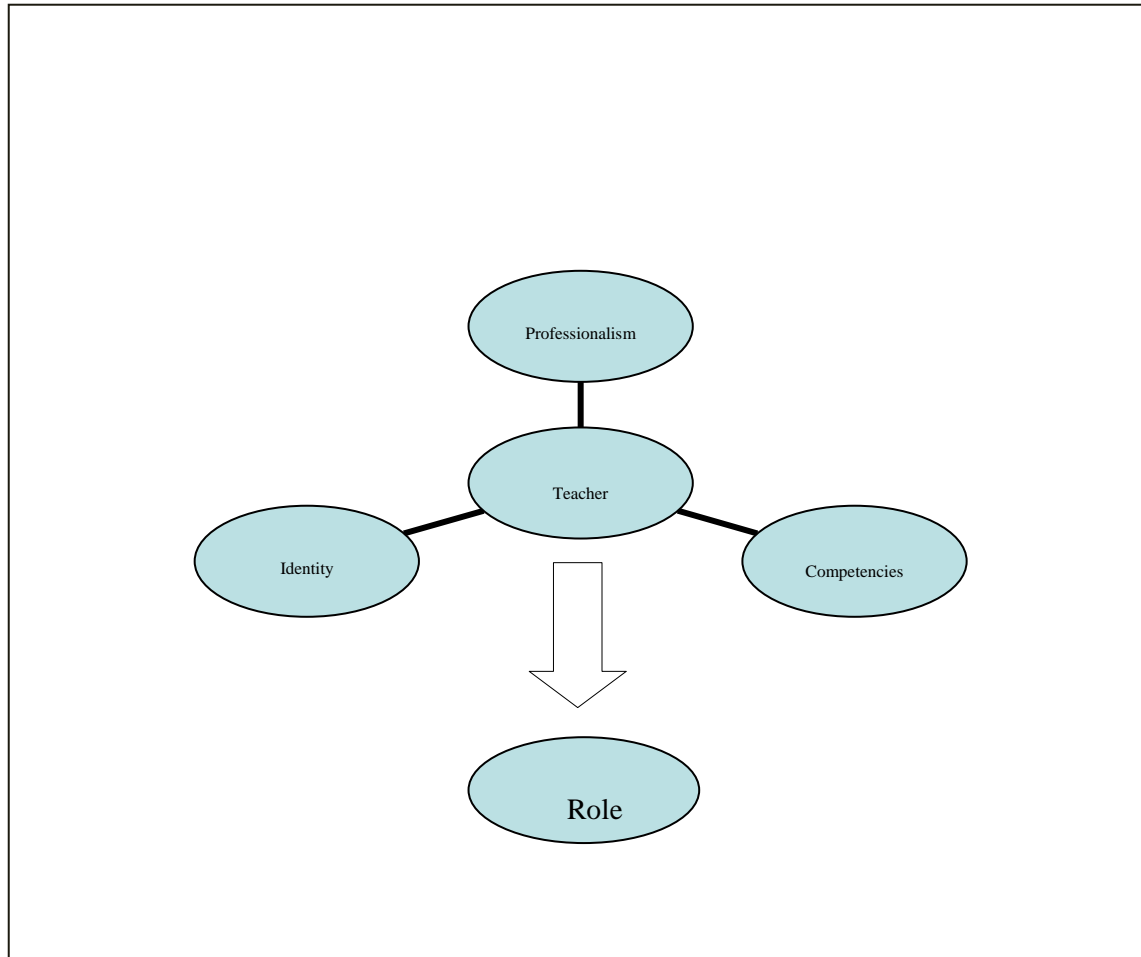
Figure *12: Influences on the Teacher's Role*

'Pedagogy' is a concept that brings together each of these aspects of the teacher's world and

describes the dynamic process that occurs within the classroom which combines them.

The work of Hart et al (2004) presents a version of pedagogy that builds on the notion of

'transformability' in the learner as being central to its meaning. This is then the teacher's

'moral' purpose. They further argue that the teacher needs to have a sense of the power of the

present to affect the future in relation to the assumptions they hold as to the capacity for

learning in the pupils. They argue that the expectation that the teacher holds relating to their

view as to the learner's 'ability' can operate as a self-fulfilling prophesy in that it then forms

the 'future world' and co-creates the outcome it has predicted with the collusion of the

learner. They posit an alternative. If the teacher operates without a fixed notion of the

learner's ability then they will necessarily have to understand the complex play of internal

and external forces that influence learning capacity. This is their model,

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                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │ The teacher's choices and│
                    │ actions – made to bring  │
                    │ about                    │
                    └─────────────────────────┘

┌──────────────────────────────┐              ┌──────────────────────────────┐
│ External forces              │              │ Internal forces              │
│   • Expanded learning        │   ← affects →│   • Enhanced states of mind  │
│     opportunities            │              │   • Limits lifted            │
│   • Limits lifted            │              │   • Increased resources      │
│   • Conditions enhanced      │              │     (knowledge, skills and   │
│                              │              │     understanding)           │
└──────────────────────────────┘              └──────────────────────────────┘

                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │ Increased learning       │
                    │ capacity                 │
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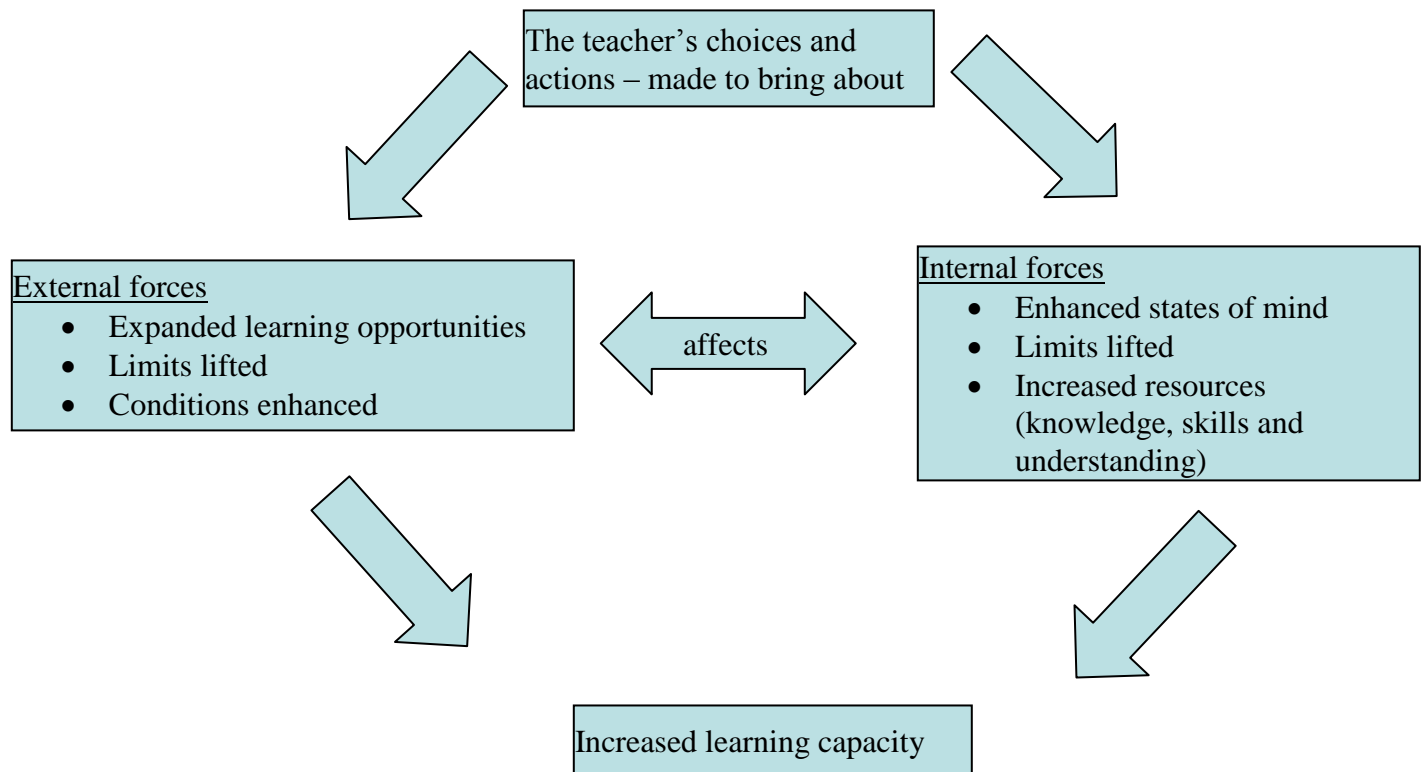
Figure 13: *Transforming learning capacity: the teacher's part of the task (*Hart
et al p169)

This model incorporates,

> The range and quality of learning opportunities provided, and the relationships that
> support and shape learning opportunities, interact with internal subjective states to
> create and constrain capacity to learn. Second, it has a collective as well as an
> individual dimension. Capacity to learn is contained within and constituted by how a
> group of young people operate and work together as a group, and by the opportunities
> and resources made available to them as a group. Third, it includes internal resources

and states of mind in addition to the purely cognitive-intellectual: the capacity to learn in any situation is affected, for example, by the emotional states and feelings of social acceptance and belonging in the school or class group. Fourth, the cognitive aspects are not mysterious inner entities, but are skills and understandings that can be, and have been, learned. Fifth, learning capacity is transformable because the forces that shape it, individually and collectively are, to an extent, within teachers' control. The teachers recognize that they have the power to strengthen and, in time, transform learning capacity by acting systematically to lift limits on learning, to expand and enhance learning opportunities and to create conditions that encourage and empower young people to use the opportunities available to the more fully. (p166-167)

Which then leads to a more complex picture of the structure of the educational practice in which understanding and action around the affective, social and intellectual purposes of the learning task are clarified and incorporated within the experience. The experience is one that the teacher and learner are co-creating, is based on a trust and equality within the learning encounter and is open-ended in its expected outcomes as the learning will be the created out of their respective contributions.

Mezirow's (2000) model of the adult learner is helpful in understanding the process that the teacher within the educational practice is undergoing as a reflective practitioner. Mezirow (2000) argues,

> Learning is understood as the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience as a guide for future action. (p.5)

He then adds,

> Learning may be intentional, the result of deliberate inquiry; incidental, a by-product of another activity involving intentional learning; or mindlessly assimilative. Aspects of both intentional and incidental learning take place outside of learner awareness. (p.5)

And concludes,

> Construal in intentional or incidental learning involves the use of language to articulate our experience to ourselves or to others. (p.5)

This connects the educational practice to the change process within the teacher's actions in the classroom setting. It lies at the root of the case for interviewing to teachers and investigating their reflections on their change experiences.

The work of Precey and Alanson (2009) offers a helpful model for the change experience the teachers are undergoing. They developed a framework that was applied to school leaders following a leadership development course but it lends itself to the experience of the teachers in this research. They argue that transformational learning occurs for the teacher if three elements are brought together. I have kept the names for the three elements but amended the definitions so that they fit this case. The original model was used to understand the transformational learning of school leaders under taking school or system improvement projects. In this study the focus is on teachers moving from school to school without a wider 'improvement' agenda. Consequently the wider range of data and experiences and the scope of the model are not appropriate to this application. The overall structure amended for this instance is useful as it contains the following elements,

- A **unique structure** that is designed for each particular individual. For transformational learning to take place such bespoke programmes (rather than standardised "one size fits all") are required which enables:
- **Praxis** - this involves interrogating practice against relevant theory and research and vice versa leading to:
- **Awakenings**- the transformation of teachers through the experiences explored, and the personal and institutional knowledge sharing that leads to the reconstruction (or even confirmation) of identity (the way the teacher sees her/himself in the role).

Underlying the whole transformation process is a series of values that the teachers share with their Community of Practice – these are around mutual trust and honesty and reliability and the commitment to learning, change and critical reflection on practice.

This model brings together each of the elements within the research process. The individual teacher, the context in which they are working and the change process they are undergoing. It directly links the research study with the intended outcome – in that it formalises the process and differentiates between those that are 'internal' to the teacher both in their practice and their personality, those that are part of the 'induction' programme for the institution and those that are aspects of the culture and ethos operating there.

The model then looks like this,

Adapted
professional
practice as
'praxis'

New Identity and
renewed agency in
role as teacher

Trust
established
between the
teacher and
their
colleagues
and
managers to
enable
reflection on
professional
practice

Teacher
confident in
critically
reflecting on
their
professional
practice

"AWAKENINGS"
- Coming to terms with newness in the
  environment and culture
- Fully involved in Community of
  Practice
- Increased awareness of teaching role
  and responsibility

Bespoke Induction
Programme
- Meetings
- Mentoring
- Coaching
- Information

Practice
- Planning
- Curriculum
- Learning objectives
- Assessment
- Teaching strategies
- Pacing
- Team management
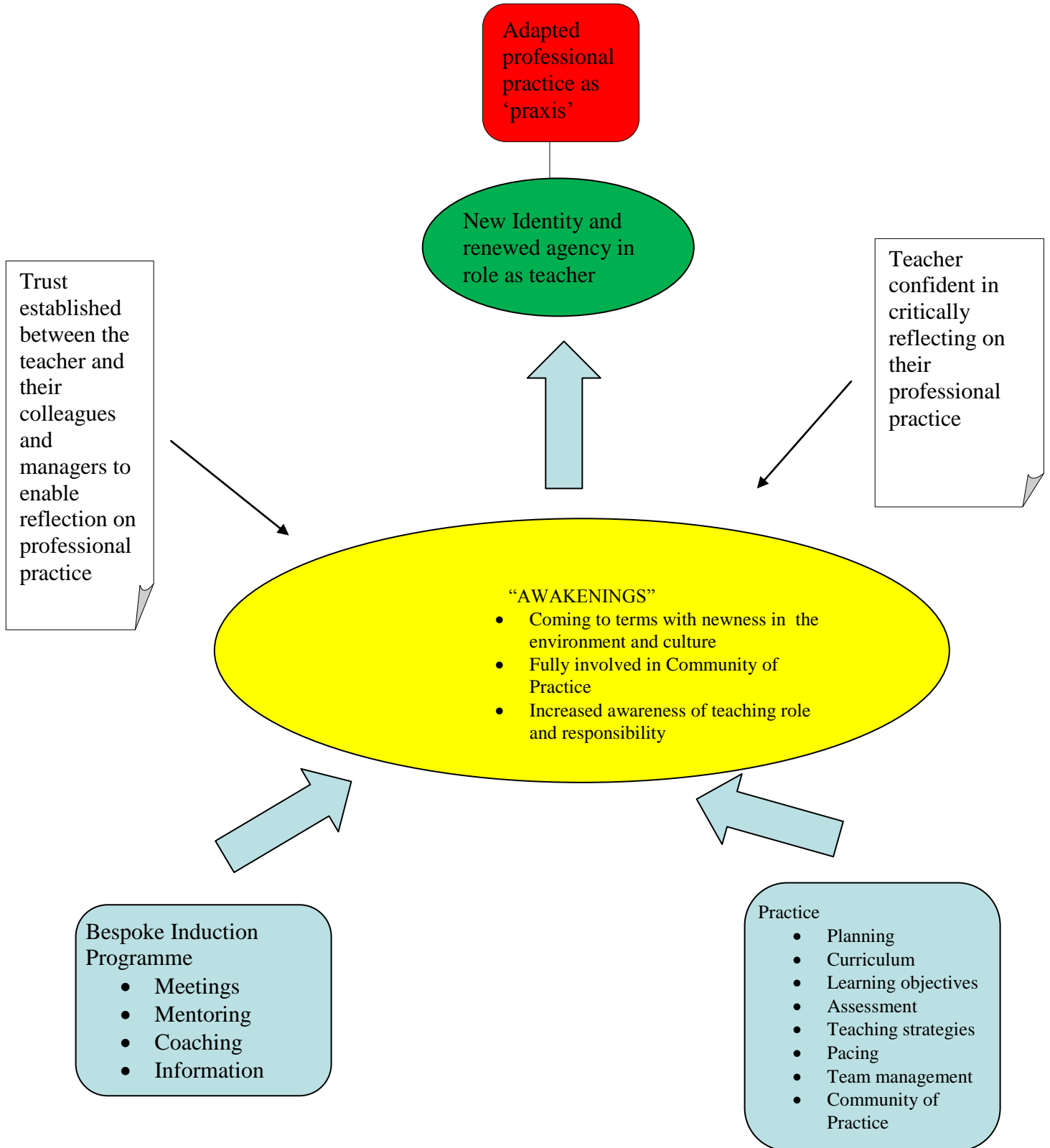- Community of
  Practice

Figure *14: The 'Awakenings' Model*

3.4 Psychological and personal knowledge

The teacher's identity and competence will be key concepts within the focus of this study. Sociological and psychological theories frame our thinking about the 'influences' on the teacher's 'mindset' (Dweck, 2012) and how that influences their actions. Atkinson (2011) criticises educational researchers who have adapted Bourdieu's (Jenkins, 1992) concept of 'habitus' and have added qualifiers to the term like 'institutional-' and 'family-' to try to distinguish between the different effects each have on the educational outcomes. He argues that they are not needed and in fact they confuse matters. By trying to differentiate between two distinct cultures (school and home) they lose the dynamic and individual purpose of the 'habitus' and do not embed it in the 'field' or power allocations. They 'reify' the concepts of institution and family giving them a form of causative influence they could not possess. Rather he argues for the concept of 'doxa' or the

> ... utterly taken for granted beliefs about the world and existence, including a sense of their limits. In so far as it only exists through the perceptions and doings of embodied agents, a doxa is layered within the habitus, but is analytically separable from the latter concept in at least two ways. First of all, whilst the habitus is the possession of an individual, a doxa transcends any one particular habitus. Even if ultimately produced by a particular habitus - namely those possessing symbolic power - it is fed back into and sustained by multiple habitus as shared beliefs and orientations. Secondly, doxic experience is only given by the synchronisation of objective relational structures and the subjective perceptions of the habitus - any mismatch or sudden rupture and doxic experience can be disturbed or even shattered, even if the habitus remains stable. (p 340)

Atkinson (2011) goes on to argue that it makes sense to say that a school may have its own doxa or ethos if the 'field' that demarcates the school establishes one. Moreover the strength of that doxa is a function of the culture of the school which is set by the power structure and meaning systems it operates by.

In situating the teacher then it is necessary to outline firstly the influence of the background

policy and accountability systems (the field), then the school culture and the community(ies)

of practice within the school(the habitus) and lastly the underlying belief system of the

teacher (the doxa). These different factors overlap and the boundaries between each are

diffuse but they form the basis of the model that assists understanding. It enables the

researcher to establish the ways in which the social reality is formed by the teachers within

the school – by setting out the framework for their shared understandings and co-

constructions.
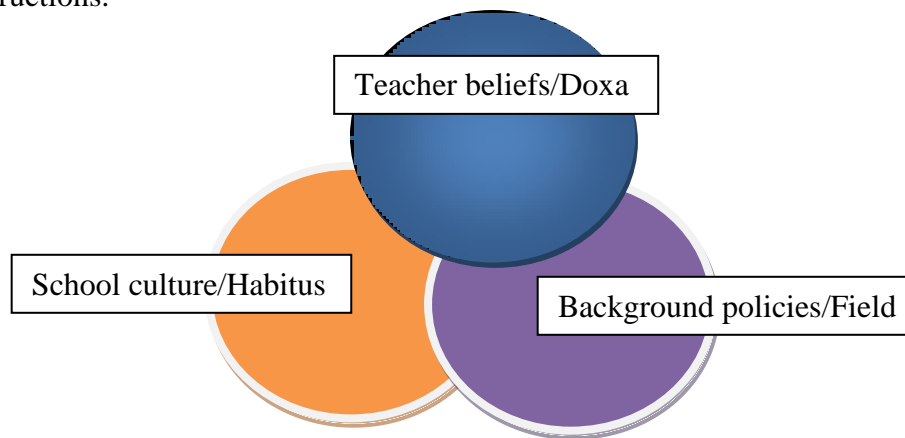
Figure 15: *Model for Understanding the teacher's social situation*

The school culture and the teacher themselves will determine the range of behaviours that

will count as an effective educational practice. This now lays at the heart of the

accountability framework that teachers and schools operate under and which the Ofsted

inspectors adopt within their guidance framework. The recently introduced revised Teacher

Competencies (2012) set out the government's expectations as to what a teacher should be

providing in the classroom. These began in the mid-1990s as a framework for setting

teacher's targets for development and career progression and were then enhanced by the

work completed in the late 1990s by the Hay Group into highly effective teachers and school

leaders (Green, 2004). The notion of a 'competency' derives from the work of McClelland

and has influenced the work of the Hay-McBer Consultancy work which the TDA (Teacher

Development Agency) and the NCSL (National College for School Leadership)

commissioned to support improvements in the English teaching force.

Bandura (1977) is the theorist of 'self-efficacy' as a psychological concept underlying

behavioural change. Bandura writes,

> An outcome expectancy is defined as a person's estimate that a given behaviour
> will lead to certain outcomes. An efficacy expectation is the conviction that one
> can successfully execute the behaviour required to produce the outcomes.
> Outcome and efficacy expectations are differentiated, because individuals can
> believe that a particular course of action will produce certain outcomes, but if they
> entertain serious doubts about whether they can perform the necessary activities
> such information does not influence their behaviour. (p 193)

With the important consequence,

> Given appropriate skills and adequate incentives … efficacy expectations are a
> major determinant of people's choice of activities, how much effort they will
> expend, and of how long they will sustain effort in dealing with stressful
> situations. (p 194)

The factors determining this judgment for the teacher will be their repertoire of teaching

skills that they can utilize in their performance, the support they receive from those whose

performances are efficacious and finally the levels to which their emotional states are

aroused. This directs us to consider the way in which the school manages its 'community of

practice' which is the means by which more successful teachers mentor less successful – a

form of craft apprenticeship. As Sennett (2008) argues,

> Every good craftsman conducts a dialogue between concrete practices and
> thinking; this dialogue evolves into sustaining habits, and these habits establish a
> rhythm between problem solving and problem finding. (p 9)

The emotional states coincide with those that are predicted from personal construct theory given the 'stress' of the teacher finding themselves in situations where there assumptions are challenged by the new reality.

The accepted and commonly applied procedure schools will have to manage the change process for a new teacher broadly fits the following structure,

```
                    ┌──────────────────┐
                    │                  │
                    │   New teacher    │
                    │                  │
                    └────────┬─────────┘
          ┌──────────────────┼──────────────────┐
┌─────────────────┐ ┌─────────────────┐ ┌─────────────────┐
│ Selection,      │ │                 │ │                 │
│ interview and   │ │   Induction     │ │ Mentoring       │
│ appointment     │ │   Programme     │ │ Support         │
│ process         │ │                 │ │                 │
└─────────────────┘ └─────────────────┘ └─────────────────┘
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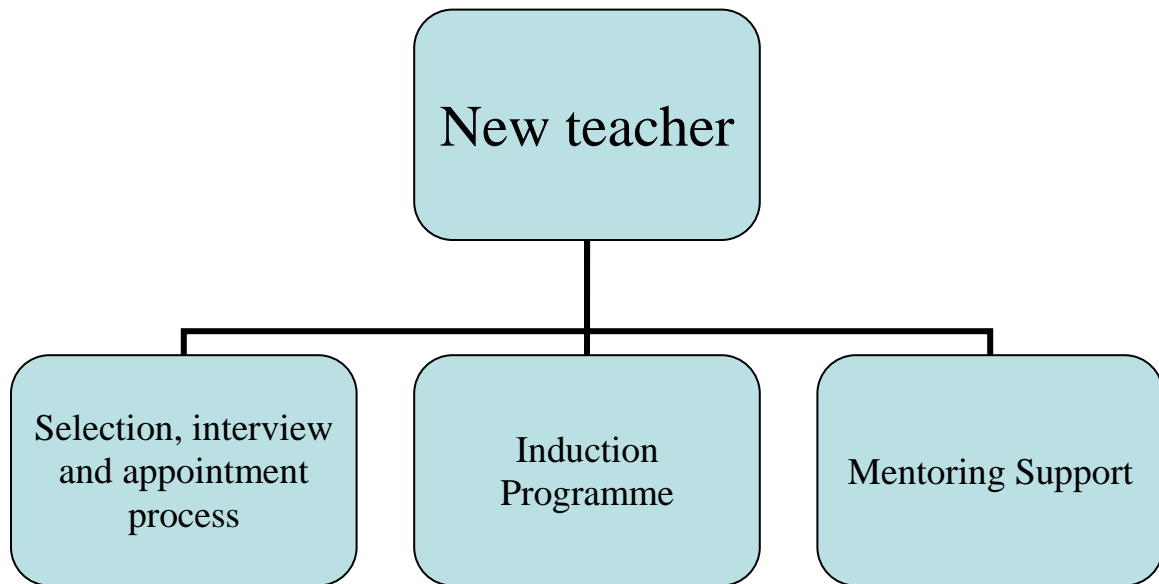
Figure 16: The Change Process for the Teacher

As the teacher moves through these institutional systems they achieve clarity about the role they are to fulfill within the school. This is a meshing of the general national policy and legal framework for schools, the school's own mediation of those requirements for its institutional and community maintenance and the individual teacher's self-understanding of their own agency within this complex social network of meanings. The teacher achieves a feeling of self-efficacy in this role as they productively engage with the school's Community of Practice and consolidate their knowledge of school culture and practices.

3.5 Methodology

Having made the case for a philosophical approach that is based in 'social construction' rather than one that is positivist (or post-positivist) and uses a logical-mathematical approach I have adopted a research design that uses a mixed methods strategy of qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection. Using a case-studies approach the methodology follows a sequence of data collection strategies that can then be brought together and 'triangulated' – that is the different forms of data can be understood to support and corroborate the conclusions being drawn from them. The mix of narrative approaches and grounded theory built up through the cycles of interviews and activities generates the data that supports through abductive reasoning the conclusions arrived at.

The research process builds up its case for validity by the researcher moving as Thomas (2004) suggests from isolated observations that may have led to some inspired thoughts on the transition process for the teachers moving from mainstream school to special school to perhaps some hunches about what was happening as more cases were added to the actual gathering of evidence so that some rationally based beliefs can be tested towards becoming knowledge about what is happening.

The research will seek to establish how each school fits into the above model of new teacher induction and assimilation.

The approach that will be taken in this study will be to assemble a series of four case studies of special schools and the experiences of two teachers within each of them who have transferred from mainstream education into them.
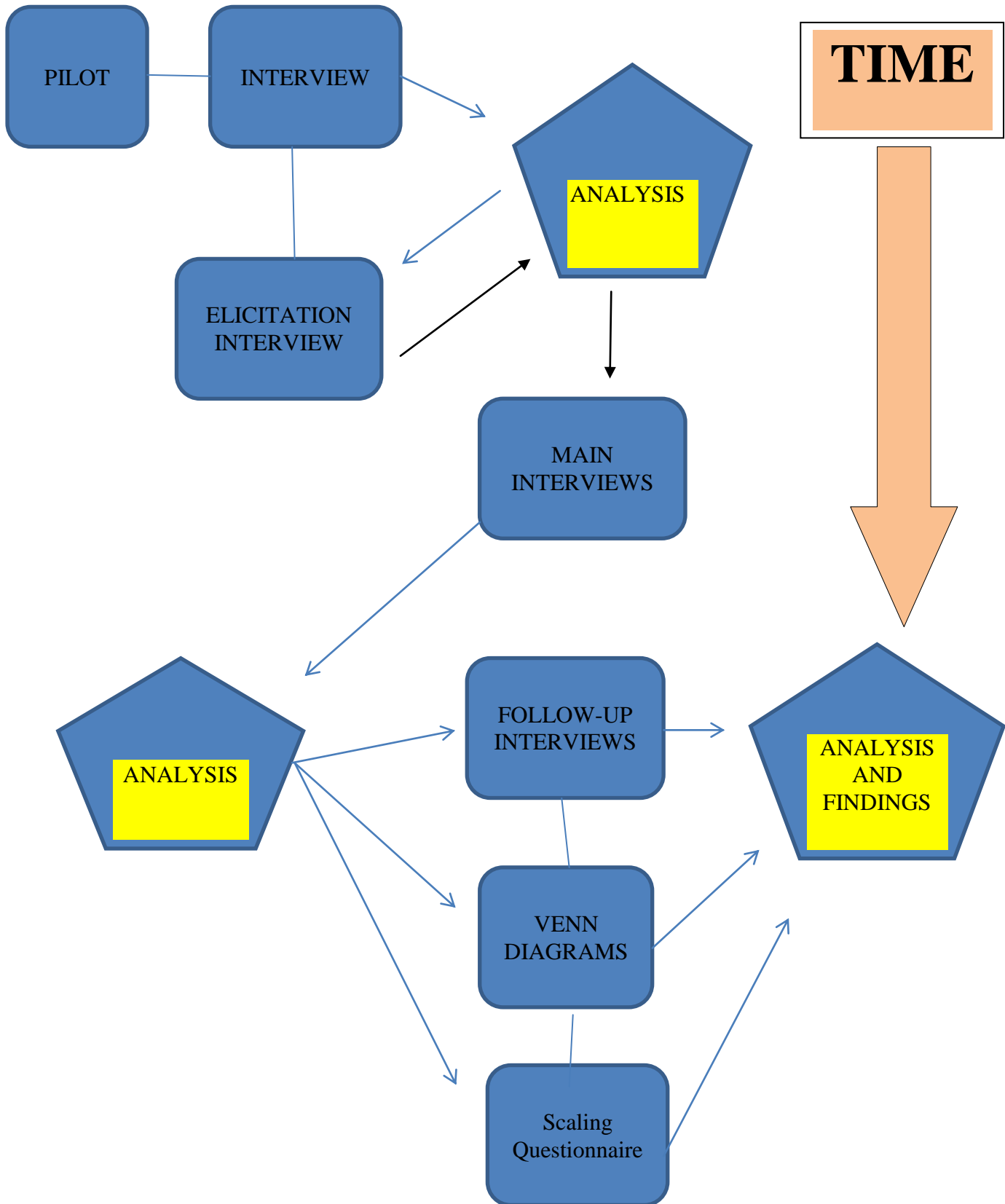
Figure 17: The Research Structure

The 30 minute pilot interview was the beginning point of the research process. The questions were derived from the background literature reading and the initial hypotheses that the researcher began with. It is set out below.

A	The transition
	• What was the transition like?
	• What skills transferred?
	• What was different?
	• What did you need to learn?
	• What helped?
B	Mainstream/Special School
	• Are there different assumptions about the children?
	• Different cultures?
	• Different teaching skills?
C	Teaching Role
	• Is the teaching role different?
	• Does your identity as a teacher change?
	• Is there a moment when you feel competent/effective in the special school?
D	What would have made the process easier?

Figure 18: The Initial Interview Question Prompts

This first (pilot) interview was then analysed . Then, building on from the initial

framework for the questions, a further grouping exercise took place so that the

responses were incorporated together and grouped and then the themes that would

then be further explored using the approach of Personal Construct Theory were

developed. The intention was to use the concept of 'laddering' – that is the way in

which the teacher orders in a hierarchy their constructs according to their strength and

relative importance for them – to gain further insight into the ways in which the

teachers experienced the changes. This was intended to reveal more of the perceptual

basis for the teacher's understandings of their observations on their transition

experience.

The elicitation interview that followed the initial interview had the following

structure,

1.	Teachers select 8 pupils in their class and they are transferred on to separate pieces of card and numbered
2.	The researcher then sets out 10 different configurations of 3 of the names.
3.	These configurations are then presented to the teacher and they are asked to sort them by deciding which two of the three are similar and therefore different from the third one. They describe this decision to the researcher by naming the end points of an axis from where the names are 'most' alike to where they are 'least' like the third.
4.	This is repeated up to ten times or as many times as it takes before the teacher feels they have exhausted their range of different categories
5.	The teacher is then asked to consider which constructs are the most important

	by ranking their top three.

Figure 19: The Elicitation Interview Structure

This 30 minute follow up interview then explored the issues that the researcher had identified within the themes from the original interview by applying a tool derived from personal construct theory to prompt the teacher to reflect further on the differences between mainstream and special education through the elicitation of their most influential 'constructs' that were guiding their practice.

The intention in using the Personal Construct theory was to highlight the importance of the underlying value assumptions of the teacher in understanding their world in the classroom and how they adapt to the changes within it. By using this approach the teacher was helped to reflect on their experiences in an indirect way rather than by responding to the more direct closed and open-ended questioning of the researcher. Rather than being asked directly to articulate the similarities and differences between the two environments, and express the complexity of their experience over time as they responded to the changes, they were asked to think differently about what they currently do and use that as a stimulus to their thinking – a reframing of their world. This viewpoint then added to the information from the initial interview – a combination then of the focused and problem-centred interview followed by the semi-standardised as described by Flick (2006) in the following typology of forms of interview adopted in the research process,

		Advantages	Disadvantages
The focused interview	Exploring the interviewees response to the same stimulus	Adaptable and responsive	Reliance upon the interviewees memory and reliability
The semi-standardised interview	Exploring the researchers theories through the responses of the interviewees	Supports the interviewee to reconstruct their memories and reflections	Depends upon the validity and reliability of the method and the theory
The problem-centred interview	Delving into more depth around the subject chosen by the researcher	Could produce more focused data using a different approach	Could be unsystematic
The expert interview	When the interviewee has specialized knowledge	Increase in information and knowledge about specific issue	Limited by the specialism and the interpretation of the expert
The ethnographic interview	Participant observation when 'field' conversations become interviews	Descriptive and rich in the data collection	Difficult to judge formal and informal information sharing and its reliability

Figure 20: Types of Interview

As the research intended to produce data that could be used in a comparable way to build up

a case then the use of ethnographic or expert interviews was discounted as it would have

yielded data that was too extensive and idiosyncratic to be used to build up the general

picture. The research necessarily had to depend on the memories of the teachers and the

integrity of the researcher in keeping the interviewees on task and providing data that could

be triangulated in order to be reliable.

The analysis of the elicitation interviews provided the possibility for comparisons and

generalisations about the thinking processes that the teachers went through during their

transitions highlighting in more detail the specific areas that they had needed to change in their thinking as they adapted their teaching practice skills in the classroom. The adoption of these interview approaches was justified by the research purpose which was to look in detail at the interviewees experience and to develop and test out theories that could be used to develop an improved support programme for such transitions.

3.6 Mixed methods

The approach taken in this study is through a series of case studies in four schools exploring the experiences of teachers who have recently undergone the experience of changing from a mainstream to a special school. Essentially I am taking a series of 'snapshots'(Flick, 2006 p 142) as it is not possible to encompass the whole complexity of each of the teachers experiences. Boundaries to the study have to be set in order for it to be manageable.
The research investigated teachers in their first year of making the change between special school and mainstream school. The presumption was that the teachers are therefore still within or close to the transition experience. The aim was to have eight teachers involved in the research. This would provide a strong sample of varying experiences. They would be across at least four schools depending upon availability and preparedness to be involved in the research. The teachers would be identified by their headteachers as fitting the criteria for being part of the study. This number of interviewees would provide a sample size that would provide a wide enough data base to be able to draw conclusions from and also be manageable in terms of the researcher's time and travel commitments. Undertaking small-group or focus

group type interviews was discounted as it could lead to 'joint' narrative constructions and could inhibit individuals from being honest and spontaneous.

The interviews took place in the second term of the teachers first or second year in the special school. This gave the teachers time to experience the change and potentially still feel that they were within the change process whilst giving them enough time to be able to reflect and draw some conclusions from their initial experiences. The follow up interviews took place in the third term. All interviewees were invited to participate and given the option of declining. They completed a consent form and had the rationale for the research explained to them. The researcher intended to build a positive rapport with them and emphasise his independence and integrity in relation to the research enterprise.

The study used semi-structured interviews to gain the information for analysis. The first interview is used as the basis for the second, which would have used personal construct theory tools to further develop the teacher's views of their experience and clarify the weightings of the different aspects of their subjective reality. This second interview took place in term three of that first year.

The research needed to address the reliability of the teachers' reflections on their experiences. That is, how useful is it to ask teacher's what their memories are of a complex life event that took place some months beforehand? The reliability issue can be addressed through the argument that teachers are encouraged to reflect on their practice and the nature of the teaching 'craft' particularly during periods of change, as a matter of course, therefore this research is to making what happens - more explicit. The researcher is therefore tapping into a process that would have taken place in some form and then using it in a systematic and analytical way. By using other tools later in the research the researcher was able to

triangulate the findings and show consistency in the responses from the subjects. The validity

of the findings would be supported by the agreement of the interviewees that the transcripts

of their responses were accurate.

A more problematic issue was the usefulness of the tools chosen for the second interview –

which was to have a semi-standardised format when the personal construct elucidation would

take place. The pilot was used to ascertain how useful the approach was and then if necessary

adapt it or look to replace it with more reliable tools.

The study relied heavily upon the methods taken by the researcher to analyse the interview

data from the teachers. The coding process is dependent upon the insights of the researcher

although they will be evidenced from the transcripts of the interviewees following a

'grounded theory' approach. In this approach the theory is 'discovered' from the data

(Glaser and Strauss, 2009).

The coding of the data and the analysis of the teacher's responses to the interviews was

created and developed from within a 'narrative' approach, as Day (1999) writes,

> The exploration of personal and professional life histories act as a window through
> which teachers can track the origins of the beliefs, values and perspectives which
> influence and inform their current theories and practices of teaching and 'being' a
> teacher. (p 36)

Day argues that the teacher's reflective practice that is shared in their telling of their stories

can be analysed in three hierarchical levels (p 31). Firstly it will be at the level of their

actions in the classroom, then it will be about those actions and will incorporate practical and

theoretical reasons and finally it will refer to ethical justifications. This research will be

guided by this typology in looking at the data that the teacher's provide.

The validity and reliability of the study rests upon the coherence of the arguments made from

the literature search and the link to the research hypotheses and then the strength of the

evidence presented cumulatively through the grounded theory approach. The methodology

will triangulate the findings by using different forms of interview approach. This will provide

a range of data to illuminate the research question and strengthen the findings. This approach

is also called 'mixed methods' as it uses both elements from qualitative research methods

(interviews) and from quantitative research methods (questionnaires) – even though it stays

within the interpretive or naturalistic paradigm.

The interviewees were asked to complete a questionnaire that graded their responses on a

scale from 1 – 7 where 1 was 'low' and 7 was 'high'. The questions covered five selected

themes highlighted within the interviews and the statements that the teachers were asked to

rate were a mix of the range of responses within the interviews. By scaling their response the

interviewees were providing data that could be analysed mathematically and presented

graphically. By asking the interviewees to reflect upon their experience and their evaluations

of it the data produced could be used to support the evidence coming from the narrative

based interviews. It would highlight consistencies and inconsistencies within the responses

from the interviewees and also provide a guide to the relative importance ascribed to aspects

of the transition experience for each of the individual teachers

3.7 Ethical issues

The objectivity of the researcher in the sense that the findings of the study are trustworthy is

a key issue for research approached in this way. Objectivity or the reduction of researcher

bias has a number of dimensions. The first is objectivity as a form of detachment. This relates

to the motivation of the researcher in undertaking the research and establishing that there is

no financial or similar gain behind the research. It links to the integrity of the researcher and

their transparency and openness. I am only interested in improving the experiences of

teachers who move into special education and I am open-minded as to how that might be

accomplished. I have no personal interest in one type of answer or programme. The study is

undertaken in the hope of improving matters by the furthering of knowledge about the issue.

The second dimension is objectivity as open-mindedness. The researcher does not have a

personal bias with regard to the outcomes of the study. The researcher is committed to the

study's aims of investigating the teacher's experiences in order to suggest improvements that

can be made to help future teachers in similar circumstances. The study makes clear the

philosophical perspective of the researcher and the research base for the approaches taken in

understanding the responses from the teachers.

The third dimension relates to the unavoidable researcher 'point of view' as the philosophical

premises of the study argue that this must be in place. The research though makes clear what

this point of view is, why it is held and the evidence and arguments that support it. The

researcher's point of view is thus not in that sense of the word a bias as it is acknowledged

and argued for and made explicit throughout the study.

The fourth dimension considers the relevance of alternative hypothesis and explanations. In

justifying the researcher's point of view the case is made that alternatives, although they may

exist would not be as useful in elucidating the information gathered and determining

recommendations for improvements.

The fifth acknowledges the notion of reflexivity and post-modernism arguments with respect

to subjectivity, relativism of truth claims and limitation of theory. Cohen (2000) suggests that

there are broadly three differing approaches that could be taken in research 'paradigms' or

principles and procedures for undertaking research. They are the normative, the interpretive

and the critical. This study takes the interpretive approach. Adapted from Cohen (p 35) the

table below sets out the differences between each of the approaches which then highlights

their advantages and disadvantages for the researcher.

	Normative	Interpretive	Critical
Size	Large scale	Small scale	Small scale
Meaning of action	Impersonal forces Regulating behaviour	Individuals Recreating social life	Political factors shaping behaviour
Research approach	Model of natural sciences (objectivity)	Non-statistical (subjectivity)	Ideology critique and action research (Collectivity)
Researcher role	Research conducted form the outside	Personal involvement of the researcher	Participant researchers
Source of theory	Generalizing from the specific	Interpreting the specific	Critiquing the specific
Role of theory	Seeking causes / explaining	Understand actions	Critiquing actions / interests
Theoretical school	Structuralists	Phenomenologists	Critical theorists
Use of research	Technicist	Practical	Emancipatory

Figure 21: Research Approaches

The decision to follow an interpretive approach is based upon the practicalities of the

opportunities available to the researcher and the researcher's philosophical point of view.

Post-modernist views or the 'critical' approach would take the focus of this study beyond the

reflections of the teachers and the sources for those reflections and place them within further

analytic frameworks that would deconstruct the assumptions and power relations that are

articulated through them – by linguistic or discursive methods. This enterprise would not be

answering the research question and the practical purposes of this research and hence have

not been followed. The wider political processes and the ways in which within Bourdieu's

(Jenkins, 1992) theory they will affect the subjective reality of the teacher's in the study is

not denied and many of the writers in the literature review make explicit reference to political

factors. This is a 'background' causative factor that is beyond the focus of the study.

The concept of 'reflexivity' (Siraj-Blatchford and Siraj-Blatchford, 1997) is utilised to

explain the ways in which the researcher's actions – the questions asked – can alter the

interviewees responses and their understanding of their reality as it is necessarily socially

constructed. They say,

> There is a sense in which social reality will always just escape our understanding;
> every effort of definition is likely to bring about some modification of our object of
> study. (p 240)

A central way in which this reflexivity dilemma can be addressed, they argue, is through the

explicit self-reflexivity of the researcher who brings their own experience and feelings to the

research in an open and transparent way. In this way the values of the researcher are clear to

reader of the research and thus the researcher's influence in the research will be transparent.

It is an important dimension to this research that the person undertaking it has lengthy insight

into the situations that the subjects are describing. This 'insider' knowledge means that

rapport is quickly built between interviewer and interviewee and contextual and narrative

aspects to the responses can be understood and explored within the interviews using a range

of responses – probes, follow-ups, direct, indirect, interpretive questions and comments.

The co-operation of interviewees and the anonymity of them and their schools were protected

by the securing of their consent through a signed agreement which was given to them and

explained before the first interview began. It was very clear that the interviewees were

volunteers and there was no compulsion for them to participate and that their headteacher had

no interest in the research or its findings beyond that of supporting research generally and endorsed the principles under which it was to be carried out. Researcher integrity was guaranteed by transparency, openness and honesty. The research was about the transition experiences and not about comparing different schools' induction processes. Each of the schools in the study had had positive Ofsted inspections and were 'good' schools. The teachers were therefore not under the pressure that occurs in schools where headteachers endeavour to raise standards within the short timeframes that Ofsted requires. Consequently there was an ethos of trust and openness in these schools and the teachers invited to participate in the study did not feel that the research had an 'agenda' or covert purpose that would be used by the management of the school. As the researcher occupied a headteacher role and this was known by the participants in the research it was made quite clear that the purposes of the research and its findings were in no way related to the participant's individual responses nor to their practice in their schools. There was no 'reporting' back to the headteachers of the schools participating and all findings were held securely and the names of the interviewees were changed. The researcher provided the interviewees with email contact should they wish to discuss any issue arising from their involvement in the research at any time. They could also contact the researcher's supervisor if they had additional concerns about the ethics of the research and the way it was being carried out. The interviews were designed to last no longer than 30 minutes and the interviewee was guaranteed that the demands on their time would not extend beyond that. The interviews were arranged at the convenience of the subjects at their schools so as not to place additional demands on them. The interviews were digitally recorded in an unobtrusive manner and they were undertaken in a positive, respectful and sensitive manner. The accuracy of the

transcripts of the interviews was ensured by providing the interviewees with the opportunity to edit the transcripts of their interviews before they were used in the research. Anonymity was guaranteed within the research as was confidentiality and the information and data was kept securely by the researcher on encrypted computers and destroyed when it had been used. All names in the research (of interviewees and schools) were changed and the locations were not identified. This protected the interests of the participants by maintaining their confidentiality throughout the research and professional propriety with regard to the use of the data.

The research had to gain ethics approval form the university before commencing thereby establishing appropriate rigour in methodology and practice. The application is appended as is the approval. The harms and benefits analysis is central to the ethical integrity of the research. The benefits of the research are not directly to the participants on the research. Rather the intention of the research is to generate knowledge that will benefit teachers in similar situations to those involved in the research in the future. The harm test is clear that those involved are at no risk, either from the research itself, nor from their involvement in it and their time commitments and the nature of the tasks they were asked to undertake were kept to the minimum consistent with the generation of a useful data set. The participants were in a position to withdraw at any time without any consequence for their role in their schools (as in fact one did).

All of the interviews were transcribed and then checked for accuracy. They were then read through for common themes and for summarising as narratives. The themes and narratives were then tested against theory derived from the literature review and the presumptions of the researcher. The findings were then interpreted. This process is clear and transparent and

undertaken in the spirit of knowledge production. The researcher is committed professionally and personally to the values of honesty, integrity accountability and openness. This research thesis sets out clearly the preparatory work, the data collection and the data analysis process that leads to the findings and conclusions reached within it.

The researcher has all through this research paid heed to the BERA Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2004) and to Canterbury Christchurch University Ethics Policy for Research Involving Human Participants (2006).

4. Analysis and Findings

4.1 Process

a. What does the data mean

Flick (2006, p301) describes the research process in a 'paradigm model' set out in this

way,
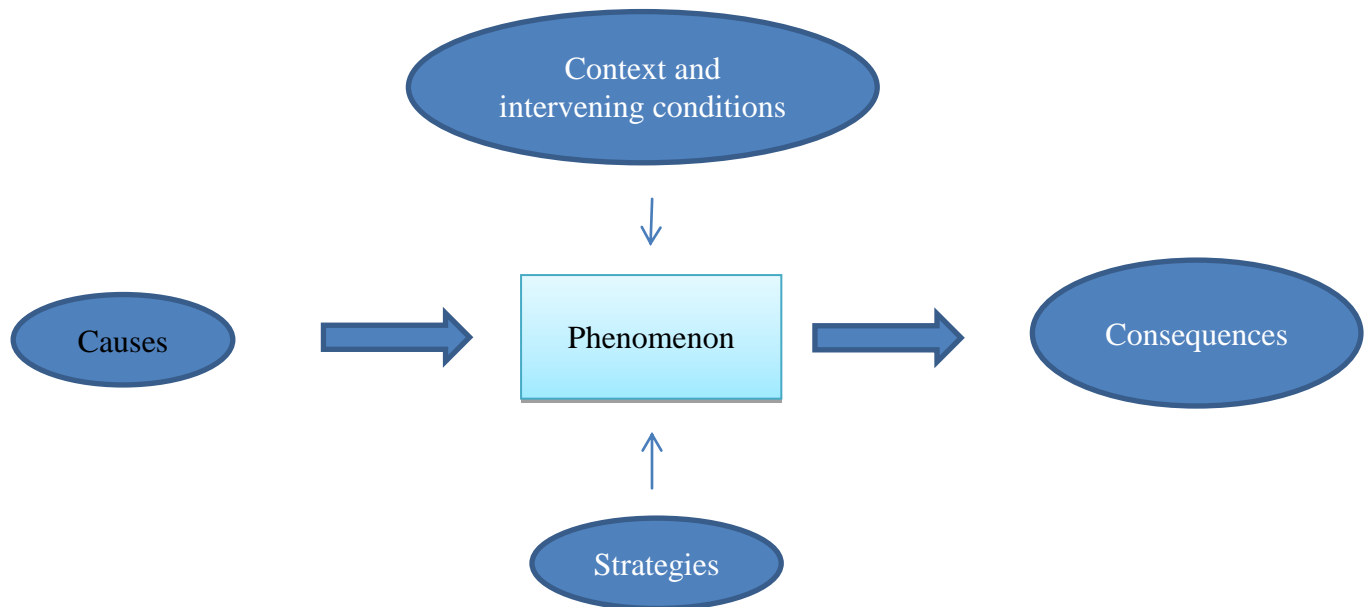
Figure 22: Data in the Research

to explain the position of the data collected.

The phenomenon in this research is the experience of the teacher transitioning from

mainstream school to special school. Their experience is drawn from their recollections of

the changes in their teaching practice and its meanings. The causes of the change are outside

the focus of this research although some of the factors are mentioned by the teachers and

their connection to the sources of the motivation for the change and therefore the teachers'

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personal commitment to success is obviously important in the underlying psychological

adjustment for the teacher. There are though 'causes' that are deeper than the individual

decision making choices of the teachers and in this regards the 'setting' or 'background' for

the teacher and their school plays a causative role in the transition as it determines the ways

in which the powerful demands of the system will be mediated through its institutions

(schools) and actors (teachers). The underlying philosophical and sociological approach to

this research expands this argument in more detail (see Literature Review and Methodology

sections). More importantly for the research are the 'context and intervening conditions and

the strategies which together form the variable factors between the teacher's experiences.

The 'consequences' again are not explored in detail beyond the fact that each of the teachers

within the research have successfully transitioned by the criteria they have adopted as

markers of successful teaching. By 'successful transitioning' I mean that they have reached a

state where they can report that they are efficacious in their role within their school. The

meaning of 'efficacious' is developed within the analysis of the research findings and is

expressed in a variety of ways by the interviewees.

b. Theory and evidence

The research process then followed a two stage theorisation. Initially it was inductive in that I

developed categories, concepts and relations based upon the literature review and my

reflections on this in the light of my personal experience and study undertaken prior to the

research commencing. Then in the second stage it was more deductive as I tested those

categories, concepts and relations against the findings from the interviews. From the

preliminary assumptions drawn from the literature review I went through two cycles of

interviews each time comparing and sampling and reinterpreting the framework for

understanding the experiences being described to produce a theory that accounted for the

data. This process followed a 'grounded theory' approach (Glaser and Strauss, 2009). The

data collection cycle fed into the development of the emerging theories that were explaining

the transition process as described by the interviewees. The following diagram illustrates this,
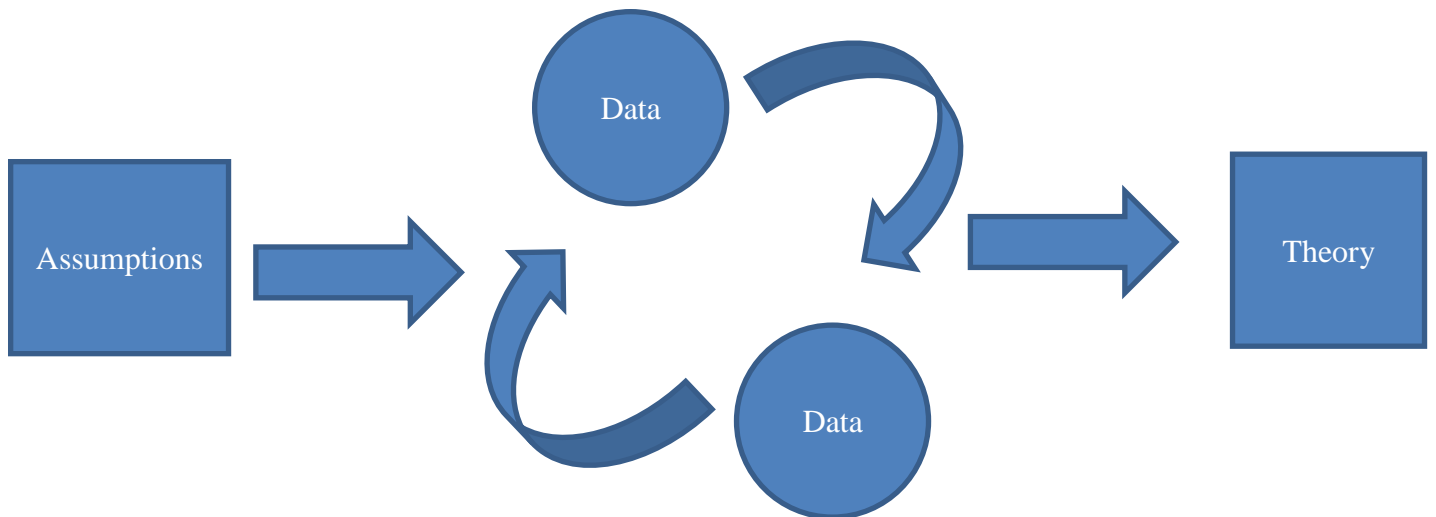
Figure 23: Developing Theory out of the Data

(From Flick (2006) p.102)

c. Data analysis

The data analysis process is set out by Newby (2010, p 460) as
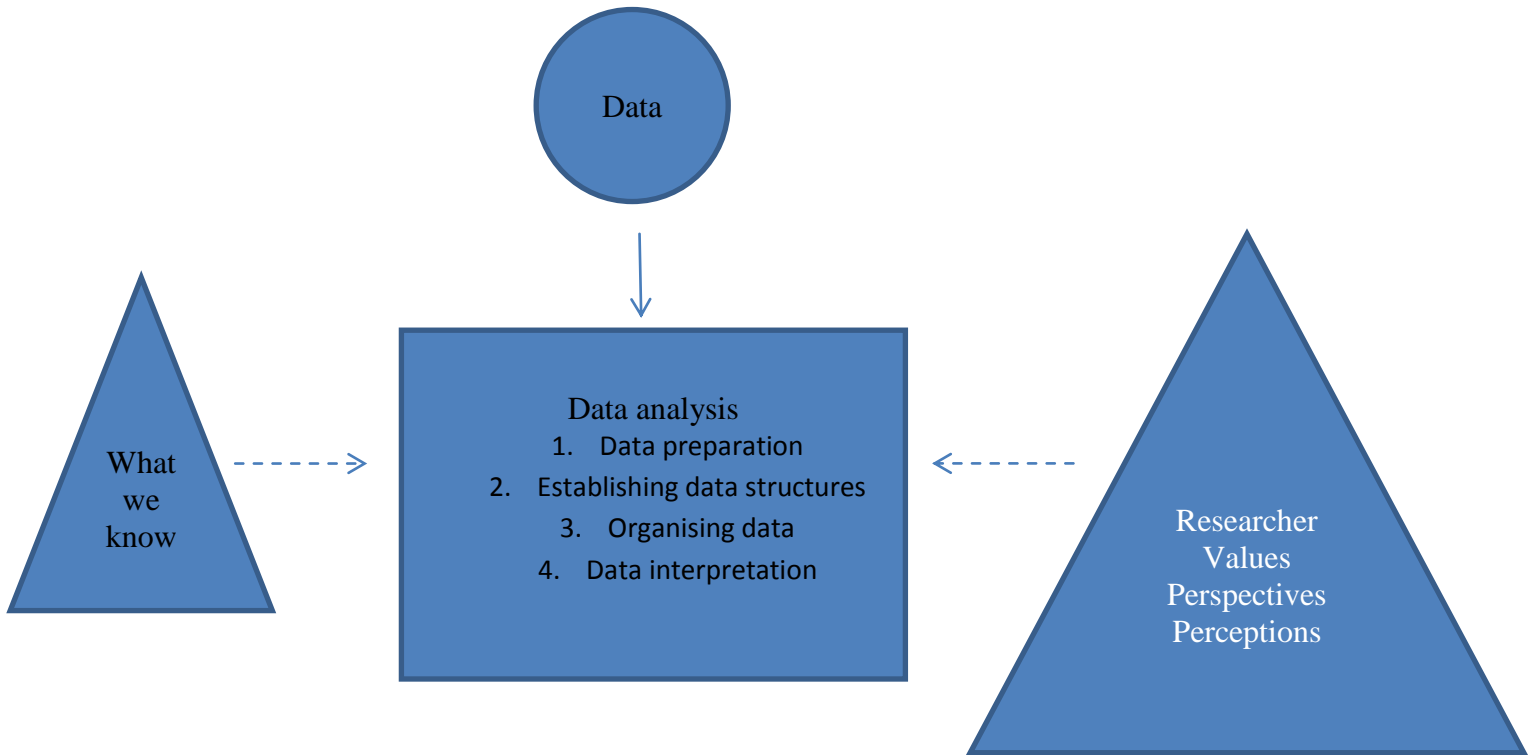
Figure 24: Data Analysis

The Literature Review provided the 'what we know' element and informs the researcher's

values and perspectives that then set the framework for the analysis of the data.

The data was transcribed and then analysed for emerging themes that could then be

incorporated into the explanatory theory that was based upon the interpretations of the

teacher's reflections. The themes that emerged were then linked with the hypotheses that

informed the interview structure.

4.2 The pilot

The pilot interview was with a teacher who was in her second year within the special school having moved from a mainstream primary school. She was therefore reflecting on her experiences from one year previously.

The interview was asking for a personal and subjective response. In arranging the interview the interviewee had been informed about the focus of the research and the purpose of the interview. The interviewee had been able to reflect on their transition experiences before the interview happened in preparation. She had not been given a list of questions or a briefing or prompt sheet. This was so that the teacher was not 'over-prepared' for the interview and came with their personal perspective on the transition experience. The interviewee had also had explained to them the protocol for the ethical undertaking of research in order to gain informed consent – the promises of anonymity, confidentiality, ownership of the data, use of the data solely for the purposes of the research project and her rights to withdraw at any time and to see a draft of her interview.

The interview had the following structure:

A	The transition
	• What was the transition like?
	• What skills transferred?

	• What was different? • What did you need to learn? • What helped?
B	Mainstream/Special School • Are their different assumptions about the children? • Different cultures? • Different teaching skills?
C	Teaching Role • Is the teaching role different? • Does your identity as a teacher change? • Is there a moment when you feel competent/effective in the special school?
D	What would have made the process easier?

Figure 25: The Interview Structure

The prompts for the questions were based upon initial hypotheses derived from the research

literature about teaching in special education and the Salt Review's (2010) highlighting of

the problems in recruitment. Some of the questions were more 'closed' than others in that

they anticipated an answer that the teacher may not themselves have thought about or asked

for a 'reframing' of the experience along a certain trajectory. This was done to enable the

research to collect data from a number of teachers and still have comparable themes.

The initial hypotheses that were being tested were:

- Teaching in a special school was daunting and challenging

- The teacher's knowledge, skills and understanding had not transferred
  easily

- This had led to a crisis in identity for the teacher

- The world of the special school was very unlike that of the mainstream
  school

- It was difficult to become part of the world of the special school

- The special school would have had benefits though in that it was child
  centred and more creative for the teacher

- Teachers found the change in their role and practice challenging

These were then loosely framed into the questions in the prompt list above.

Within the interview a number of themes then emerged which form the framework for

understanding Christine's transition experience. The interview was then transcribed using a

simplified notational form. It was transcribed verbatim including all repetitions, non-words

and pauses or spaces in the narrative were marked with three full stops. The more

sophisticated transcription forms (Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) p. 181, Flick (2009), p. 301

and Atkinson and Heritage (2006), 158-165) were not used as the purpose was to analyse the

events narrated and the teacher's perceptions of those events and not a specific analysis of

their discourse (Edwards, 2006). As the researcher was familiar with the professional

language of teaching and was using the interview to elicit a 'narrative' of the transition

experience the focus of discourse analysis on the power relations underlying language use

had been placed beyond the scope of this study. The focus for the study was the meaning or

content of the interviewee's responses rather than the language or structure.

Summarising Christine's responses I found the following themes arising from the

narrative of her transition experience:

1. *Being 'overwhelmed'*

- the experience of adapting to the changed setting was immense and
  seriously challenged the teachers ability to operate as the professional they
  felt they were (Appendices p.46 "… it was entirely overwhelming for the
  first term …" and "… I wasn't prepared for anything that was going to
  come my way …" and "… I was literally learning nearly every day …")

- it was the complexities of the behaviour and additional needs of the
  children in the class that was overwhelming (Appendices p. 47 "…
  particularly very violent outbursts from children …")

- it was also the special programmes, strategies and resources that were
  overwhelming (Appendices p. 46 "… took me at least a term to get to
  grips with the routines and the timetables and the different rooms within
  the school and different programmes …")

2. Relationships with the children

- this was the core value (teachers have to have good relationships with their pupils) and the process that the teacher held to as the means by which she would adapt to the new setting (the teacher needed to invest time in getting to know her pupils in order to function as an effective teacher)

  (Appendices p. 47 "… you know the most important bit … learning about the children and their tics and what's going to set them off and what they like and what will encourage them to get on with their work …")

- discovering effective communication strategies was crucial and these may require adaptations to her teaching style that may change the self-image of the teacher (Appendices p. 48 "… you just change and adapt and try and communicate with each one …")

- by getting to 'know' the pupil the teacher was working out 'readiness to learn' for complex children (Appendices p. 49 "… it's more using those small targets for him and just applying the ones you think he can actually achieve that day rather than trying to ram something down his throat that he's not in the mood to …")

- compassion was part of this relationship (Appendices p. 50 "… with special needs teaching your teaching role … can be far more … involved with each child …" and "… you're allowed to be far more caring and get to know the children far more …")

3. Thinking on your feet

- this was what teachers did (Appendices p.47 "…I'm having to adapt and do different things you know … and kind of thinking on your feet…")

- the limits to the range of choices and actions were changed in the special school setting

- a new or newer repertoire of actions was called for in the special school setting that had to develop out of the established (mainstream) repertoire

- It was this adaptability that when allied to the knowledge about the children that was forthcoming from the relationships that were formed in the classroom which enabled the effectiveness to develop

  (Appendices p. 53 "… I've got my daily plan … I know that is roughly what I want to do with that group … then if it doesn't go to plan we will do something different …")

4. Being accepted by the team

- the TA team who were 'supporting' the teacher had a set of expectations of their relationship with their teacher (Appendices p. 50 "… I felt like … had a checklist of things I needed to go through to become ... a member of staff…")

- this involved the working out of the team dynamics – independence and dependency and respect

- being linked to other teachers formally limited the direct help and support they could provide – rather they acted as a community of professionals in a similar situation and it was reassuring to have successful colleagues who could model ways of managing TA teams and share problems and ideas when called upon

- mainstream schools have a greater culture for sharing of teaching practice and ideas – as they are more easily transferable and similarly structured

5. Meeting expectations

- what did the school expect its teachers to be doing and achieving

- mainstream expectations were very clear

- being trusted to make appropriate decisions about learning in the classroom (Appendices p. 49 "…being given that kind of leeway … that trust…")

- being creative (Appendices p.49 "… I have just loved being a bit whacky and creative and it's been really nice…")

6. Personal teaching style

- having a teaching 'persona' – quiet calm friendly creative etc.

- was 'set' in the classroom with the demands and expectations of the mainstream school

- within the special school had to adapt their teaching expertise

I then used PCT to explore in more detail these themes from Christine's interview. This was

to test out whether in so doing it would yield information that would help to delineate the

change process by providing more detailed information about the ways in which the

Christine's thinking changed .The approach was to use a construct elicitation interview

which was built around a task asking Christine to compare the children in her class.

The construct elicitation interview with Christine yielded the following eight constructs in

other words the children were able to be placed along a continuum with these as the poles:

1. Understands boundaries but tests them – doesn't understand boundaries

2. Profound disability – more able

3. Responds to motivators – indifferent to motivators

4. Routine based – flexible

5. Sensory learning – academic

6. strong motor skills – weak motor skills

7. Additional support from beyond the classroom team required – needs can
    be met within the classroom resources

8. Independent of adults – dependent on adults

These eight elements within the grid set out the framework within which Christine

determines how she will respond to the children in her class – how she understands them and

can match them with appropriate learning tasks. This research strategy was intended to draw

from Christine greater clarity about the ways in which she reflected on her practice and

adapted how she operated according to theories she used, her experience and the underlying values that were important to her.

From the initial interview Christine was very clear that the immediate and lasting impression of the transition to start with was the overload of new information she had to react to – deciding which was important and which could wait to be attended to later. A lot of this information is procedural and context specific – the school's way of doing things and as such different from her previous school. Christine prioritised 'getting to know the children' as the first task she needed to accomplish. Clearly the children presented differently to those that she had been used to teaching previously and as such presented her with challenges. How different the children were can be gauged by eliciting from Christine her constructs for teaching in the mainstream school. This has the potential for highlighting the differences and the additional knowledge and skills required to adapt the teaching practices that she used in the mainstream school to the special school setting. At the same time her style as a teacher was adapting as she 'thought on her feet' to accommodate the behaviour of the children in her class. The process of adapting her teaching style so that she could be effective within the new school is described within the grids. These are the most important ways in which she discriminates between the children and the key factors that determine her response to their individual learning needs. The first six relate to Christine's professional ability to assess the child's needs based upon her application of appropriate knowledge, experience and accuracy of judgement. The seventh and eighth relate to the working with adults and Christine's role in managing the adults who are involved in the children's education in her class. Within the initial interview these relate to the themes of 'being accepted in the team' and 'meeting expectations'.

The meaning of the experience for Christine clearly resides in the very human development

of the teaching relationships between Christine and the children in the class and the working

relationships that grew between herself and the members of the team of teaching assistants in

the classroom and the wider group of professionals who are involved in the education of the

children in her class. Although personal to Christine the framework and experiences are part

of the social fabric of the shared reality she inhabits within the 'teaching world'. The notions

of being a teacher, of children with SEN, of being effective in her role are all social

constructs and need to be located and critiqued so as to illuminate the process that was

undergone.

Salmon (1995) describes it in this way,

> Our personal construct systems carry what, in the broadest possible sense, what each
> of us knows. It is these systems that allow us to 'read' our lives psychologically. They
> locate us, moment to moment, within events. They govern the stances we take up.
> They represent our possibilities of action, the choices we can make. They embody the
> dimensions of meaning which give form to our experience, the kinds of interpretation
> which we place on it. (p. 22-3)

What Salmon (1995) writes relates specifically to Christine's type of experience,

> Meeting a new class the experienced teacher instantly gets the feeling of a 'tricky'
> class. The perception carries with it a whole network of interpretations – of past
> experience, future expectations, possible strategies and potential outcomes. These
> constructions define the teacher's position towards the group: assumptions about
> them, the kinds of engagement possible. They are likely to be available to the teacher,
> not as explicit verbal labels, but rather as an implicit set of inner guidelines towards
> the situation, felt and sensed rather than put inwardly into words. Our construct
> systems encompass far more than we could possible say: and the more fundamental
> the knowledge, the less accessible it is to explicit verbalization. (p. 23)

Following the initial two interviews I have only the beginnings of the information I would

need to be able to describe in detail how Christine's constructions help her to negotiate

meaning and actions in her world. The constructs we have elicited will be woven in to a

complex wider system of meaning for Christine that orientates her to her world. Fortunately we are only interested in those aspects that relate to her teaching role and how they were challenged and changed by the experience of transferring from mainstream to special education.

Through these two interviews I was able to elicit rich data about the experience of transition for Christine but this had limitations. The wider context of schooling and teaching had not been explored in detail and the ways that the school 'culture' and the community of practice had impacted on the transition process. The experiences described were localised to the particular career trajectory of the teacher and although the strength of the approach is that it is non-judgemental and personal to the interviewee it does therefore produce the potential for idiosyncratic responses that would make generalisation difficult. Consequently I could see that the wider conceptual analysis and the elicitation of 'themes' that I wanted to have so that they could potentially be triangulated with other interviewees was limited.

The elicitation interview technique had produced details of the ways in which Christine had adapted her approach to the teaching of the children from one setting to the other but did not detail the context within which these constructs were 'nested' – the knowledge base, the value system, the problem solving strategy that structured her pedagogy or teaching practice. It did though elaborate on the ways in which the teacher-learner relationship was processed and developed for Christine with the children in her class. This was an important aspect of the research that would have greater significance later.

There were though key aspects of this pilot that were retained as providing important information about transition, identity and the current context of teaching. Nevertheless the

follow up elicitation interview tool had many limitations. It related only to the pupils and Christine's teaching and though providing rich personal data did not extend into the school culture and the wider systemic factors. I could not expand the use of this tool to the mainstream school setting as the teachers had already transferred and asking them to do a retrospective one would in all likelihood not present with valid data as their constructs would have already 'changed' as a consequence of their time in the special school. This meant that the theme of the 'teaching relationship' which leant itself to the use of this tool could not be further explored in this way and alternative more flexible tools would need to be used. The response to the questions already was suggesting that the initial hypotheses were not accurate and the picture was going to be more complex and this tool was not going to focus on where these complexities were

Consequently I decided to not use this tool but ones that would provide more direct information with regards to the model that was developing.

4.3 The first series of interviews

The subsequent interviews used the same framework but focused in through the use of prompts and supplementary questions into four main 'themes'; the transition experience, the tools for navigating the transition, assumptions about teachers, schools and pupils and reflections on the 'ideal' transition.

This structure would enable the interviewees to provide information on the experience of transition for them within the parameters of the model I was developing. It was apparent

from the pilot interview that the issues that I had initially hypothesised as being important

were different. It would also provide a clear 'narrative' of the teacher's transition experience.

I had underestimated the way in which the areas in the 'model' were working through the

teaching profession. This was because my personal teaching career had followed through the

changes in teacher professionalism identified by Day (2002).

> Successive governments have attempted to re-orientate the strong liberal-humanistic traditions of schooling, characterised by a belief in the intrinsic, non-instrumental value of education towards a more functional view characterised by competency based, results-driven teaching, payment by results and forms of indirect rule from the centre. (p 677)

And which Hargreaves (2000) argues as passing through four stages and importantly for the

perspective that I as the researcher take I began my teaching career during the period of

'individual professional autonomy' that then developed into the 'collegial professional' and

is currently now in a 'post-professional' phase,

> So we are now on the edge of an age of postmodern professionalism where teachers deal with a diverse and complex clientele, in conditions of increasing moral uncertainty, where many methods of approach are possible, and where more and more social groups have an influence and a say. Whether this postmodern age will see exciting and positive new partnerships being created with groups and institutions beyond the school, and teachers learning to work effectively, openly and authoritatively with those partners in a broad social movement that protects and advances their professionalism, or whether it will witness the de-professionalization of teaching as teachers crumble under multiple pressures, intensified work demands, reduced opportunities to learn from colleagues, and enervating discourses of derision, is something that is still to be decided. (p. 175)

Teachers who have been trained and then only worked within the current system of

'performativity' find the change process from mainstream to special less challenging

because the system has brought the two sectors even closer together in the sense of their

organisational structures and expectations than ever before.

This has strengthened the case made by Lewis and Norwich (2005) for a 'continua of teaching approaches' to describe teachers 'approaches to the differing needs of the learners in each of the settings. They were unable to find any evidence for the case that the learners in the special schools were uniquely different from learners in the mainstream schools. The curriculum, pedagogic and professional knowledge issues that the teachers faced were surmountable because they already possessed the foundations for effective teaching and learning from their previous training and teaching experience.

Consequently I revised and refined the interview schedule so that these issues pertinent to the contemporary experience of transition were addressed. I then re-worked the pilot interview analysis so that it provided information for this wider analytic tool.

The categories in the interview analysis were derived from the interview schedule and the reading of the interviews. In the 'grounded theory' process this means that the theoretical perspectives behind the research guided the interview schedule and informs the analysis of the data but doesn't constrain it.

The initial framework is a combination of 'open coding' that is deriving the themes from a close reading of the interviews, triangulating this with other interviews and testing their veracity with the texts. It is then anticipated that I will undertake 'axial coding' and rework the interview data so that it reveals deeper congruence with more refined themes.

The process of hypothesising, developing, testing and elaborating on these themes becomes the outcome of the research and the contribution to understanding and improved practice. This process can be schematised as:

Preliminary assumptions

interview a

Comparing / sampling

interview c   interview b

Theory
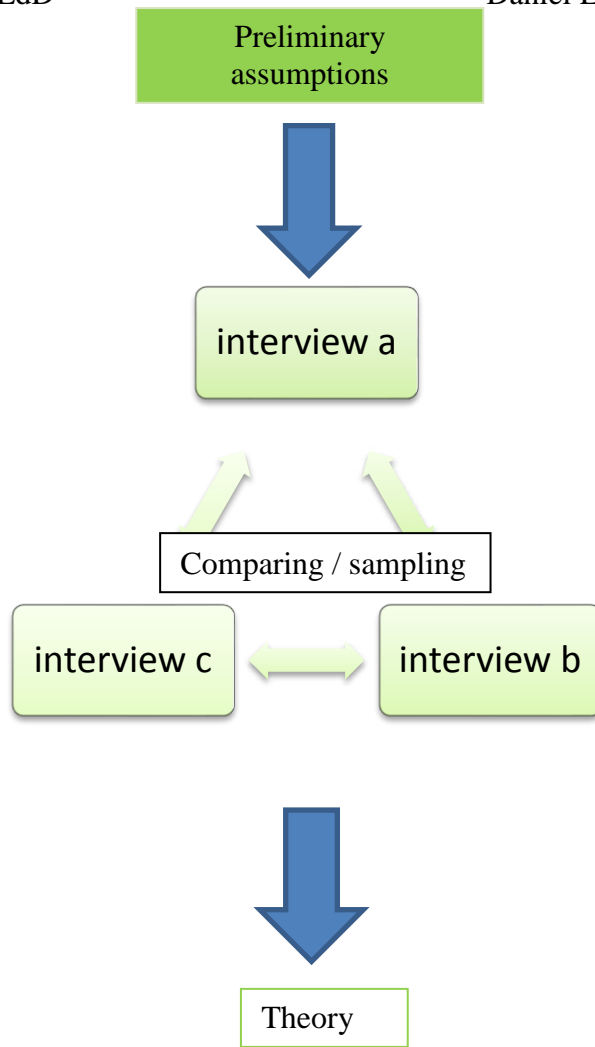
Figure 26: Coding the Interviews (from Flick (2006) p.102)

The interviewees had the following similarities and differences,

Interview number	Gender	Transition from -	Transition to -
1	F	primary	Primary special
2	M	primary	Secondary special
3	F	primary	Primary special
4	F	primary	Primary special
5	F	secondary	Primary special
6	M	Primary	Secondary special
7	F	primary	Primary special
8	F	secondary	Secondary special

Figure 27: The Interviewees

The fifth interviewee in the original group had to withdraw for personal reasons after the first interview – that interview is used in the report and appears in the appendices. The ninth interview in the appendices is the interview that was the pilot with Christine who moved from a mainstream primary school to a primary class in a special school.

The clear majority were transferring from primary schools and this gave them an advantage over those from secondary school both in the attainment ranges of the learners – the difference is greater as older pupils in the mainstream sector will have progressed much further. And a further advantage is that the primary teacher is expected to teach across the whole curriculum whereas in secondary schools teachers are subject specialists. All of the teachers in the special schools had class teaching responsibilities to teach across the whole of the curriculum. In other words the teaching task in the special school is similar to the teaching task in a primary school. The gender range reflects the broad gender representation within the special school sector for pupils with learning needs.

The thematic analysis is appended. The analysis showed each of the interviewees responses tracked across eleven themes. The themes presented themselves following the question prompts within the interviewee's answers. The nine interviews were then matched against these themes and similarities and differences were noted

These themes were then contrasted with the 'issues' I had expected to be drawn out of the interviews. Of the seven hypotheses I had begun with it was clear that the first three had not been supported and the teachers were saying that the transition had been manageable because there were skills that they were able to utilise from their previous settings and the support

processes in the special schools had enabled them to become part of the those institutions and emerge as successful teachers. The first hypothesis was confirmed in a qualified way in that it indicated that the initial period of the transition was challenging but that was not long lasting and was an aspect of the 'transformational learning' they were engaged in as they quickly learnt to understand their new work place.

1. Teaching in a special school was daunting and challenging

   '…personally for me it was quite hectic…' (Appendices Alan p.32)

   '… the atmosphere is a lot less formal… (Appendices Mike p. 7)

   '… initially it was really daunting…' (Appendices Susan p. 41)

2. *The teacher's knowledge, skills and understanding* had not transferred easily

   '… all the basics of any teacher are definitely transferable…' (Appendices Tina p.20)

   '… I think some of the strategies I used in mainstream actually were suitable for the first class I had here…' (Appendices Diane p. 13)

   '…I think the skills are very similar…' (Appendices Alan p. 32)

3. This had led to a crisis in identity for the teacher

   '… I remember the transition being quite smooth really … it felt like quite a natural sort of transition for me…' (Appendices Mike p. 7)

   '… I don't see a difference in the role … it's just here I am able to be less formal…' (Appendices Susan p.43)

There was much stronger support for the hypothesis about the special school being more 'child centred' and there being some significant changes in the teacher's role although they were still not as challenging as originally speculated.

4. The world of the special school was very unlike that of the mainstream school

'… there is a lot more pressure to show progress in a mainstream so you're constantly on to the next thing whereas here you have a little more time to get them consolidated on this before they move on…' (Appendices Alison p. 3)

'… I think at mainstream school I would feel at the end of the day there were students I hadn't had the chance to talk to whereas here I feel that every student has had my attention for at least part of the day …' (Appendices Mike p. 9)

'… there is certainly a difference in terms of the general learning style and the teaching style …' (Appendices Tina p. 20)

'… I would say the culture in the mainstream school is much more rigid…' (Appendices Tina p. 23)

'… it's much more teamwork…' (Appendices Laura p.38)

'… I don't feel there is the same level of competition …' (Appendices Susan p. 43)

5. It was difficult to become part of the world of the special school

'… I felt more comfortable in a special needs environment than in a mainstream environment …' (Appendices Diane p. 13)

'… it's been much easier here than I think it is in a mainstream school… here staff are generally more friendlier …' (Appendices Tina p. 23)

'… I can only say positive things about the other teachers and how nice it is to work with them...' (Appendices Susan p. 44)

6. The special school would have had benefits though in that it was child centred and more creative for the teacher

'… I'm not sure that the student's happiness or well-being really factored into it very much at all…'[when asked about their mainstream school] (Appendices Mike p.10)

'… in this special school I feel the children are viewed much more as individuals than they are in the mainstream setting…' (Appendices Diane p. 16)

'… here you have to make it your job to know these children inside out really…' (Appendices Tina p. 21)

7. Teachers found the change in their role and practice challenging

'… I felt more comfortable in this sort of role than I did in mainstream…' (Appendices Diane p. 17)

The follow up interview had four purposes, firstly to elaborate or complete the information that may have been missing form the first interview, secondly to revisit the original hypotheses and to reformulate them in the light of the findings of the first set of interviews and then to test them out, thirdly to develop the key themes further through question prompts and finally to 'ladder' the themes in importance for the interviewee – that is to ask the interviewees to complete tasks so that they score some of the emerging issues in order to clarify their importance to the interviewee.

The following table collated the information that would act as prompts for the second interview.

Interview number	Focus question 1	Focus question 2	Focus question 3	Focus question 4	Focus question 5	Focus question 6
1	Good teaching in m/s and s/s and high standards	Awareness of government agenda	Values as a teacher and job satisfaction	Transfer strategies and risk taking/challenges	Managing teams	Awareness of school policies
2	Similarities between the two environments	Values as a teacher and job satisfaction	Managing the team	Awareness of government agenda	risk taking/challenges	
3	What sort of person is successful as a teacher in a special school	How do you see your teaching role in the special school	Values as a teacher and job satisfaction	Awareness of government agenda	risk taking/challenges	
4	How do you see your teaching role in the special school	Values as a teacher and job satisfaction	What do you need to know	Awareness of government agenda	risk taking/challenges	
5	Values as a teacher and job satisfaction	Special school and mainstream school culture determinants	Awareness of government agenda	risk taking/challenges		
6	What do you need to know	Assumptions about the learners in m/s and s/s	Values as a teacher and job satisfaction	Awareness of government agenda	risk taking/challenges	
7	Values as a teacher and job satisfaction	Awareness of government agenda	risk taking/challenges	Teaching strategies that transfer		
8	Values as a teacher and job satisfaction	Awareness of government agenda	risk taking/challenges			
9	Values as a teacher and job satisfaction	Awareness of government agenda	risk taking/challenges			

Figure 28: Analysis of First cycle of Interviews (1)

The second interview would use the findings of the first round of interviews and the

developing model as the stimulus material for discussion.

4.4 Developing the model

Initially the model came from the theoretical work in the literature review where the levels of

influence on the teacher (weak to strong causation) went from the system wide - 'fields' and

'background' to the institutional ('habitus' and 'school culture') and then to the personal

('doxa' and the psychological construction of practice for the teacher).

The three areas of the model then broke down into the following parts with the elements

forming the main responses from the interviewees.

Factors	Elements	Elements	Elements	Elements	Elements	Elements
1. Educational background	Government policy – the 'standards agenda'	Ofsted	Teacher Standards			
2. School culture	School policies, structures and procedures	School communities of practice	Team management			
3. Personal practice	SEN knowledge	Curriculum knowledge	Pedagogic knowledge	Self-efficacy	Team leadership	Teacher-learner relationship

Figure 29: Analysis of first Cycle of Interviews (2)

The personal practice factor links well with the teaching framework used by Lewis and Norwich (2005) who argue that it is in curriculum knowledge and knowledge about the learners specific needs that significant differences exist between special and mainstream schools and that the teacher's pedagogic knowledge will have the adaptability to teach pupils in either setting. There are therefore they argue no distinct or special pedagogies for pupils with special educational needs (although there are special curricular and programmes).

By evaluating the interviewees answers according to each of the three groups and allocating sections of the transcript to one or other the Venn Diagrams were created that provided a visual representation of the amount of salience the interviewees gave to each of the areas which could then be used when planning for the second interviews See appendices).

4.5 The second set of interviews

In considering how the follow-up interview could provide data that would triangulate the findings led to the plan have a three part structure. The first part would be a reflection on the main themes of the original interviews with questions that probed further into the thinking of the teachers. The second part would be for the teachers to create a Venn Diagram for themselves of the relative strengths of the three areas in the model that I describe to them. The third part would be a questionnaire that asked them to grade their responses from 1 – 7 to provide data that could be used to compare each of their experiences in more detail.

4.5.1 Interviews

This would test out the themes derived from the initial interviews and probe further to elaborate on them by summarising them and inviting comments.

4.5.2 Venn Diagrams

The interviewees would be invited to produce a Venn Diagram depicting the relative strengths of each of the factors in the model hypothesised as an explanatory tool for the transition. They would be given minimal guidance so that they had space to interpret the model in the way it felt meaningful and comfortable for them.

4.5.3 Questionnaire

This began with 15 statements grouped into three issues – expectations, school culture and teaching. Three teachers completed this questionnaire and then after reflection on the data being provided and the willingness of the teachers to complete such a task quite quickly it was expanded to 25 questions with the addition of two further issues – professional development and change.

4.6 Case stories

Case stories are an adaption of the research technique of Ackerman (2002) and are described in Flick (2009, p347) as following certain stages. This is the original narrative interview, followed by the thematic analysis and then this leads to the reconstruction of the data as a case story. The case story can then be used to contrast with others. This further deepens and consolidates the analysis of the interviews and the triangulating data within the theoretical approach of the researcher which has been developed from both the literature review and the data collected. It is a narrative précis of the complete transcriptions of the interviews and consequently depends upon the insight and capacity of the researcher to fairly and accurately represent the evidence. It summarises the 'narrative reflection' level in Days (2004) gradings of teacher's reflections on their practice. It builds upon the teacher's narrative responses to the interviews conducted and avoids the too deliberate, self-censoring and possibly rushed response that would have resulted from a request to write the story for themselves. The teachers in the study had limited time available to me to be involved in the research and expressed wariness of strategies that were not 'interview like' when the initial approaches were made.

        4.6.1   Diane's story

First Interview

Diane found the initial period of the transition a 'steep learning curve' as she discovered that many of her teaching strategies weren't applicable in the special school setting. Some were though and these were valued by the school's management. It was the challenge of the pupils' behaviour that most surprised Diane. She found that the underlying structure to her teaching was similar but the pace of the pupil's learning was significantly different and the

range for which she needed to differentiate her teaching was far wider. This impacted upon the flow of the day and when combined with the personal care needs of the pupils and the support they required to manage the transitions between lessons and from activity to activity it resulted in a quite different feel for how her teaching day progressed and how she was situated within it. Diane was supported by her line-manager to understand the demands of the learners, their behaviour and the curriculum they required. The pressure to lead a team of teaching assistants and provide them with guidance and direction so that the needs of the learners were addressed was intense and Diane was helped by an experienced teaching assistant. Diane felt that the children in her class were viewed more as individuals than those she had taught in the mainstream school. Nevertheless she felt that she had the same high expectations for them to make progress in their learning as she had in the mainstream class - it was just more personalised. Diane felt that the classroom culture in the mainstream school was more formal than in the special school where because the pupils were less engaged in the learning process the teacher had to put in more time and be more flexible to encourage the children to learn. Diane feels it's very important for the children in her class to be happy and pleased to come to school and for her to be teaching them useful practical things that will increase their independence.

Second Interview

Diane is clear that the key issue for the transition is the needs of the pupils and how you adapt the curriculum so that effective learning takes place. Finding out about the school culture would be true of any change between schools but the significant factor for the teacher and it is always part of their practice is how to adapt the curriculum to the continuing changing needs of the learners.

First Task

She feels that during the transition her personal teaching beliefs and practices needed to take a backseat to the school's guidance and support on good teaching and classroom management. She trusted the school's direction on meeting the Ofsted criteria for her expected teaching practice. Over time though this changed and Diane was able to describe her position as one where her own teaching practice now met the requirements of outstanding teaching for the school and Ofsted but was 'her own' and she was confident in her own self-evaluations of her teaching.

Second task

Diane placed the learner's characteristics higher than the more 'external' demands on her role for setting her learner expectations. Similarly she rated the influence of her colleagues higher than the external factors. She has incorporated into her own personal teaching practice the external expectations for high standards and they are of as equal importance for her relationship with the learners. She attains a high level of personal and professional self-fulfilment from her teaching.

4.6.2   Tina's story

First interview

Tina felt that 'all of the basics' of her teaching transferred when she moved from the mainstream school and found the differences to be around specific ways of supporting the learners because of their specific needs. She felt that the need to be more controlled, precise and structured with her language was a major difference and the biggest 'learning curve' for her. The need to have a greater understanding of the learner because of the wider range in their needs was different and the additional demands they made in terms of their care and

behavioural issues. Consequently Tina saw the management of the team of Teaching
Assistants as crucial in order to both attain that knowledge and to be able to address the
needs of the diverse range of learners in her classroom. She was supported by her line-
manager. The commitment to high standards that Tina held to in the mainstream classroom
also transferred easily into the special school classroom. She remembers the culture of the
mainstream school to be 'more rigid' and sees the special school as 'more human and
personalised' with more 'humbleness'. The mainstream school was more hierarchical in her
view whereas in the special school there was collegiality and this facilitated the transition and
made her 'accepted' and 'feeling part of the team'. She finds great reward in adapting her
teaching and continually reworking what she does and so finds the special school
environment particularly motivating. For a transition to be effective she believes that the new
teacher would need to be trained in the key communication strategies that are used within the
classroom.

Second interview

Tina found the analysis of the four themes very strong and picked out the management of the
team of Teaching Assistants as the one for her that was most significant.

First task

 Tina feels confident in her teaching and in her successful transition and sees the
requirements of national directives to be well mediated by the school for which she is
adapted to but feels there is more learning still to be done in order to raise her professional
practice. She is very child-centred and holds the view that it rest upon the teacher's personal
experience and their 'gut-feeling' about the child's learning rather than any other measures.

Tina feels that the experienced teacher can intuitively tell what is right for their teaching in their classroom.

Second task

Tina's expectations of the learners are formed by the amalgam of her judgement of the learner's ability and the school's previous assessments and programmes. She is very aligned with the school's perceptions of the requirements for teachers and has internalised the 'standards agenda'.

4.6.3   Mike's story

First interview

Mike remembers the experience as being 'quite smooth' and he was able to transfer a lot of the skills he had developed in his teaching in mainstream school. He found the cultures of the schools different finding the special school 'a lot less formal' and 'a lot happier atmosphere'. He benefitted from the opportunity to work in a team teaching situation and was able to quickly learn the 'procedures and routines' from his colleague. He found the Teaching assistants who worked with him to be very supportive and committed to their role and this helped him. He noted the difference in his colleagues attitude to being observed and monitored with the tone led by the school's management – in the special school it was welcomed as a helpful and positive experience whereas in his mainstream school it had been more critical and demotivating. He feels that his expectation of the learners hasn't changed and it remains high although he appreciates the differences now in his behavioural expectations and the benefits of encouraging more 'conversation and communication' than he ever did in his mainstream classroom. The relationships with the learners are more 'open' and 'friendly' which he sees as necessary in order for the learners to 'come out of their

shells'. This is helped by the smaller classes and the greater time available to do that. He found the challenge of 'pitching' his teaching at the right level for the learners difficult at first but recognises this as an on-going aspect of his teaching. He felt that in mainstream school the criteria for success was very much the levels that the pupils attained whereas in the special school there is a more scope for recognising a wider range of achievements. As he became more confident in his role so he felt more able to say that he was doing a good job.

He feels to successfully transfer, although anybody could do it as 'the skills are transferrable' you need to 'change your outlook on teaching' and develop relationships with the learners so that you can set them appropriate learning expectations. And to do that requires a specific commitment on the part of the teacher – as Mike says 'a particular person to want to do that'.

Second interview

Mike agreed with the four themes and said that the issue of getting the expectations of success right for the pupils in the special school was the most challenging one. He feels that mainstream schools are very directly affected by the Ofsted accountability framework whereas in the special school although it is still there it is mitigated by the focus on the individual needs of the pupils. Mike 'likes personally getting to know the students and making professional judgements about where their learning has come from and where it needs to move to next'. And he feels this situation 'leaves a lot more scope to actually teach'.

First task

Mike is clear that his personal judgement is the key factor now in his teaching and this fits completely with the requirements of his school and overlaps where he feels it needs to with the strictures of the wider Ofsted world.

Second task

Mike has aligned his personal expectations with the schools and has internalised the 'standards agenda' and feels it is part of his everyday practice. He rates highly his relationships with the pupils.

4.6.4   Alan's story

First interview

Initially Alan found the size of the school and its organisation the most challenging aspect of the transition. He felt that his curriculum knowledge and teaching skills transferred straightforwardly - 'I found I didn't have to adapt my teaching style too much'. What he feels he had to do was change the pace of his teaching – 'slowing myself down'. He did though find the task of managing the team of teaching assistants at first quite daunting and feels that his initial attempts weren't too successful but with their support and guidance from his managers he was able to develop his team leader skills. Alan feels that the individual needs of the pupils in the special school make them much less homogenous as a teaching group than the classes in a mainstream school and this is exacerbated by their communication problems. His experience is that all schools have differing cultures and that that then depends on the management of the school. In all schools the aims are the same – to ensure the children make progress. Alan was well supported by his colleagues who he felt confident to ask for guidance and ideas. He gauges his successful transition to be from the time when his colleagues searched him out for support rather than the other way around. He believes that teaching skills transfer but that it takes a person with patience and resilience to overcome the particular pressures of the special school.

Second interview

Alan emphasised again the impact of the different structures and policies on his transition experience. He also elaborated on the importance for him of the time he has for each learner in order to look 'deeply into their needs'. Ideally he feels he would have wanted to do this in mainstream. In the special school though this meant that he spent a lot of time planning his curriculum as he was taking each child individually and aiming to set them each appropriate learning tasks.

First task

Alan feels that the national expectations and frameworks for teachers are the most powerful influences on what he does and the school is fully in line with them. Personally he keeps a part of himself at a critical distance from that.

Second task

Alan is pupil focused in his personal approach and clear that he has to operate within the national frameworks as they are interpreted by his school. He doesn't feel a tension between these.

4.6.5   Alison's story

First interview

Alison was worried that her transition experience would be very difficult and had created 'a lot of misconceptions in my head' about the possible differences. In reality she feels that her teaching still has all the elements that made it enjoyable for her in the mainstream school and her teaching skills transferred straight forwardly. The biggest issue for her was the management of her team of Teaching Assistants. As with any change between school there was a period of adapting to the routines and processes in the new institution. Alison found the culture of the mainstream school very 'pressurised and stressful' due to the focus on

hitting the targets for the children. She felt that the culture in the mainstream school wasn't supportive of her professionally or personally whereas the opposite is true of the special school. She appreciates the trust she is given and the support from her managers. There were areas of knowledge she feels that key to being successful in the special school – 'definitely autism training' as an example. She is clear that not all teachers could teach in a special school because it requires 'a certain way about you' which she feels is an understanding of the complex ways in which children can behave and learn which is non-judgemental.

Second interview

Alison reaffirms that the management of the Teaching Assistants was the biggest issue that she faced during the transition. In Alison's view the relationship that she forms with the learner in the special school is all about encouraging them to want to learn which for the most part is not the case in the mainstream classes that Alison taught in.

First task

Alison feels that her practice is guided by her own experience and viewpoints about teaching. She incorporates the needs of the school within that and has a much smaller regard to the demands of the government and Ofsted.

Second task

Alison has a child-centred approach to her teaching and incorporates the expectations of her school managers into this. She rates her professional development highly as having an impact on her teaching. And although admitting to finding change stressful she also sees it as a creative time.

4.6.6   Laura 's story

First interview

Laura was clear that her transition had been helped by the fact that although a qualified

teacher she had begun work at the special school as a Teaching Assistant and then done some

'cover' for teachers. So when she began as a teacher she feels she had the advantage that she

knew the school and the way that it worked. She found the most difficult issue to be the

curriculum and adapting it for the needs of the pupils. In mainstream school this had been

straightforward although very time consuming as there was a lot of 'paperwork' to be

completed and not much time or space for fun or exciting activities .

Second interview

Laura agreed with the four themes and picked the 'getting to know the pupils' as the

'biggest' one for her. For her getting to know the pupils is the way in which she got them to

engage with learning and this was far more important than it had been in the mainstream

school where the learners had been more mature and had had a good understanding of what

the teacher was expecting from them. Additionally Laura also saw this relationship as crucial

for the teacher to be able to anticipate and manage difficult behaviour. Only by knowing the

child very well could that detailed reading of their behaviour be attained. Also she had

developed very positive relationships with the families of the pupils in her class and this she

saw as more important for her in the special school than it had been in the mainstream

school.

First task

Laura was very clear that it was the school that set for her the teaching expectations. The

external world was for the most part mediated by the school and her personal views

overlapped with the schools.

Second task

Laura grouped the ratings for her expectations closely indicating parity in their influences on her. The school though had a strong impact on her and she was aligned with the 'standards' agenda. In terms of her own professional development again it was the school and her colleagues that were the most effective.

4.6.7   Susan's story

First interview

Susan describes her transition as 'daunting' and reflecting back over the experience feels her 'career has really changed'. Crucial to her transition experience was the support that she received. She recognises that an overload of information at the first stages would have been difficult to cope with and she felt it was a bit more 'sink or swim'. She is clear that 'learning through experience' is the most effective way of adapting. She found the issues relating to behaviour management the most challenging to begin with and understanding what she could expect and would have to deal with. Fortunately many of the skills and strategies she had used in mainstream in this area did transfer successfully. A big difference she found though was the issue of physical contact with the learners whether as part of their care needs or to deal with their behaviour and this was quite different from the mainstream school. It did initially make her wonder whether at times she wasn't more of a carer than a teacher. Gauging the correct learning expectations was also problematic but she had some personal experience in that her own child had learning difficulties and so she appreciated the importance of small steps in the learning process. She feels her own expectations of herself as a teacher hadn't altered and she still put in as much time and commitment to planning and preparing her teaching as she had done previously. Similarly she continued to have as high expectations of the learners. The culture of the special school is more 'close knit' and there is

a lot of co-operation between staff so that she feels 'part of the team' and that wasn't the norm in the mainstream school. Susan describes herself as a 'self-reflective teacher' and found the supportive observations she had as being really useful in her developing her practice. She is confident that she is doing well as she has had positive feedback from classroom observations and she sets high store by the responses of the learners in her class. She feels that she developed 'more understanding about motivating children and engaging them in learning and having fun' than she had in her time in her mainstream school.

Second interview

Susan agreed that for her the culture of the school had been a major change although one she relished, she didn't feel that managing the team of TAs had been problematic for her as she had had management experience in her previous school and she found them supportive and was able to quickly adopt a clear teacher role with them. She found the setting of appropriate learning task more difficult and feels that this 'is very much a learning process'. Laura has always believed in the learning process for the pupils rather than simply the outcomes of her teaching and feels that the relationship with the learner is about real 'personalisation' and there was not the time or the recognition of this in mainstream. Also in the special school is the need to know the learner because of their more complex learning, care and behavioural needs. She also feels that the relationship she has with the parents of the pupils in her class is different in that it is more supportive and wider ranging than the one she had with mainstream parents who looked only to the grades their children achieved.

Fist task

Susan has a clear view as to her own values and teaching expertise which overlaps with the schools and the external worlds enough to enable their expectations to be aligned with her practice.

Second task

Susan strongly indicates her personal practice sets her expectations for the learners above the school and the government. The school's culture is set by the headteacher and reflected in the staff group she is part of. She is child-centred and is clear that she is about getting the most from the learners. She finds working in the special school challenging and exciting and not particular stressful.

4.7.8. Christine's story

First interview

Christine felt that the biggest change for her during the transition experience was getting to understand all the routines and procedures within the school. At the same time there was getting to know the children and particularly their challenging behaviour. She found the flexibility and child centeredness of the special school supportive in this task and she realised that she had to adapt her speaking style for each of the children which she learnt from the Teaching Assistants. Christine feels that she has the same expectations of the children in the two settings – 'that they are ready to learn'. The special school allows more scope for creativity and is more trusting of her professional competence in being able to meet the needs of the children in her class. The team of Teaching Assistants supported Christine during the transition and helped her to get into the role and gave her feedback on how she was doing.

Second interview

Christine agreed with the themes and emphasised how in her mainstream school she had to treat the children very much as the same – 'the perfect child'. The focus then was on raising the children's attainment levels following careful tracking of their results. In the special school Christine feels that she is able to work at the pace of the learner. She also feels that it is possible to develop a far more intense relationship with the learners in the special school that is responsive to their learning and emotional needs. She feels that 'one of the things I like most about special needs schools is that you are getting to know each individual child and you are unlocking how they learn or how to get them to talk to you for the first time … I enjoy the challenge of that'.

First task

When Christine was in the transition period she felt that the requirements of Ofsted were the most important factor in her teaching practice and this incorporated both the school's expectations and her own personal values. Having successfully adapted her teaching to the needs of the pupils in the special school this then changed to a much larger place for her own personal judgements with a clear overlap with the important expectations of the school and which now incorporated the expectations of the outside world which had become less influential.

Second task

Christine is very child centred in her approach and placing their needs high in the ratings. She sees the school's culture as being set by the managers and her colleagues and incorporating the Ofsted expectations. She has accepted the 'standards' agenda into her teaching and aims to get the most out of the learners. Her practice is most influenced by seeing other teachers. She values creativity in teaching.

4.7 Summarising the themes from the interviews and the tasks.

The responses of the teachers formed a 'story' of their transition experience. Their

recollections and judgements were personal and formed from their experience of the process.

The stories were informed by the three elements – their personal practice, the specific school

culture in which they operate and the wider system properties that impact on the schools,

managers and teachers. Through their reflections the teachers were framing their experience,

prompted by the questions I provided, such that what potentially could have been a

fragmented, time bound, emotional and challenging series of experiences formed a coherent

whole. From this 'whole story' it was possible to derive themes that illuminated the specific

demands of special schooling and also those that had a wider significance for teachers

undergoing any change of setting.

Looking for the similarities and contrasts between mainstream schools and special schools in

the teacher's experiences provided the following breakdown,

		Diane	Tina	Mike	Alan	Alison	Laura	Susan	Christine
Comparisons	Flexible	*	*	*				*	*
	Creative	*	*	*			*	*	*
	Freedom	*	*						*
	Similar strategies	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	Same skills	*	*	*	*			*	
	Planning	*							
	Manager support	*	*	*					*
	Information provided	*	*	*	*	*		*	
	Formal observations	*	*	*	*	*		*	
	Pupil progress	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	Strategies	*			*		*	*	

Contrasts									
	Unpredictabilit	*						*	
	y	*			*	*			*
	Pace	*						*	
	Primary care	*			*	*			
	Curriculum			*					
	differentiation	*	*	*				*	*
	Getting to								
	know the								
	children	*	*			*	*	*	
	TA role	*	*		*	*	*	*	
	Management								
	of TAs	*	*	*	*	*	*		*
	Pupils are								
	individuals	*		*			*	*	*
	Learner is								
	happy	*		*			*		*
	Relevance	*							*
	PMLD pupils								

Figure 30: Similarities and Differences

From this it is apparent that,

- Some strategies transferred for all of the teachers

- Half felt that there were strategies that didn't transfer

- Most found that they could adapt their skills within both settings

- Pupils progress was a prime focus in both settings for all teachers

- A majority of the teachers found the special school to be more creative and flexible to work within

- A majority of teachers used the induction information and the formal observation process to support their transitions

- Most felt that the special school sees pupil sees individuals, values their happiness and sees getting to know the pupils as important

- Half highlighted the slower pace of teaching to be a crucial difference

- Half highlighted the greater relevance of the curriculum content to the learners needs in the special school

- For most teachers the different role of the Teaching Assistant and the task of managing a much larger team were significant contrasts

- Two teachers noted the primary care needs of the pupils as being a major contrast

- Two teachers felt that the unique demands of learners with profound and multiple needs were a major contrast

Theorising the transition experience using the 'awakenings' change framework would require that the teachers describe 'events' that match the notion of the teacher realising that they have 'transformed' their learning and therefore their understanding of the new teaching setting that they are in. This is analogous to them realising that they were self-efficacious in the classroom and consequently their transition had been successful. Within the interviews the following evidence could be found to support this perspective in the change process.

	Evidence of awakening experience, event or reflection
Diane	'feeling a lot more comfortable' (p 14) The soft-play room experience providing the insight as to the nature of the pupil's needs and the changes in expectations on the teacher (p 19) 'it took a long time for that to feel ok' (p 19)
Tina	The role of the TAs and listening to them and utilising their knowledge and skills and working as a team (p 16) Adapting my teaching (p 19)

Alan	When teachers come to him to ask advice (p 35 & 36)
Mike	The maths lesson that he pitched wrong (p 35) Changing your outlook on teaching (p 37)
Alison	The autism course (p 36)
Susan	I am a better teacher now (p 36)
Christine	Challenging experiences with the children (p 33) The modelling behaviour of the TAs (p 35) Child on the vibromat (p 37)

Figure 31*: 'Awakenings'*

The major factor in the 'awakenings' would appear to be the developing of the teaching relationship with the learner and this would also seem to be the main difference between the mainstream school setting and the special one. This was confirmed by all of the interviewees who each framed it in their own way according to their perspectives, beliefs and experiences. The teaching relationship was described in a variety of ways and for a range of purposes. The following table summarises these for the interviewees.

	The teacher-pupil relationship	The 'reason' for the change
Diane	'adapting your teaching to the needs of the pupils' 'Understanding the children's needs' (p29) 'Spend a lot of time … getting to know the children … before you can start building that learning up' (p 15) 'The children are viewed much more as individuals than they are in the mainstream setting' (p 18) Teach them what is useful (p 19)	More time available to bring the learners into learning which they need as they are more in their 'comfort zones' at home without the demands of school
Tina	Developing the relationship	Medical/care needs

	'you have to really really understand that child' (p 22) 'Know those children inside out' (p 22) 'Everything has to be tailored to each child' (p 22)	
Alan	'Look at each child and look deeply into their needs … in a special setting you are forced to do that' (p 33) 'Taking each child individually' (p 79)	More time The level of need
Mike	Individualising the expectations Personalised learning Openness and friendliness (p 11) Getting to know the student (p 11) Caring and professional 'friend' Personal relationships	
Alison	Its knowing your children (p 4) Treat them as individuals (p 5) I enjoy the challenge of finding different ways through to learning (p 6) I have very good relationships with them (p 101)	Pupils not understanding schools
Laura	Getting to know the pupils (p 17) To know them and use that knowledge (p 22) Individualising the learning Understanding the pupils Deeper understanding (p 56)	More time Encouraging learning Learner engagement Reluctant learners
Susan	More intimate close relationship (p 46) Personalised learning (p 102) More caring role 'More intense relationship' (p 95) Really fine-tuned to all their needs (p 129)	Having the four of us thinking (including the TAs in the teaching practice) The level of need
Christine	Personalised 'Here it is just you go with the children' (p 50) Working at the pace of the child 'More involved with each child' (p 53) Caring (p 41) Compassionate You work at the pace of the child (p 31)	The level of need In mainstream – blanket approach – the perfect child Time

Figure 32: The Teacher-Learner Relationship

Responses to the question about the best possible transition experience based upon their

experiences.

	Elements of a good transition
Diane	More time in the school prior to starting (a week) Information on the pupils needs The curriculum A 'meet the class' session Basic communication programmes – signing Courses on ASD and PMLD
Tina	Basic communication programmes – signing Courses on ASD How to use the ICT Managing a team of TAs
Alan	Observe other teachers Reflection time in a structured induction period
Mike	Getting to know the pupils time Lesson planning information Information on the school's systems and procedures
Alison	ASD training Information on the school's systems and procedures Managing a team of TAs
Laura	Managing a team of TAs Information on the school's resources Information on the4 needs of the pupils A meet the pupils opportunity
Susan	Training in behaviour management The care needs of the pupils Time to observe how the school works
Christine	More time in the school prior to starting (a week) Information on the school's resources

Figure 33: Elements of a Good Transition

This leads to the following model for a transition plan that incorporates all of the above

elements into a package that sits within the 'first awakening' change framework as the

'bespoke programme'.

1.	Orientation • The school building and grounds

	• The school's resources (specialist spaces) • The school's ICT systems and software • The pupils in the class • The school's key policies and procedures • Partnership with parents/carers
2.	Essential training • Behaviour management • SEN • ASD • Communication programmes
3.	Formal Mentoring/coaching including reflection time and support
4.	Management of the Team • Theory and practice • Support
5.	Access to the informal 'community of practice' of the school

Figure 34: Elements of an Ideal Induction Programme

Analysing the elements that went together to form the teacher's self-efficacy judgements was

a further area for investigation. The following table draws their responses from the

interviews.

	Elements
Diane	Children are happy Parental feedback Seeing progress
Tina	Meeting high standards
Alan	Other teacher ask you for support You ask less support from others
Mike	Regular positive observations Manager feedback Feedback from the pupils Peer observations
Alison	The children are learning The children are making progress Classroom observations (Performance management) Knowing the children Planning Evaluating and assessing Having fun Watching others who are good and comparing
Laura	The children are learning

	Knowing the pupils and knowing what they can achieve
Susan	Lesson observations
	'Good practice' videos
	TAs feedback
	Seeing progress in the pupils
Christine	TAs feedback
	Observations

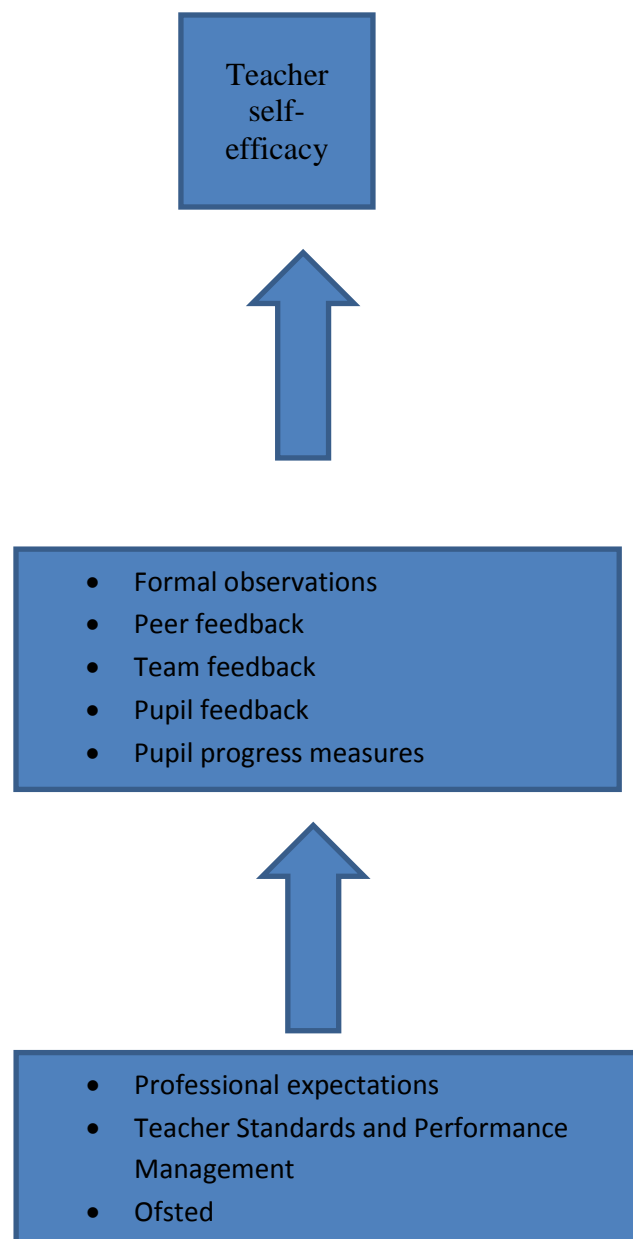Figure 35: *Elements in the Teacher's Self –*Efficacy Judgements

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┌──────────────┐
│   Teacher    │
│    self-     │
│   efficacy   │
└──────────────┘
        ▲
        │

┌────────────────────────────────┐
│  • Formal observations         │
│  • Peer feedback               │
│  • Team feedback               │
│  • Pupil feedback              │
│  • Pupil progress measures     │
└────────────────────────────────┘
        ▲
        │

┌────────────────────────────────┐
│  • Professional expectations   │
│  • Teacher Standards and Performance │
│    Management                  │
│  • Ofsted                      │
└────────────────────────────────┘
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Figure 36: *Teacher's Self*-Efficacy

It would seem from the responses of the interviewees that the above figure for teacher self-efficacy was operating for them. The formal 'system' definitions of teacher competency as exemplified in the Teacher Standards (2011) and the Ofsted (2014) judgements of good and outstanding teaching are mediated through the school's interpretations and the developed 'community of practice' operating between the very experienced and the less experienced.

The differential effects of the three elements within the model for looking at the transition experience are illustrated in the Venn Diagrams that the interviewees were asked to produce to summarise the relative strengths of each for them.

As Alan says, ' school and Ofsted are intertwined … the way the school looks at government policy and Ofsted is different according to the school and so the influence of Ofsted will depend on the school' and 'the way that the school influences government policy influences my teaching more than the general policy'. Consequently a Venn Diagram that allows for overlapping of influences to be represented enables this notion to be reflected upon in greater depth and then expressed visually. In the diagram the P is for the 'personal', the S for the 'school' and the B for the 'background'.
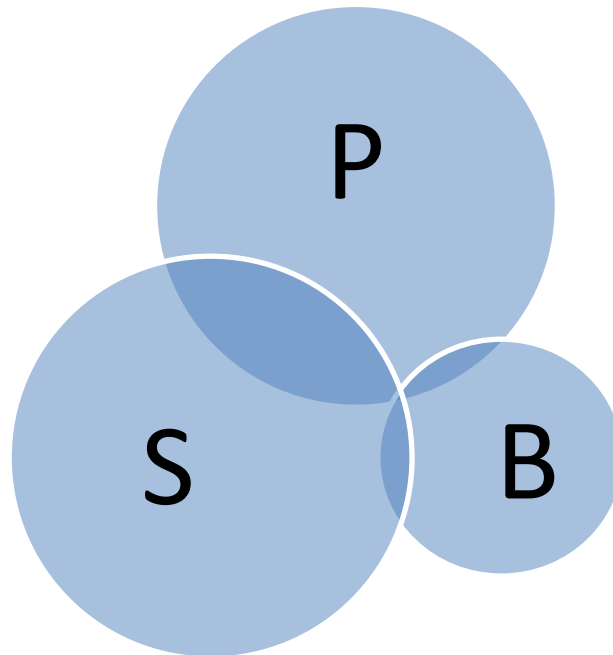
Figure 37: Venn Diagram to Describe Transition Experience

Three teachers produced the same diagram to describe their post-transition situation. Two of

the rest produced the same diagram and then three had their individual ones. The most

common was one where the personal and school were the same large size and overlapped and

incorporated a medium sized background that overlapped both the personal and the school –

this is illustrated above. The 'personal' circle was large six times and medium twice. The

'school' was large four times and medium four times. The 'background' was medium five

times, large just once and small twice. It is possible then to suggest that for this group of

teachers their personal judgements and values were the most significant factor with the

schools community of practice almost as strong but the background governmental framework

having the least effect.

Three teachers wanted to produce two diagrams – one for how they felt during the transition

and one for now. This produced two that were very similar to one of the 'now' diagrams for

one of the unique teacher diagrams. These three diagrams had a large school factor, a

medium personal factor and a small background factor. The other diagram depicting how that

teacher felt during the transition was very similar to the 'now' Figure of another unique

teacher. This had a large background element and two medium sized personal and

background elements. The diagrams are in the appendices.

The following table summarises the Venn Diagram findings.

Teachers	Now/Then Figure	Description
Tina	Now	Large 'personal'
Susan	Now	Large 'school'
Christine	Now	Medium 'background'
Mike	Now	Large 'personal'
Alison	Now	Medium 'school'
		Medium 'background'
Diane	Now	Large 'personal'
		Medium 'school'
		Small 'background'
Laura	Now	Large 'school'
		Medium 'personal'
		Small 'background'
Alan	Now	Large 'background'
		Medium 'school'
		Medium 'personal'
Diane	Then	Large 'school'
Laura	Now	Medium 'personal'
Alison	Then	Small 'background'
Christine	Then	Large 'background'
Alan	Now	Medium 'school'
		Medium 'personal'

Figure 38: Venn Diagram Findings

The questionnaires

Taking the ratings that the interviewees produced for the questions which for the first three,

were grouped into three and for the rest who had two additional groups added to make five

produces the following breakdowns.

Group 1 (Questions 1-6)

1. Are your expectations set by the learners' ability?

Rating 1(low) – 7 (high)	Number of interviewees
7	6
6	1
5	1

2. Are your expectations' set by the learner's needs?

Rating 1(low) – 7 (high)	Number of interviewees
7	1
6	2
5	3
4	1
3	1

3. Are your expectations set by the learner's previous performance?

Rating 1(low) – 7 (high)	Number of interviewees
7	6
6	1
5	1

4. Are your expectations set by the school's targets?

Rating 1(low) – 7 (high)	Number of interviewees
7	0
6	2
5	3
4	2
3	0
2	1

5. Are your expectations set by the school's assessments and curriculum for that learner?

Rating 1(low) – 7 (high)	Number of interviewees
7	1
6	2
5	2
4	2
3	1

6. Are your expectations set by National Targets?

Rating 1(low) – 7 (high)	Number of interviewees

7	0
6	0
5	0
4	1
3	3
2	1
1	3

Within this first grouping which focused on where the teacher's expectations for the learners' came from it is clear with 75% of the respondents saying that it is set by the learner's ability and consequently their knowledge of that learner rather than the knowledge of the learner provided by the school through information about the learner's special educational needs, targets or their previous performance within the curriculum. It is very clear too that they do not rely on the national performance indicators to guide them. This strongly reinforces the theme that the teacher's rely upon their own professional judgement when determining what their expectations of the learners are and that this is formed through their teaching relationship with that learner.

Group 2 (Questions 7 – 11)

7. The school's culture is set by Ofsted

Rating 1(low) – 7 (high)	Number of interviewees
7	0
6	2
5	5

8. The school's culture is set by the headteacher's vision

Rating 1(low) – 7 (high)	Number of interviewees
7	5
6	2
5	1

9. The school's culture is set by the staff group

Rating 1(low) – 7 (high)	Number of interviewees
7	1
6	5

5	2

10. The school's culture is set by the area the school is in

Rating 1(low) – 7 (high)	Number of interviewees
7	0
6	0
5	0
4	1
3	2
2	3
1	2

11. The school's culture is set by the needs of the learner

Rating 1(low) – 7 (high)	Number of interviewees
7	4
6	2
5	2

This second group of questions was looking at the school culture. The three factors

emphasised by the teachers was the headteacher's leadership, the influence of the staff group

and the needs of the learners. This supports the case for the 'community of practice' strongly

influencing the teacher's functioning within the school.

Group 3 (Questions 12- 15)

12. Teaching is about the relationship with the pupil

Rating 1(low) – 7 (high)	Number of interviewees
7	3
6	3
5	2

13. Teaching is about my professional practice

Rating 1(low) – 7 (high)	Number of interviewees
7	2
6	4
5	2

14. Teaching is about getting the most out of learners

Rating 1(low) – 7 (high)	Number of interviewees
7	6
6	1
5	1

15. Teaching is about raising standards

Rating 1(low) – 7 (high)	Number of interviewees
7	3
6	2
5	3

This third group of questions was focused on how the interviewees saw their role in teaching. They were child focused in that they were all very clear that they were about getting the best out if their pupils, with their professional practice and their relationship with the pupils just behind. They also fully believed that they were about raising standards as well.

Group 4 (Questions 16 – 20)

16. My professional development is most influenced by courses

Rating 1(low) – 7 (high)	Number of interviewees
7	0
6	3
5	2

17. My professional development is most influenced by my colleagues

Rating 1(low) – 7 (high)	Number of interviewees
7	3
6	2

18. My professional development is most influenced by watching other teachers

Rating 1(low) – 7 (high)	Number of interviewees
7	3
6	2

19. My professional development is most influenced by my managers

Rating 1(low) – 7 (high)	Number of interviewees
7	6
6	1
5	1

20. My professional development is most influenced by my own reading and
    questioning

Rating 1(low) – 7 (high)	Number of interviewees
7	1
6	2
5	2

This fourth group looked at the teacher's professional learning and development. Here the

influence of their colleagues or the 'community of practice' was highest with other factors

varying according to the individual teachers.

Group 5 (Questions 21- 25)

21. I find change challenging

Rating 1(low) – 7 (high)	Number of interviewees
7	3
6	0
5	2

22. I find change exciting

Rating 1(low) – 7 (high)	Number of interviewees
7	2
6	1
5	1
4	1

23. I find change creative

Rating 1(low) – 7 (high)	Number of interviewees
7	1
6	4

24. I find change manageable

Rating 1(low) – 7 (high)	Number of interviewees
7	1
6	1
5	3

25. I find change stressful

Rating 1(low) – 7 (high)	Number of interviewees

7	1
6	1
5	2
4	0
3	0
2	1

This final group looked at change with most agreeing that it was challenging, exciting and creative.

When looking across all of the answers it appears that the scores that the interviewees made are grouped closely together without great variation between them. Questions 6 and 10 have the lowest scores and questions 1, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 have the highest. These are strongly confirming the views that the teachers are forming professional judgements based upon their relationships with their learners which is giving them confidence in their teaching expectations. They develop this confidence through interaction with their colleagues in a 'community of practice' which provides them with ways to reflect upon their own teaching practice so that it matches the school's ways of working.

This picture is conformed in the following table which brings together each interviewee's highest and lowest ratings.

		Highest scores	Lowest scores
1	Mike	1, 3, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15	6, 10
2	Alan	1, 2,3, 8,9,11,12,13,14,15	6, 10
3	Tina	1, 5, 8, 11	6, 10
4	Diane	1, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17. 18 21	6, 25
5	Alison	1,2,3, 12,14	10
6	Laura	8, 14, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 24, 25	6, 10
7	Susan	1, 3, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 21, 22	6, 10
8	Christine	8, 9, 11, 14, 15, 18, 23	6, 10

These interviewees only had questions 1-15 to respond to.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Did the methodology serve the research intentions?

The study began with a number of research questions, theories and assumptions. These were to be explored through the reflections of the teachers taking part in the study. The methodology was selected because it matched the study's purposes in that it intended to evaluate the transition or induction period for the teacher by using the focused reflections of those teachers on their experiences. The issues highlighted within the Salt Review (2010) were systemic, institutional and also specific to the teacher. This study looked at those that related to the teacher, their status, preparedness for the role and effectiveness once they had taken it on. It aimed to get beneath the assertions of the Salt Review (2010) and the assumptions about teaching in a special school that it seemed to be based on. By asking teachers to reflect in some depth upon their transition experience the methodology provided rich data related to that change process that goes beyond the institution's own over-simplifying categories for determining if a teacher is operating effectively for them. The ways in which different school's interpreted and enact the requirements of the schooling system and its accountability framework within special school was not the focus of this research. Rather it was looking at the personal experiences of the teachers who underwent the transition from teaching in a mainstream school to teaching in a special school. The issues highlighted by the Salt Review (2010) did not seem to be reflected in the teacher's responses. Rather a wider range of issues that related to the way that teaching has developed with regard to special educational needs and the expectations that the accountability system has placed upon schools seem to be those that figure predominantly in the perceptions of these teachers.

The way that these issues are understood within the teacher's personal practice and their subsequent reflections upon that practice point to matters that are more focused ultimately on the teacher's 'character' (Carr, 2007). Carr (2007) makes the case that,

> Teaching seems to be the sort of occupation in which professional effectiveness is greatly enhanced by the possession and exercise of personal qualities and practical dispositions that are not entirely (if at all) reducible to academic knowledge of technical skills. (p. 369)

Through the interviews and tasks it became clear that the 'character' of the teacher was the key determinant in respect of their choice to transfer and then their success in transforming themselves in their new roles. At the core of their 'character' was the quality of their care or concern for the learners in their classrooms and their consequent commitment to using their professional expertise to help them learn and make positive progress.

5.2 The findings summarised

5.2.1 What have we learnt about the teacher's transition?

The transition experience described by the teacher's was one of them undergoing a process of change in their practice and simultaneously in their psychological evaluation of their self-efficacy. They were on a journey and getting to a place where in their professional self-estimation of their work they felt themselves to be functioning effectively as a teacher. Over the initial change period (varying from one to two weeks to 1 term up to 1 year) to when they felt they had become the teacher they felt that they wanted to be, a number of experiences combined to make their perception of what they were doing move from that initial instability to the later clarity and confidence.

This change process was importantly about the relationships that they developed with the learners in their class. This relationship needed a period of time to develop and this was influential in the teacher's estimation of their self-effectiveness and the way in which they fitted into the 'community of practice' with their colleagues within the school. The change process was also about the feedback they received from the school community on how they were doing – from the Teaching Assistants, their colleague teachers and the school's management. Again this changed over time and provided them with evidence that influenced their self-evaluations of their effectiveness. The environment of the special school enabled both to happen and also demanded as an aspect of this that their understanding of what being a teacher was about would conform to the community of practice operating within the school.

The teachers were 'inducted' into that 'community of practitioners' through a combination of information or 'knowledge sharing' and practical coaching. This built upon their acknowledged skill and knowledge base as teachers which are based upon the common expectations for teachers set by the government through its reform programme aimed at raising standards in schools. The teachers had acquired this skill and knowledge base through their training and experience in their previous school(s).

The teachers identified a key difference between the mainstream school and the special school in that the learners in the special school found it difficult to engage with the 'game' of learning. They had to be coaxed and cajoled into the 'game' and the teacher has to utilise a number of strategies that were dependent upon a much deeper and holistic knowledge of the individual learner's life – their family background, their behavioural functioning, their communication systems and choices and their likes and dislikes as well as their medical and care needs. The teachers of necessity also had to be tuned into what made the learner 'ready

to learn' and just as much what would divert, distract or turn of the learner from engagement with any learning episode. This relationship was nested within the culture of the school. It was realised in the rituals and routines that had become the 'familiar' for the learners within the school environment. Running parallel to that aspect of the school culture was the one that the school created and maintained so that it conformed to the accountability framework that the state had established for the schooling system.

In Wenger's (1998) Community of Practice model he made the case that the students within a school are not part of a community of practice and their learning is not therefore illuminated by this theory. Within schools he argued learning is 'engineered' rather than proceeding by a version of 'apprenticeship' (Sennett, 2009) and the teacher's pedagogy is the process by which this 'engineering' occurs. The learning relationship is an aspect of this pedagogy and there is a clearly articulated by the teachers in this study of the difference in the ways in which it is realised between the mainstream school and the special school. This aspect of their pedagogy that was recognised by them as important in the teacher's effective work within the special school is also suggestive of the key 'motivational' or personality factor that may differentiate both those teachers that choose to transfer and those that are successful when they do so. It is a reference to Buber's (1958) I-Thou relationship and to Nodding's case (2006 and 2012) that teaching includes a caring and non-instrumental dimension to be congruent with its general purposes. Additionally this highlights the link between the individual teacher's value systems such that teaching can then be seen through each individual teacher as a consistently ethical activity that recognises the justice of education for all learners (Nussbaum, 2006).

It is by interpreting the demands of government and its inspectorial regime through its policies, procedures and performances that the school, defined by the school management, develops a practice that is routinised by the teaching and staff teams which becomes how it operates in accordance with the state's determination of 'good schooling'. The 'community of practice' of the teachers supports the way in which these demands are meshed with the particular teaching style or styles that the special school requires consequent on the nature of their learners and the challenges they present in terms of engaging with the school's curriculum and the wider opportunities for learning organised by the teachers.

5.2.2 What was the experience like?

For most of the teachers the presentation and the initial demands of the learners were quite different to the classes they were responsible for in the mainstream schools they had come from. In addition they also had a team of teaching assistants within the class waiting to be directed by the teacher. There was an immediate imbalance in the knowledge and skills base within this team - with responsibility vested in the person with the power deficit. The teachers had to utilise their generic teaching knowledge and skills in order to establish their authority and lead the team to accomplish the goals that the teacher had to set for the each of the learners. The setting of those goals based upon the expectations of the learner is the key to the success of the new teacher's teaching. This was at the heart of the anxiety or worries that the teachers talked about before and just as they arrived in the classroom.

5.2.3 How did teachers cope?

The process by which they adapted their knowledge and skills to the new situation through the 'community of practice' of the school was the learning experience for the teachers – the

way they developed their practice or praxis. They had to be self-reflective about their skills

as they applied 'theory' or ideas about what ought to happen to their practice or the

interactions they were having with the learners. This was constantly being updated and

upgraded so that the framework for teaching that the teacher brought with them could contain

the new learners, their curriculum and the support they needed for their learning from the

teacher themselves or the from the team of teaching assistants also in the classroom. The aim

for the teachers was to adapt what they already knew as accomplished teachers albeit in

mainstream schooling settings to the special school environment and operationalize it for the

new learning expectations. These they realised and then understood to be individualised and

personalised to the learner but not completely free floating as they were formulated within

the 'community of practice' of the school in the way that it had incorporated the national

framework for standards within all schools to itself.

5.2.4 How did their practice change?

Teaching is a complex knowledge informed practical activity. The constituent elements of

the teacher's pedagogic knowledge undergo continual revision as 'craft knowledge' but in

the more pressured experience of meeting novelty and especially novelty on the scale of the

special school classroom then those elements are being revised extensively over an on-going

period and simultaneously. The teacher's pedagogic knowledge, in this study, was comprised

of the following elements and probably more depending on the teacher's personal

educational and career trajectory,

- Curriculum knowledge
- Special Educational Needs knowledge

- Child Development knowledge

- Professional practice knowledge

- Pupil/school contextual knowledge

These were all forms of knowledge that provided information about the situation the teacher found themselves in as they produced their professional practice within the dynamic set of interactions in the classroom. These knowledge elements were transformed into a pragmatic and practical 'knowledge in action' series of performances and utterances – in other words knowledge how to teach.

The teachers reflected upon that experiential process and highlighted for themselves the key moments and changes that they remembered and have incorporated into their pedagogic knowledge to draw upon as they develop their craft knowledge in the classroom. They highlighted the changed relationship they had with the learners in their classroom as key to the way their practice changed. The 'individualised' and 'personalised' educational programmes they were now delivering, which drew upon their previous knowledge of similar demands in their teaching experience and skills, was new to their repertoire of teaching strategies and provided them with 'mastery' experiences to consolidate their self-efficacy feelings in their roles. The moment that these experiences constituted an 'awakening' and through reflection were understood as defining the professional role they needed to follow in the school then they had then undergone the main change needed of them. Managing the team of adults within the classroom was another major factor to address through their change process. This the teachers had to face according to their previous experience of people management. Consequently it assumed a different valence for each teacher according to their perceived self-efficacy in managing others. The teachers found that the Teaching Assistants

in their teams were able to provide them with models of behaviour to copy and informal coaching which enhanced their effectiveness in their roles and when added to the formal school systems which supported the transition.

The schools were able to provide much needed pedagogic knowledge to supplement that which the teachers brought with them so that they were able to modify their successful practice in the new situation. Various forms of induction programmes and support enabled this to happen and coupled with the classroom observation feedback and the opportunities to observe proficient teachers in other classrooms gave the teachers enough material to work into their practice.

5.2.5 How useful was the model in illuminating this transition?

Professionalism and policy

The re-modelling of the teacher workforce that has been undertaken from a centralised policy agenda delivered by successive governments has changed the picture of teacher professionalism that teachers currently hold. The 'de-professionalization' has been accomplished by

a) The training and teaching standards that emphasise competencies over discipline knowledge and subject knowledge

b) The expectation of teachers to be teaching using 'models' promoted by the national strategies and their guidance and subsequently endorsed by the 'high stakes' accountability framework Ofsted imposes through its effects on schools and their organisation

    c) The focus on the performance of teachers and the linking of their performance

       to pay

    d) The absence of an independent self-regulatory body for teachers

The teachers in this study did not take a strong view with regard to the changes to the teaching profession that have and are occurring following the policy directives each government makes as it endeavours to 'improve' the educational system. They did though report that the way that the 'standards' agenda is all pervasive in mainstream schools means that their personal value system that sees teaching as being an enlightening and transformative experience for the learner is compromised by the need to ensure that narrow outcome measures are reached and it consequently framed their teaching.

Schools, teachers and policy

The emphasis on teacher performance and the meeting of competences and 'standardised' styles of teaching has devalued the role of research evidence in the development of effective pedagogy and left policy to be determined by the selection of features of high performing jurisdictions identified by the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment, OECD) rankings produced every three years beginning in the year 2000. Teachers are very open to the importance of training and knowledge to the development of their personal practice but leave this to the schools to determine so that the 'community of practice' is engendered for them. The notion of independent research impacting upon their practice was not mentioned or considered and this has a wider significance given the debate that Goldacre (2013) has on behalf of the government begun again on the role of research in the evidence base for good teaching.

5.2.6 What have we learnt about teacher self-efficacy and competence?

The teachers in the study were attuned to the national policy framework for education that has established for teachers a set of competences to measure themselves against and determine any need to improve their performance within. Their self-evaluation of their professional effectiveness was gauged by their journey towards having their performance judged to be meeting those criteria by their managers and colleagues. This complemented their own personal evaluation of their effectiveness and became the judgement that they themselves were professionally competent. There was a strong view that the skills and knowledge required to be a competent practitioner in a special school were within the reach of any teacher but that the teacher required the additional motivation to apply those skills within the special school. The key difference was seen to lie in the additional effort that the teacher would have to make to form a relationship with the learner so that their teaching would be effective. This was presented as an empathy with the learner and a sympathetic appreciation of the challenges that special needs education presents.

5.2.7 What were the key differences and similarities between the mainstream and the special sectors?

The teachers were clear that there were not significant differences between mainstream and special education. In this they were not reflecting the issues presented to the Salt Review (2010). They did not indicate wariness about entering the special sector of education nor a view that teaching within the sector was less valued than in the mainstream sector.

They indicated the main differences were in

- The special needs of the learners

- The cultures of the schools

- The management of the team of teaching assistants

- Their relationship with the learners in their class

The Salt Review (2010, page 23) argued that the issues affecting recruitment to the special school sector were the perceptions that teaching there had a more a caring role or dimension to it and therefore had a lower status and value, that there were few opportunities for career progression once in the sector and finally that teachers were very underprepared in their training and experiences for the differences in practice required to manage within the special school.

The issue of the 'caring' role presented itself, in the study, not in a negative light but as a positive difference between the two sectors. None of the teachers in the study felt that it was inappropriate or devaluing of their professional expertise for them to play a role in the care needs of the students in their classes. Additionally many felt that it was important to recognise the way in which physical touch and proximity supported the learners in their readiness to learn in the classroom. The teachers expressed these views within the discourse of professional boundaries and expectations and so demonstrated that the view that they did not feel that the teaching role in the special school was in any way had a lower status than that it had in the mainstream school. A number of the teachers also spoke of the management roles they had been offered and the management training they were able to access. This similarly is counter to the view that was expressed in the Salt Review (2010). The research did though support the view that teachers are 'under-prepared' for making what is referred to as a 'conversion' within the review when they transition from mainstream to special school. The review was also correct when it anecdotally suggested that many teachers make that

'conversion' due to personal experiences and connections that have provided them with an insight into the sector that wouldn't have come through the normal run of their professional career.

This last point may be important in that it may link with the personal characteristics identified by the Salt Review (2010, p. 26) as making the cluster that would enable a teacher to be successful in the special school and those described by the teachers in the study as differentiating them from their just as competent colleagues who would not consider making such a 'conversion'. For example creativity, patience and enjoying working intensely with a small group of learners clearly were expressed within the interviews in the study as were, for some of the teachers, the issues around unwell children and those with high medical needs. The management of the team within the classroom for the benefit of the learners also is a cross-over point. Issues around understanding the particular needs of the learners with relation to independence, language and accessing a 'pre-curriculum' curriculum were also common.

The teachers in the study had all been competent teachers in the mainstream setting and they had been trained and inducted into the centrally determined model of teaching efficiency that is exemplified within the Teaching Standards and enforced by schools through the high stakes accountability system led by Ofsted. This meant that they all were clear that the 'standards agenda' and raising performance in schools was the prime goal for teachers and they personally were driven by a desire to get the best out of the learners and to make a difference with their practice. This the Salt Review (2010) identified as a characteristic of the best teachers in the educational system. The teachers in the study expressed the view that

they felt that they were even more effective in this role within the special school as they felt

able to use their skills in a more effective and rewarding way.

5.2.8 What were the differences between mainstream and special schools in

relation to inclusion and the expectations of learners?

The main point made by the teachers related to the time available to meet the needs of those

learners in mainstream schools who found it difficult to engage with the learning tasks

presented to the class or group they were part of. The mainstream schooling expectation was

of a non-negotiable conformity to the schooling game or rules. The role of the teacher and

the learner was formally demarcated and the expectations were clear. The teacher 'delivered'

the curriculum and ensured the learner was able to present what they had learnt in the

appropriate assessment form so it could be accredited as having passed that stage of their

education. There was more flexibility in the special school and there was an acceptance that

the learner may not engage with the learning task but will need a personalised approach in

order to be successful in their learning.

The teachers did not express views that were critical of the 'segregationist' or 'labelling'

aspects of special schooling. They were concerned that pupils with special educational needs

were not, in their experience, given the support they required in the mainstream schools and

they did not feel that personalised learning was happening in mainstream schools despite the

claims made by the schools themselves. In many ways then they would fit with the case

made that the predominant ideology of schooling is one that is based upon a rather fixed

notion of a child's ability which then predicts how they those children will proceed through

the educational system. This ideology supports the view that pupils who do not fit this

normal trajectory require special provision. This view has been critiqued (Hart et al 2004)

and the alternative case made that a learner's 'ability' is more plastic and can change and

furthermore that different rates of progress and variegated outcomes ought to be valued

within an educational system that values diversity and difference. Consequently the

'inclusionist' case is that the classroom could contain learners if the 'high- stakes'

accountability system was adapted so that the children's 'ability' would not be the measure

by which they would be grouped to maximise the assessment outcomes that are used as the

measures of the school's success and hence the teachers effectiveness. Cornwall (2013) sees

these two viewpoints as perhaps irreconcilable and incompatible with a modern equality

based educational system. He argues that the English educational system is exclusionist,

competitive and hierarchical and therefore inimical to the values of inclusion and to any

structural changes that might advance it. The teachers in this study did not see the debate in

these terms and seemed of the view that inclusion meant the opportunity for the learner to

achieve their best irrespective of the difficulties they may face. It was not context specific

and furthermore the teachers emphasised how the culture of the special school facilitated this

for the learners. There was no notion that the special school had lower expectations of their

learners than the mainstream school.

5.2.9 What have we learnt about the change process?

The general three stage model that Lewin (1947) described that follows the process

beginning with an 'unfreezing' which creates the conditions within the teacher for change to

begin to occur and when they are then open to the supportive means by which that change

can happen. The 'unfreezing' is the recognition by the teachers that they must adapt their

practice. Then there is the change process itself when the teacher is moving to the new state of being effective in their role in the different setting. And the final stage consolidates those changes and establishes them within the teacher's personality, practice and value system. Scharmer's (2005) change theory reworks these stages and places them at key moments along his U shaped pathway. Scharmer (2005) helpfully reminds us that it is based upon the perceptions that the teachers has and the means by which they get to appreciate and form shared perceptions with their colleagues and the learners in the classroom so that the curriculum and learning goals that the teacher has can be delivered in the classroom. The 'awakening's' model operationalizes the insights from both Lewin (1947) and Scharmer (2005) so that they can be applied to the particular situation of the teacher in the school.

The teachers in the study felt that the changes in their teaching practice called upon by the special school setting were entirely consistent with the overall teaching framework within which they operated. They were 'under-prepared' for the change to those practices but were able with the supportive induction programme to adapt and develop to the new requirements. This induction period for them could be improved and they have indicated in which ways this could happen but necessarily it cannot be completely overcome. As teachers in the study pointed out many of the change experiences they underwent would happen if they moved from one school to another within the same sector and furthermore some are of their nature part of any change process.

5.2.10 What would make the most efficient transition?

From the perceptions of the teachers in describing how their transition experiences developed it would seem that the most important factor is the school's management of these teachers

and the way that management is congruent with the school's culture and ethos. If the experiences of the teachers as part of a 'community of practice' through which they receive information, ideas, access to resources, guidance, feedback on their performance, models of performance to replicate, emotional support and goals to reach are all working to the same framework and value system then the transitions were successful. For the teachers improvements could come in the balancing, relative importance of each of the elements and their timing. Summarising from the findings the most effective transition 'package' for the teacher would have the following elements,

INDUCTION PROGRAMME

| **Orientation:**

School environment
School resources
School ICT
Meet the pupils
School policies and procedures | **Essential training**:

Behaviour Management
SEN
ASD
Communication Programmes | **Mentoring and Coaching** | **Managing the TA team**

Theory and Practice Support | Access to the informal 'community of practice' of the school |
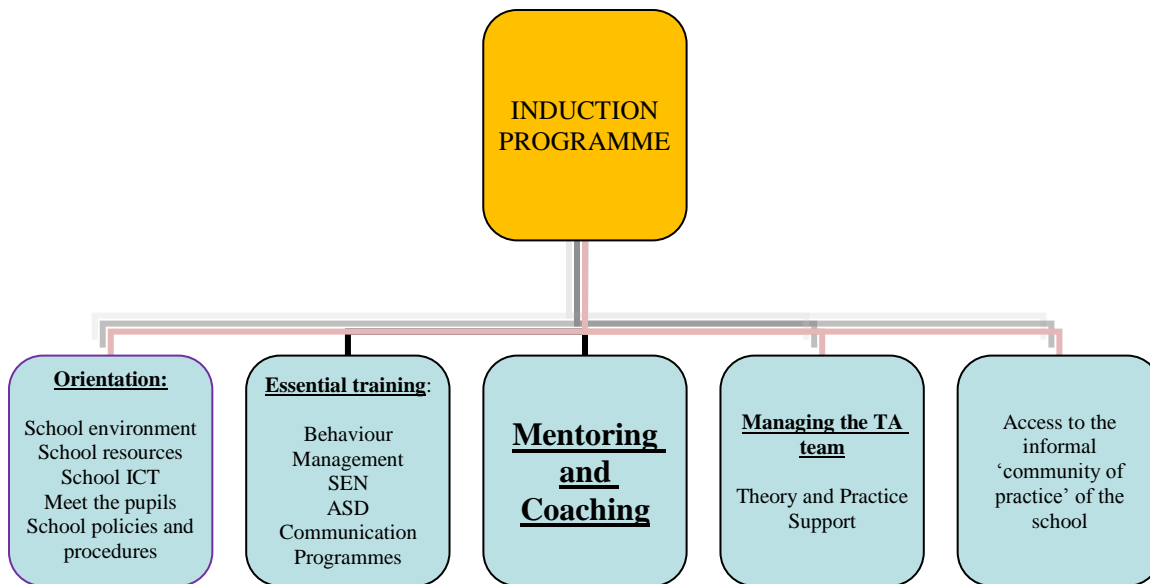
Figure 39: The Ideal Induction Programme

5.2.11 What have we learnt about the personal values of the teachers?

The teachers have reported feeling that the special school enables them to align their personal values about individualised learning and the special needs of pupils with their professional practice. They reported feeling a conflict within the mainstream school sector between recognising and responding to the individual needs of learners and the priority to maintain the delivery of the curriculum such that the majority of the learners made the progress that national expectations required. Although these teachers were effective within the mainstream schools they felt that their personal value system was compromised by this 'system demand' upon them.

Looking at their values it was apparent that the individualised, personalised, relationship based educational provision made and valued within the special school was closely aligned with the teachers personal interpretation of the 'general' professional expectation to raise standards for learners in schools. They did not feel that there was a conflict but rather that there were pressures in the mainstream sector that mean it was realised in a range of ways including some they were uncomfortable working within.

5.2.12 What have we learnt about how communities of practice operate?

'Communities of Practice' is a loose term that refers to the way in which the teaching profession operates a version of 'apprenticeship' for new entrants into schools. Schools differ in the ways in which they formalise aspects of it and leave other aspects informal. Induction programmes and school performance management, quality of learning and continuing professional development systems as well as mentoring and coaching relationships and staff meetings all form the context within which interactions between inexperienced and

experienced teachers form the culture for the school of 'being a good teacher here'. The teachers in the study were very clear about the influence that their colleagues had on the transition experience for them. This included the teaching assistants within the classroom, colleagues in the classroom next door and managers and senior managers in more formal roles and relationships with the 'converter' or new 'entrant'.

5.2.13 What have we learnt about the professional learning process for teachers?

Teaching is a practical profession informed by knowledge. The teachers in the study were clear about what areas of knowledge they recognised they needed to function within the special school. This was context dependent and so needed to be negotiated by and for the specific school. They also learn very effectively from their colleagues. The model of the teacher attending a training course that would then develop their classroom practice is less strongly endorsed in this study and this finding is consistent with Wiliam (2009) who argues that teacher practice development is most effectively developed through a collaborative process of sharing 'what works' in a supportive and critically structured way. This moves the teachers into positions where they articulate the view that their practice is continually developing and that their practice is ever changing. The teachers in the study were clear that the key aspect of the change process was an 'acculturation' to the 'ways of being' in the school – the formalised institution setting that defined their role and effectiveness and through which they realised their personal fulfilment. But they were also clear that the value of their experience of achieving their effective role in the special school was that it gave them a solid base from which to continue to develop their practice and to respond to the continuous challenges the learners in their classes presented them with. These teachers valued the

creative and rewarding professional practice that was framed by their experience in the

special school – practice that was continually developing and improving.

5.2.14 What did the notion of praxis mean and add to our understandings of

teacher practice?

For teachers knowledge is very important and the transition experience points up clearly

areas where teachers were able to identify areas of knowledge they needed to have to be able

to teach in the special school in addition to those they already had. But this knowledge base

is not fixed and some of it is context specific. The areas that the teachers identified did not in

themselves count as knowledge disciplines or parts of knowledge disciplines. Rather they

seem to be specific skills that training could provide or discrete areas of information that

were 'stand alone'. The notion that there is one knowledge base for teaching that provides the

theoretical underpinning for all of the actions that the teacher takes in the classroom is not

apparent from the way the teachers talked about their transition experiences. Rather there is a

professional practice that is framed in a consistent and replicable way that can be adapted to

operate in a range of settings with different learners. Praxis is a term that takes us closer to

this active, practical, knowledge based personal experience that the teacher has and how it is

based within a dynamic relationship between the teacher and the learner. Praxis suggests the

way in which the reflections of the teacher at a range of levels are incorporated into the

practice of the teacher as they interact within the classroom co-creating the shared reality of

the teaching and learning experience for themselves and the pupils in the class. This leads to

a model of the teacher's learning that looks like this,
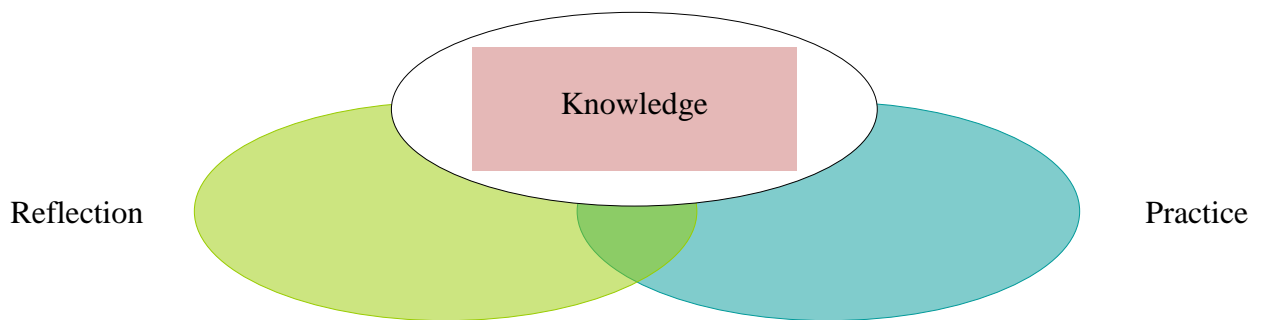
Figure 40: Praxis as the overlap between practice, knowledge and

Reflection

The teacher's reflections include those that are immediate in the classroom situation, those that are shared a bit later in the staffroom or with colleagues, those that become more detailed 'stories' of what has happened for reports or analysis and finally those that become elements of action research undertaken by the teacher themselves or as part of a larger collaborative effort with others.

The teacher's practice is 'what they do' in the classroom and it is informed by their knowledge which they can relate and make explicit, their 'know-how' or cumulative experience of what works for them which is less explicit, their personal understandings, self-knowledge and memories of episodes from their past and then their tacit knowledge which is implicit and which they finds difficult to relate as it comes to them automatically in the classroom.

The overlap is where the teacher's 'praxis' operates as the realisation of their practice and their reflections on their practice in the complex dynamic teaching episodes that make up teaching encounters. This 'praxis' is a form of 'situated learning' in that it is specific to the context and the moment in which it occurs. If it is then built upon to become a series of 'performances' then it adds up to the teacher's developing competence in their role.

This model is then 'nested' in the culture of the school which mediates for the teacher the demands and expectations of the formal and legal framework of policy and practice that defines education and teaching and by which their practice is judged successful or not.

5.2.15 Was personal construct theory useful in illuminating the intuitive

knowledge of teachers?

Personal construct theory is a way of looking at how individuals psychologically adopt cognitive systems that can quickly provide decision making guidance through the continuous secession of episodes that makes up a life lived in socially constructed institutions – specifically a teacher within a school. It has a number of tools that enable analysis of these cognitive structures and the way that decisions are made to change those structures in the light of experience (or feedback). Through the pilot within the study it became apparent that it provided detailed information about the individual teacher and their context but that it might not provide data that was comparable with others. The complexity of the factors influencing the individual teacher's cognitive decision making system and then the specific dynamic of their teaching situation as it presented itself just at the time of the research interview generated such case sensitive data that generalisation or comparison was very

difficult. Working from the individual perspectives of the teachers though and with the same

focus on the values underlying that teacher's personal attitude to their professional

experience enabled general conclusions to be drawn. This development from the PCT

starting point to a more thematic analysis of the teacher's narratives incorporated some of the

approaches and theory of PCT without the utilisation of the tools. In many ways the findings

can be seen to confirm the theory of 'semantic differentials' present within the PCT tradition.

5.2.16 How useful were case stories in illuminating the teacher's transition

experience?

The narrative approach to investigating the teacher's experiences was a very powerful tool in

developing theories about teacher learning and the development of their professional

practice. The narratives illustrated the five step process described by Eraut (2004) as

typifying teacher learning in their practice and also underscoreed the importance additionally

identified by Eraut (2004) of 'trusting relationships' with colleagues and managers,

> …practice can only be investigated by the co-construction of accounts of periods or
> episodes by observer(s) and performer(s). (p 259)

Eraut (2004) proposes that teachers will firstly try to utilise the knowledge and skills they

bring from their previous setting, then they will develop initial understandings of their new

situation and they will then filter their knowledge and skills and use those that have the

potential for application. Then they transform these strategies so that they work well in the

setting and finally they will then add onto these foundations new knowledge and practice that

they see and hear about from their community of practice. The narratives in their different

ways provided evidence for this change process and reinforced the point made by Eraut (2004) that the informal learning that the teacher undergoes in the school which is so complex and difficult to schematise can be made explicit through the teacher's reflections on their practice and especially through the dialogue with an 'informed' colleague or in this instance the researcher.

5.3 Recommendations for supporting the transition process

The change process for the teacher has involved a mix of formal and informal learning and will be intensely emotional for them as they look to achieve self-efficacy in their new role. This will entail them becoming 'transformed' in their identities as teachers and in their practice as an effective teacher. The way in which the school supports this process depends upon them having both the capacity to deliver the induction 'package' described above and also the expertise to differentiate that programme for the individual teacher. By being aware of the overall change process and how that is influenced by the combination of the teacher's individual professional experience, their level of competency in their practice at the time and the ways in which they engage with the 'community of practice' of the school including its policies and procedures, management oversight and colleague support, the school can 'pace' the appropriate induction programme over the time-frame required by the teacher as they adapt their teaching practice. Thus the 'ideal' induction package is both flexible in its content (based upon the framework described above) and in its time-frame – thereby recognising the individual change 'story' for each teacher and the need to be able prepare the teacher for and to then respond to the teacher's personal 'awakening' experience.

5.4 Whither the Salt Review (2010)?

From the research findings it would seem that the concerns expressed within the Salt Review (2010) that teachers were reluctant to move into special schools because it had low status and fewer promotional prospects seems unsupported by this research. There is support though for the view that teachers in mainstream schools are not well trained in supporting children with special educational needs and it would seem that the teachers who select to transfer have some experience and interest from their backgrounds that predisposes them to be motivated to undergo the change rather than it being a straightforward career development step. The teachers in the study did though hold the view that teaching in special schools although a possibility for all of their colleagues in mainstream schools was not appropriate for many of them as they felt certain personal characteristics – patience, empathy, understanding, flexibility were essential and these were not evenly spread amongst teachers.

5.5 What did the teachers in the study believe?

5.5.1   About professionalism

The subjects in the study had clear views about their 'craft' knowledge and skills as a teacher. They were clear about the role of the teacher both in the mainstream school and the special school and that there was little difference between the two rather it was only the context that altered. They highlighted the differences between the two to be primarily in the management of the team of teaching assistants with whom they shared their classroom. The skills required to effectively direct the team of support staff was not something that the teachers felt they had acquired, nor were they believed to be easy to come by. In many ways it rested upon the culture of the school

and how those members of staff understood their own role and particularly when they were placed with new teachers. As the teachers become more confident in their own practice, that is they better knew the pupils and their curricular needs, then the issues around managing the team decreased. This would suggest that the issue of managing the team relates more to the teacher's competence in understanding and organising for the learning needs of the pupils in the class than in a discrete set of 'team management' skills. This may be because once the teacher is effective in managing the curriculum and learning targets for the pupils then the teaching assistants are clear as to what their role is and consequently will then adapt to the 'style' of the teacher.

5.5.2   About their identity?

The teachers in the study found that the greater need for them to take on a 'caring' role in the classroom at times initially challenged their view of themselves as a teacher but then they each rationalised this over time and expressed well thought out cases for what they were doing which were within their strongly held views as to what a teacher should do and particularly what they felt was right for themselves. None of the teachers felt uncomfortable or embarrassed by the intensity of the emotional commitment they made to the learners in their classrooms and having adapted to it felt it was a key aspect of their role and identity and something that gave them immense satisfaction. As Beijaard et al (2004) conclude a teacher's professional identity is an on-going process of interpretation and reinterpretation of their teaching experiences and links to their notion of 'agency' in their role which combines their personal self-evaluation of their effectiveness with the context in which they are teaching and the feedback they are receiving there. In a special school this clearly

includes very strong emotional relationships with the learners that are essential to the

effectiveness of the teacher in engaging those learners in their education.

5.6 Teachers' values

The teachers all expressed their commitment to the value of the teacher-learner relationship

in their professional practice. They formulated it slightly differently based upon the rationale

they used to justify it. These justifications are along a continuum from one end where the

teacher believes that a 'caring' relationship is an integral part of all good teaching for all

pupils to the other end where the teacher believes that it may be necessary to use a caring

relationship to engage a reluctant learner to participate in their education otherwise it's not a

necessary part of their teaching 'toolkit'. For Noddings (2012),

> … the teacher as a carer is interested in the expressed needs of the cared-for, not
> simply the needs assumed by the school as an institution and the curriculum as a
> prescribed course of study (p 772)

The descriptor 'carer' is one that many of the teachers were wary of adopting as it suggested

to them a diminution of their professional status as teachers. Nevertheless as they described

the transition from the mainstream school into the special school the concept presented itself

immediately and compellingly as a 'difference' that needed to be adapted to and incorporated

into their practice. This was consequent on the ways in which the pupils presented to the

teachers in their straight forward care needs (to be assisted to use the toilet, dress, undress,

eat, drink), in their care needs with regard to the support they needed to manage their own

challenging behaviours and finally in the support needs they required to relate to a trusted

adult given their own emotional immaturities and insecurities. Noddings (2012) adds,

> After listening and reflecting, the carer must respond. If she can, she responds positively to the student's expressed need. But, if there is a reason why she cannot respond positively to the need, she must still respond in a way that maintains the caring relationship. (p772)

This reflects the teacher's stories as they increased their understanding of the needs of their pupils and the ways in which the school helped the pupils to manage their behaviours when it challenged the teacher's authority or the learning atmosphere of the classroom. These findings are supported by Roger's (2002) view that the role of the teacher is principally to establish a supportive and trusting relationship as this will enable them to facilitate the learner to manage their own learning and thus become autonomous as a person.

5.7   Final remarks

The teacher's professionalism was defined by their training and the experiences they have had within the schools they teach. From these schools they received the message that they were effective in their role. The meanings of these messages were deeply embedded in the culture of the school and were communicated formally and informally through the community of practice that the teacher joined as a member of the teaching group in that school. The ways that the wider educational policy framework and legislative definitions of effective teaching were mediated through the school via its management were accepted by the teachers as part of the fabric of the social world of the school in which their professional life was embedded. Their feeling of self-efficacy came from the accumulation of a range of positive (and negative) feedback they received from their peers, their teaching assistant colleagues and the pupils they taught and the parents of those pupils. Transitions are challenges to this model of the teacher's professionalism. The 'background' is unchanged but

it is a new 'cultural' reworking of the forces that determine what effective teaching means –

in the new setting. Furthermore the new teaching environment challenges the adaptability of

the teacher's professional skills and understandings. They have to learn quickly and think

reflectively as they work out how the foundational skills and understandings they have

accumulated over the time of their professional career in their role will need to be 're-

invented' to meet the needs of the learners in front of them in the new institution. The

teachers move through this transformational series of experiences. They reflect on what has

happened, what is happening, what they need to know and how the skills their colleagues

have might help them. As they try out new formulations of their practice they become more

confident in their role. The balance in the ways their foundational skills are used changes

between the school and the choices they make alters as they align their skills with the needs

of the new learners in their classes. In the special school the teacher-learner relationship

becomes the key factor in their practice. The process by which they come to understand this

and integrate it into their professional functioning and their personal value system is the

'transition journey' for them. The induction systems that the schools have help support this

process and I suggest that they can be modified and tailored to the needs of the teacher as the

ways in which they learn and reflect on their practice is unique to them. The process will be

similar for them all although the specific details, times and balance of types of support

between information, training, mentoring and coaching will be different. The transitional

experience is understood by the teacher as a narrative and this processes their learning for

them and 'normalises' the emotional turmoil that accompanies such dislocation in their

effectiveness in their role however temporary and anticipated. The narrative tells the story of

their transformational learning and captures the moments and significant meanings within it.

For Mezirow (2009) this learning can be either 'epochal' or 'cumulative', that is the process can be one of gradual adaption or it may have involved a crisis or moment of 'awakening' (Precey and Jackson, 2009). In fact it is more likely to be a combination of the two as the interpretation of the narrative story is made by the teacher themselves and it is their subjective assessment that illuminates the process for us.

The teacher's professional practice at the period of the transition for one sector the other could be schematised following this research in this way,

Figure 41: *Model of teachers' Professi*onal Practice

The teacher's professional experiences operate through their process of tacit understanding and reflective evaluation to be the foundations for their adapted practice in the new setting as

they absorb the messages and feedback from the new setting so that they can adapt their

practice in order to again be competent in the eyes of their community of practice and self-

efficacious. The research insights from this study, I would suggest, would enable this process

to be more transparent and better gauged to the specific needs of the teacher so that the time

and the emotional stress can be minimised and the positive impact of the teacher on the

learners thereby maximised. For teachers moving into special school settings the research has

demonstrated the primacy of the teacher-learner relationship as the key to the self-efficacy of

the teacher and their understanding and experience of the transformational learning that

occurs as they adapt to their new professional role. This demonstrates that the impact of the

'managed professional' agenda or the 'performativity' culture has not undermined the core

value-driven motivations and understandings of the teaching role that defines this group of

teachers. Although only a small sample the teachers expressed a clear unanimous view that it

was the capacity to realise the teacher-learner relationship within the special school that

provided them with the intrinsic satisfactions in their role and defined their belief in the

purposes of teaching.

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APPENDICES

INTERVIEW 1 (Alison)

Researcher	*If you could give me some background … what was the mainstream school you transferred from …*
Alison	Ok … it was B Primary School in D … it was a small village school … one form entry and I was there for two years as a year 4 teacher straight form teacher training
Researcher	*Ok … thinking back … when you transferred from there to here what is your memories of that transition experience …*
Alison	I think personally within the school holidays at first it was really exciting and then I though what have a done … what have I taken on … although I had a fair experience of special needs background I wasn't sure … I really wasn't sure what to expect … I got more worked up until I spoke to P [the headteacher] and she said don't worry it will be fine …
Researcher	*And what happened …*
Alison	It was fine …
Researcher	*Why were you fine …*
Alison	Because a lot of the misconceptions I had made up in my head … like … are the elements of teaching I have enjoyed in mainstream are they going to carry across into special needs because autistic children don't do what mainstream children do and it was things like … am I going to be able to have a laugh with them … am I going to be able to … have fun … or is it going to be so rigidly structured … but it wasn't … it's still got all those elements just in a different way …
Researcher	*So … thinking back … what skills transferred …*
Alison	I think it was more skills of differentiation and sort of being able to adapt the curriculum to the needs of the different children … the class I had in mainstream went from P7 up to Level 5 so I was used to a big differentiation … that's probably the biggest thing that came with me … just being able to introduce the topics to the children in a such way that they were able to get something out of it … they would still be learning …
Researcher	*And what struck you as being different …*
Alison	To be honest the thing that was the biggest difference was having 4 TAs in my room because I was used to having one TA for one lesson four days a week and now I had 4 TAs looking at me saying what shall I do … that to me was the biggest and hardest thing to deal with …
Researcher	*So what did you do about it …*
Alison	I tried to use their experiences because they were all more experienced in special needs than I was … and sort of learnt from them but keep leading them … once I found my feet … and could sort of develop my understanding of special needs more through the experiences they showed me
Researcher	*Who helped you in doing that …*
Alison	The TAs … I had one TA who was incredibly helpful and she knew what my background was and she helped me and also support from the deputy head at the time …
Researcher	*And what was that support like …*
Alison	It was more a case if I needed support I knew I could go and talk to them at any time

	and I could make a time and he also used to come round and look and he'd just come round one a week and say I realise I haven't caught up with you is there anything I can help you with … which was nice …
Researcher	*What were the things you needed to learn quickly*
Alison	… quickly … it was the same as with any school it was the routines of the day … who does what, when and how … this TA needed a certain amount of break and this needed that … it was all those sort of logistics … working with the children wasn't a massive difference I just had less of them … two thirds less than I had in mainstream ….
Researcher	*That must have made some difference …*
Alison	Well it did … it was nice to spend time with them all rather than just with one table leaving the other three or four almost to get on with themselves which then means you can challenge the children more because you have got more support whereas in mainstream you can't always do that …
Researcher	*Do you think that as a teacher in a mainstream school you have different assumptions about the learners … than you do when you are in a special school …*
Alison	Yes … I used to feel in mainstream that you were teaching to raise the levels … it was the children who were just under where they should be who got the most support … the ones who were a lot lower didn't because they wouldn't be the ones to affect the tables … whereas here … I'm presuming in special schools it's not like that … we still have to show progressing but not … you don't have the … league tables we had then …
Researcher	*So what difference did that make for the teacher culture in the mainstream school …*
Alison	It was very pressurised and stressful … it was constant … constant setting targets and reviewing targets in a space of time … in which the children wouldn't have made an awful lot of progress … whereas here it was once every two terms you reviewed their progress … its changed a bit now … but which then didn't take the pressure of but gave the children a chance to show they had actually made progress … they had consolidated their learning … they had moved on …
Researcher	*Did you feel the role of the teacher was different in the mainstream school …*
Alison	Yes … again because you are teaching more … I don't know how to word this … It's not that your … there is a lot more pressure to show progress in a mainstream so you're constantly onto the next thing and the next thing whereas here you have a little more time to say we need to get them consolidated on this before they move on …
Researcher	*So … are you saying that the teacher in the mainstream school was defined by the progress the children in their class made or…*
Alison	I feel it was at the school I was at …
Researcher	*And that was how you gauged whether you were doing your job well …*
Alison	Yes …
Researcher	*What's different here in the special school …*
Alison	Nobody's assumed they're not doing their job well … it's a lot more of a supportive environment … the mainstream school I was in wasn't supportive at all … that's the biggest difference for me being here … it's so much more a supportive school anyway …
Researcher	*What does that feel like or look like …*
Alison	It feels great … its knowing you can go to somebody whether it's the teacher in the room next to you or the headteacher or anybody and asking for their support and if they can't help you they will direct you to the person who can or if they think

	someone can help you better … it's that presence of you knowing you can go somewhere …
Researcher	*In a special school how do you know when you are doing the job right … doing a good job …*
Alison	The children are learning … the children are making good progress … they are making progress regardless of what their ability is … you know we get our appraisals and things but people do come and tell you as well … quite often and it's not the … sometimes you do things wrong and they come and tell you that as well … but in the last school you would only get told when you were doing something wrong not when you doing it right but here they make a point of that …
Researcher	*In the mainstream school did you feel that you were a good teacher there …*
Alison	The first year I did … I didn't the second year I was going to come out of teaching and then I thought no I need to give this another go I need to go to another school and my aim when I came into teaching was to go into special needs teaching so when this came up I thought I will just go for it and see I didn't think I had enough teaching experience but obviously P thought I had and gave me the break I needed …
Researcher	*And do you think you are a good teacher here …*
Alison	Yes …
Researcher	*And was there a stage when that happened or has it been gradual …*
Alison	It's been … it's not that it was instant but it was as soon as I came here people …. It wasn't that they assumed I knew what I was doing but they trusted me in that what I was doing was right and I had a few observations and they came out really well so I kind of came in on a good note … it's had its ups and downs throughout the time as anything would but …
Researcher	*What are the aspects of being a good teacher …*
Alison	I think here its knowing your children … and the families you're working with … its planning at the right level for the children … its preparing … its resourcing what you're doing its evaluating and assessing what you're doing its consolidating and then moving on and having fun … sorry that should have been first …
Researcher	*And how different is that from how it was in mainstream …*
Alison	The mainstream priority for the school that I was at was what progress have they made and it felt like how many times can you produce your plans for the week … how much paperwork could we get … I don't know it just seemed an awful lot …
Researcher	*So that was defining what a teacher was and what a teacher did and you finding it difficult to fit with that …*
Alison	Yes … but … the difficulty I had was the school … the head changed after my first year and the next one that came in was the deputy head from the school and I knew I wouldn't get along with her so it was more a … I wouldn't get any support from her as a newly qualified teacher I would go to her and say how should I do this and she would say well you're a qualified teacher you should know how to do this so I would go ok and go away and do it and I would go back to her and then she would say no that's wrong … so that was my problem with the school … it certainly wasn't a problem with mainstream … just my experience …
Researcher	*What about the other teachers in mainstream where they supportive …*
Alison	They were to a point as long as I completely fitted in … all the other teachers had either done their training at the school or been a TA at the school or had taught there for thirty years … there wasn't anything fresh in there … so they were supportive as

	long as I did what I was told …
Researcher	*So you came here and that was different …*
Alison	Yes … I was given a lot more freedom to be a teacher …
Researcher	*And how did you know what a teacher was like here …*
Alison	I came in beforehand to do some observations … and also I was given the chance to observe while I was here as well … the key stage manager at the time was brilliant she met up with me in the school holidays and went through loads of things with me … so she kind of put me in the picture … and I think … its sounds a bit corny but you do just get a feel just by being in the place not that people are necessarily doing it all right but there are no closed doors here … you know you can go in and see others at any time
Researcher	*Did you do that …*
Alison	Yes... and we still do …
Researcher	*And what difference does that make …*
Alison	It makes a huge difference because sometimes you think am I doing this right … when there are new strategies coming in and … you go and see someone else … someone you know has been observed and got good gradings for it … so if they're already doing that and I am then you can compare with what you're doing you can …. Have little curriculum meetings when you can talk to different people about what they are doing … just check you are on the right lines
Researcher	*Was there a formal induction programme for you …*
Alison	No there wasn't … there was supposed to be but there wasn't …
Researcher	*And do you feel you missed it …*
Alison	Not really … I think out of the induction programme we only ended up with one and the only thing I can remember out of that was if you start the week on your register with a black pen you have to finish the week with it you can't chop and change colours... that always seemed really random … yes it was just general housekeeping but it was two or three months down the line …
Researcher	*So by then you had learned what was what from the other teachers and teaching assistants …*
Alison	Yes and if I wasn't sure just by asking whoever whether it was management or colleagues or …*
Researcher	*If you had to put together an induction programme or support package for teachers moving from mainstream to special what would be top of your list to happen …*
Alison	Probably some training in the areas of need of the children we work with … definitely autism training and how their learning can differ from mainstream children and a lot of the support aids that you can use like PECS and visual support and communicate in print just to get those in place first because sometimes you bumble around not quite sure what is the best way to do … it was quite a awhile … I had been teaching quite a while before I went on an autism course and they told me that autism children need longer to answer questions … and I was like … oh … that makes sense now … to me that's one of the biggest things … it should be the top line … autism children take longer to answer questions … don't keep asking them the same question because that will confuse them just give them time to answer … that I think would be the biggest thing
Researcher	*So information about the needs of the children … so that's number one … what would be number two …*
Alison	It almost contradicts number one because it would then be … not to judge a child just

	because their autistic … that they are going to do this this and this … it's still to treat them as individuals … again you come and with autism children you go this is what they do and then you find no its not … he is showing me affection … he is giving me eye contact … he can answer a question straight away but he is autistic … I suppose it's the same knowledge but looking at both sides of it …
Researcher	*Using that knowledge to get to know the individual child … so that's the second thing what would be the third thing …*
Alison	I think policies and strategies and … things like that that the school provide and how to use them effectively so going through how to do your planning using programmes like Caspar and BSquared … I think that would be next because that is such a big chunk of what we do …
Researcher	*So is there a clear way the school does things … is that easy to get a handle on …*
Alison	Yes I think it is … you just need time and someone to show you how to … I suppose it's like anything new once you get into it … its fine …
Researcher	*Is there anything else you would need to know …*
Alison	Yes … actually the working with TAs … that would be a priority as well … I was doing a course the other day and saying that … we're doing the middle leaders course which I did a couple of years ago … I think that would be very valuable for a special needs teacher because although I am not a middle leader but I am in my class I use all of those techniques with my TAs and the last two years have been much more enjoyable than the four years before that when I didn't have that knowledge or strategies in place and I was not always working with my TAs as efficiently as I could and I wasn't getting the best out of them so I think that would be another priority …
Researcher	*Thinking back to your time in mainstream and this might be a difficult question given what you have said do feel that some of those teachers could have as easily transferred and been teachers here …*
Alison	No …
Researcher	*Why not …*
Alison	Because I do think that to be a special needs teacher you've got to have a certain way about you or interest … and a lot of teachers I came across were like … they're just naughty … they can't do that and I can't be bothered … and that sort of attitude whereas … you can't do that you can't do that here … you can't do that in mainstream …
Researcher	*What qualities do you need …*
Alison	Well everybody says its patience … but it's not patience
Researcher	*So what is it …*
Alison	I don't know … I think it's a … I can't describe it … it's an understanding …
Researcher	*Do you think those teachers in the mainstream school that you worked in have they got the skills to be a teacher here … if they followed that induction package you described …*
Alison	I guess they have got the skills because at the end of the day they have had the same training as me or any of the other teachers here but …
Researcher	*So what would be the difference …*
Alison	It's like when you say would you rather be primary or a secondary teacher … you know all the secondary teachers say oh no I couldn't work with the little ones and all the primary ones go I couldn't work with the big ones … and I suppose it's the same … I don't know …

Researcher	*Is it about the assumptions they have about learners …*
Alison	I guess so and one example of that is I have a student teacher with me and he has made comments like … I can't be bothered to plan … to spend ages planning because they won't learn it and I'm saying no you will still need to plan because they will learn something you've just got to get it right but he just wants to be a mainstream teacher so … I don't know how to word it …
Researcher	*So what would happen to them here then … imagining them here … they would get what … annoyed … frustrated … baffled …*
Alison	Yes … and then they wouldn't be getting their job satisfaction and they wouldn't want to be here and that's not to me how it should be … you're here for the children at the end of the day … and yes they are there for the children in mainstream but I just can't pinpoint what it would be … maybe it's me … over assuming because I feel I could work in mainstream and special and do it well so there is no reason why the mainstream teachers couldn't work well in special and enjoy it but maybe that's me speculating
Researcher	*Yes … I asked the question … I am interested in why some teachers want to make that switch*
Alison	Before I became a teacher I worked with adults with learning difficulties in residential care and then I worked as a speech and language therapy assistant with pre-school children and adults with learning disabilities and I really enjoyed the learning disability side of it and really enjoyed working those needs … and enjoying that challenge … of finding different ways through to learning to communication to social skills … my teacher training I did a PGCE and I think we had a workshop on special needs so I don't think especially at the time I was teacher training it wasn't … it's not very well covered in teacher training so people come out of it and think I don't know what to do … so unless you've maybe got a bit more of a background or understanding … then … because it is a different way of learning … a different way of teaching … it is about … because I have got friends who are mainstream teachers and they say to me I've got this boy in my class what do I do with him and I say ok from what you have said he needs a visual timetable … I haven't got time to do that … but it will help him he will know what he's doing he will be able to sit down … and then I listen to other teachers and they say oh he does this and I say why do you let him do that … well because he's autistic … so … don't let him do it .. just because he's autistic doesn't mean he can't learn some social boundaries … so I feel it's that some mainstream teachers just go special needs I know nothing about it so I am not going to … again that's speculation … me assuming …

INTERVIEW 2 (Mike)

Researcher	What was the transition like for you …
Mike	I remember the transition being quite smooth really … it felt like quite a natural sort of transition for me … I had a background prior to mainstream school in working as a teaching assistant in another special school … I had a bit of a background in special needs before which made the transition a little bit easier … but I remember it being quite a smooth transition …
Researcher	So what sort of mainstream school were you teaching in …
Mike	It was a mainstream primary school in W on the border of T … it was quite a large primary school … two form entry … the area was quite high deprivation sort of rates … it was a big school and sort of diverse as well …
Researcher	When you transferred into the special school … what skills did you already have that worked effectively for you …
Mike	I think a lot of the behaviour management strategies were things that were kind of refined whilst at the primary school … I think behaviour is quite an issue here so a lot of things I had learnt there transferred here … I think it was … teaching there was aimed to be quite practical and again benefitted coming here from that more practical approach to teaching and things being a little bit multi-sensory and a bit more not quite as formal really … I think that helped a lot … I think they were probably the main things …
Researcher	And what struck you as being different …
Mike	I think actually the atmosphere here … the atmosphere is a lot less formal … walking through the doors it's a lot happier atmosphere and a greater feeling of togetherness really … within the mainstream primary school you sort of went through your classroom door at the beginning of the day and you very much felt like that was it you were on your own until the day ended whilst here there is a greater sort of feeling everybody supporting each other and everybody pitching in for the same kind of outcome really …
Researcher	Initially who were the people that helped you in that transition …

Mike	It would have been the senior leadership team … the headteacher … the deputy headteacher … but also I was fortunate in my first year here to work in a joint form group … so there were two of us in the form group and so I suppose I learnt quite a lot of the procedures and the routines from having a joint form tutor being here for a number of years beforehand … that helped quite a great deal …
Researcher	And had you in your mainstream school worked with teaching assistants …
Mike	I had one teaching assistant who was with me for part of the day but obviously coming here every class will have a minimum of two or three teaching assistants so again as you say you are having a greater team of people who are supportive of what you are doing …
Researcher	Did you find that easy to manage or difficult …
Mike	Personally easy … not through any great skill of my own but because I think the majority of teaching assistants here are very supportive and there never seems to be that issue of having to manage them … it doesn't become a big issue because we are all sort of working towards the same goal … it never feels like there is a sort of barrier that you have to cross …
Researcher	When you were saying the atmosphere was different and the support you got from other teachers was greater than you got in primary school do you … thinking back how would you characterise the teaching culture in the primary school …
Mike	Well I think I wouldn't like to judge all primary school by the experience I had … the school I was at it wasn't a particularly supportive culture … I think the management of the school made people feel perhaps a little bit threatened … people didn't really like other members of staff coming into their rooms to observe and there just was a general feeling of people not wanting to share the practice they were using … everything felt sort of enclosed really …
Researcher	Why would they not want to share their practice …
Mike	I think it was because … a lot of teachers there had some quite negative experiences of observations … they certainly weren't done in a positive way like they are here and I think people just got to the stage where they didn't really want to let their guards down in any way so people weren't sharing practice … they weren't doing peer observation … these people certainly weren't coming into each other's rooms to see what good practice was going on … and it wasn't really encouraged from the management … the senior management team either …
Researcher	Going back to that initial period when you moved into the school … what do you think were the key things you needed to learn quite quickly …
Mike	I think in terms of lessons things are different in the sense … I think it was moving away from the more formal structure of lessons to … and thinking about how is best to engage students obviously with many different areas of special needs and also how to … how to engage students with different learning difficulties … I think it was really as well learning to be more sort of trusting of other people who were coming to share practice and they wanted to see what I was doing as well and basically they were looking at it from a positive standpoint rather than a slightly more negative point that I had experienced previously …
Researcher	So did you have some anxiety then at that time …
Mike	Possibly … I suppose anxiety is quite a strong word I think I … my experiences of people observing and peer observations had always been quite negative so I guessed that I just judged that was what it was like everywhere and so I think if I did have any

	anxiety it probably disappeared quite quickly when I came here and I realised what a sharing sort of environment it is really and a positive one as well and I think in terms of observation the positive is always what is focused on and I think that is probably credit to a very strong leadership team but also everybody else …
Researcher	Was there a strong induction programme for you …
Mike	Yes … I think it was a whole afternoon of induction … sort of getting all of the new teachers … I joined at the same time as three other new teachers so again it was feeling that it wasn't just myself but there were four of us who were sort of experiencing the same things I think … and I think the induction process was strong we had a good two days to get used to the school … have a look around and … I think we all felt quite comfortable … in that first sort of couple of days …
Researcher	Thinking back to mainstream schooling and comparing to the special school do you think in the mainstream school you had different assumptions about the children you were teaching …
Mike	I'd like to think not really … I'd like to think in terms of trying to challenge and having high expectations I think my expectations are just as high here … I think perhaps your expectations of slight behaviours change … there were things in the school I was at wouldn't have been acceptable because of the nature of some of the children here you have to accept them … in mainstream school it was very much expected that for hour lessons students would sit and be utterly silent and ask a question … whereas here I think we are understanding that conversation and communication is a very positive thing and to be encouraged really … so I think my expectations are the same … I would like to think my expectations are high just in a slightly different context maybe …
Researcher	What about your relationships with the pupils …
Mike	I would say actually relationships are slightly different here … I think at the mainstream school the teacher student boundary was much more clear while here although it is clear that it is … teacher student … there is much more openness to allow a bit more friendly sort of nature … really it's not quite as much teacher and student and I think that is because of the nature of the students we have … you have to be a lot more open yourself … in order to encourage them to sort of come out of their shells and be a bit more open … but that might just be my personal opinion …
Researcher	The class sizes are different aren't they …
Mike	In my mainstream primary my class size was 32 with one TA … and it is quite a struggle … whilst here class sizes tend to be maximum 10 or 11 with maybe 2 or 3 members of staff … I just think it means that you … you feel like you are getting to work with the students on a much more personal level … I think at mainstream school I would feel at the end of the day there were students I hadn't had the chance to talk to whereas here I feel that every student has had my attention for at least part of the day so I think it makes quite a big difference really
Researcher	Was it easy to transfer your high expectations from mainstream to special … is it easy to see what a high expectation is for a learner in a special school …
Mike	I wouldn't say it was easy I think it involves quite a lot of getting to know the student because obviously in the mainstream school high expectations are judged a lot more on around levels and levels of achievement whereas here high expectations could just be based upon some social improvements or … it's not quite as clear cut so I think It's based around the getting to know the students and getting to know what is really a

	great achievement for them and then basing your expectations around that …
Researcher	How did you get to that position …
Mike	I think it is probably having the opportunity to spend a lot of time with the students which again I think comes from having smaller class sizes and it's quite a slow and steady process I think initially I possibly wasn't pitching things quite at the right level … so I think it is just a learning experience for myself as well really and that happens from year to year as I get to teach new classes …
Researcher	So that initial sort of mismatch in terms of pitching was that over estimation or under estimation … or was it random …
Mike	I think in a lot of cases it was possibly under estimation … I'd like to think not but I think perhaps I didn't actually challenge as much as I should do and I think definitely a lot of times I've seen that you lessons are clear and your instructions are clear then the students achieve far beyond what you could ever imagine really … so if anything possible a little lower than they could have been but I like to think now my expectations are where they should be …
Researcher	Was there a stage when you realised that …
Mike	I think it would have been quite immediate … I don't necessarily remember but I think there was possibly one Y11 maths class that I taught … I think there was a lesson I did on I think multiplication and division and I think the way I pitched it I had it very sort of a bit creative with a song and like that and I remember thinking to myself in terms of socially it was just pitched wrongly it was far too lower level for them socially … and its sometimes remembering that the students here are teenagers and they want to be taught like teenagers … so that is possible one thing I remember …
Researcher	What do you think is the biggest difference between you as a teacher in the mainstream school and you as a teacher in the special school …
Mike	Well I would probably say I am a lot more happier teacher … I remember feeling a lot more stressed in the mainstream school and I think rightly or wrongly that might have come across in the way that I was teaching … now I feel a lot more relaxed … I feel happier around the students and I have good relationships with them and I think that allows me to be a sort of more fun and creative teacher and somebody that the students want to learn from rather than in my mainstream school where it felt like I was someone the students had to learn from and I was kind of inflicting that learning upon them rather than now where I feel like they want to listen to what I have to say … and that's all based around relationships really …
Researcher	What about the language of learning …
Mike	The last class I taught in mainstream was a year 2 class so obviously they were quite a bit younger … possibly I would say the language didn't change that much … I think there are obviously incidences here where … in a lot of cases … language has to be changed in the sense it can't be spoken language anymore you have to use different types of communication so visual communication and so in that respect it might have changed again that would be the minority of cases … I think … so I think perhaps the language I use here has to be more varied … it sort of depends form class to class and student to student more than it would at my past school …
Researcher	Do you feel that your role as a teacher is different …
Mike	I don't know that it is different I think my role is still to get the best quality of teaching and learning from the students … I think the ways that I have to go about that are different but I think the end result is possibly the same … obviously going back to what

	I said about the relationships with the students I think they have obviously changed so I think in that sense my role has changed … I think it is slightly more emphasis on caring for students and being that kind of professional friend … but I think the roles the same really …
Researcher	How do you know when you are doing a good job …
Mike	I think I terms of lessons I think I know because I get to see progress … the students achieve things … and I know if it is a really good achievement for them… and I think as well I know I am doing a good job if the children like coming to school and they tell me they like being in school and they are happy in my lessons … I think that is a sort of indicator of doing a good job …
Researcher	Is that different from knowing you were a good teacher in the primary school …
Mike	Yes … I think that was much based upon levels of progress … how many students were reaching the national levels of expectation … and it definitely came from pupil progress almost entirely really … I'm not sure that the student's happiness or well-being really factored into it very much at all … it was all about are they reaching the point at the end of the year they are supposed to be reaching … so that has definitely changed …
Researcher	You said how you felt that teaching in a special school allowed you to be more creative in your teaching so does that mean that in the mainstream things were a bit more rigid …
Mike	I think they were more rigid because of the numbers in the class … it's a lot easier now with 10 students to have an outdoor learning lesson and take them to the woodlands to do a maths lesson there or somewhere on site … that's much more difficult when you have got 30 students and fairly limited support … I think it was also possibly more rigid because at my primary school we had a kind of set framework to work from whilst here we obviously use the National Curriculum but we have kind of altered it so it suits the students here and I think it leaves a lot more scope for what we are doing really as long as the students are covering what they need to cover … the way we are allowed to teach it there is a lot more freedom here …
Researcher	And when you did that transition you said you were supported by the senior leadership team did they give you feedback on being a teacher …
Mike	Yes … I had quite a lot of sessions with Mrs. C and we worked on lesson planning and making sure that I understood how I should be planning lessons … I obviously had observations where I had feedback on how my teaching was going and that sort of thing … so yes I think there was feedback on how I was doing as a teacher definitely …
Researcher	And was there a stage through that when you thought 'ah now I get it ' …
Mike	I wouldn't say … it's hard to explain … I feel that as a teacher I have gained more confidence and I come into work now thinking that I am doing a good job … I can't really put my finger on when that happened … but it was sometime between leaving mainstream school where I have to say my morale was quite low but I wasn't really convinced I was a good teacher between now and then it has been a gradual increase in confidence really … but I couldn't put my finger on why apart from the things I have said really …
Researcher	It's the feedback from the learners in the classroom …
Mike	Yes positive feedback … as I say … a lot of visitors say it as well … there is just a positive atmosphere that pervades the school … I think the feedback from the students obviously … you know the enjoyment they get makes you feel more confident about

	what you are doing and also we do use assessment tools here and the students are making good progress so again that gives you … I think as a class teacher a lot of your feedback does come from observations and if you are having regular observations which aren't particularly positive then it does have quite a big impact on you and think that is where the management of my last school didn't realise the impact that activity was having in the staff … and it can be a downward spiral really in terms of confidence and just general sort of …
Researcher	So there is the formal observations that the managers will do what about your colleague teachers …
Mike	We're encouraged to do peer observations so if we feel that there is an area of our teaching which needs development we are encouraged to find somebody whose skills match up with that … and go and do a peer observation … which again is quite different from my previous school … peer observations are encouraged here … and everybody is very willing to have people come in to see what they are doing … I think it is the knowledge that actually we are all … if we are observing it's because we want to benefit from it it's not because we want to criticise really …
Researcher	So if you were given the task of managing someone's transition from a mainstream school into here … what would be top of your list of things to help them …
Mike	In think priority should be getting to meet the students … getting to understand the students … getting a really good feeling of the different sorts of students we have here … making sure they feel confident with the different sort of lesson planning … all of the more formal kind of stuff we have to do … and … I would say the most important thing for me would be making sure they feel comfortable with the students and with what they are teaching really …
Researcher	Do you think any teacher could move into this school and teach here …
Mike	Yes … I am sure they could … I think definitely lots of them could … I think it's just about changing your outlook on teaching and I think it is changing what you expect from the students in a way and how you are with the students … but I think anybody could … if they wanted to …
Researcher	Because …
Mike	I think working in SEN is something people do because they want to specifically do it … so I think it does take a particular person to want to do that … but I think if you have trained to be a teacher then I do think the skills are transferrable so I do think that anybody could transfer those skills across it just depends on whether they want to do it
Researcher	What would make them want to …
Mike	Well personally form my point of view … I am a bit biased obviously … but just from coming and working here with the students that would make me want to change a work with SEN … but there are a lot of other teachers who perhaps like to have that more formal … kind of knowing where they are going with the teaching … that suits their sort of … but from my point of view coming here would make anyone want to work here …

INTERVIEW 3 (Diane)

Researcher	When you moved from mainstream teaching to the special school what was that transition like for you …
Diane	It was a very very steep learning curve moving from a mainstream school … I had been in a mainstream school which had had a unit for hearing impaired pupils so I had some experience of children with significant learning needs … I had had some experience of sign language which I think helped ease the transition to a special school environment somewhat … but I don't think I had quite anticipated how much the strategies I was using in mainstream were not necessarily applicable to the strategies I would use in a special needs classroom … it was a very sharp learning curve … but having said that I think I knew within the first half term that it was personally the right move … I felt a lot more comfortable in a special needs environment than in a mainstream environment just in terms of the sort of … adminy side of things I thought the planning was a lot more easier in many ways that you could be more flexible you could be more creative

	with the curriculum so even though I had to really think about the objectives and differentiation a lot more I felt that I had more freedom with the curriculum so I felt that was more … that was better for me … in a special school than it had been in a mainstream … but I think overall the transition … the biggest thing I would say was that people who move into special from mainstream … maybe need more time to observe the special needs environment before the change … because … like I say I moved from a school that had a unit for the hearing impaired and I came and toured here before I made the application just to see … because I had only spent one day in a special school in my training so I had a sort of vague idea about what I was going to see but I don't think it's until you've spent a couple of weeks in a special school that you know what it's like day in day out because it's so different every day …
Researcher	So what were the skills that transferred easily …
Diane	Well I think some of the teaching strategies I used in mainstream actually were suitable for the first class I had here … it was a more able group so there were some teaching strategies I could use with those pupils that I had used in mainstream … and used quite effectively … things that perhaps actually weren't already in practice in this school … things that the management picked up on that had been brought from mainstream and that they liked seeing in action in the special needs classroom … so just as an example things like talking partners wasn't something that had ever really been done sort of here necessarily and I sort of tried it with my kids and they shared practice with other people so there was some teaching strategies that got transferred … some behaviour management I would say from mainstream is applicable to SEN but the nature of the behaviours is so different that I think a lot of what I know now it's a big step on from what I was doing in mainstream … in terms of low level behaviour … ignoring it and redirecting it … here its constant … whereas in mainstream it was a couple of times a lesson … here its constant redirection and behaviour support for the children … so …
Researcher	So what struck you as the big differences …
Diane	I think it was the pace of the day I think … the pace of the day is so much slower here because of the transitions … because it takes the children so long much longer to process what's going in … so for example in mainstream we didn't have a set snack time then a playtime it was just the kids went out and they took their snack with them 15 minutes and then it's back inside here though you know we have a 15 minute snack time and then we ease into play time because the transition takes quite a long time … then you sort of wander back from the playground whereas in mainstream its bang bang bang this is what we are doing … we're doing it quickly … and you feel like it's a lot faster paced in a way … in terms of the structure of the day … but the lessons are probably quite similar … you still do your three part lessons that hasn't really changed its just the pace at which you do the transitions is one of the biggest differences …
Researcher	The needs of the children …
Diane	Oh yes … obviously the needs of the children is a huge difference … I mean in terms of the personal care as a sort of starting point for basic needs … I didn't have any of that at all in mainstream … any children that we did have to do any sort of personal care with was always the TA would nip off and do that and it wasn't built in a structured part of the day … in terms of basic needs it was a vast difference and in terms of the learning needs … the level of differentiation … as I said before the difference between a P4 and a P8 was so vastly different to the 3a and the 4c for example which was what

	I was working with in mainstream … the differentiation is much more difficult .. it's almost having to teach a different activity to different pupils working towards their IEP targets … you have to sort of plan three or four curriculums all at once that go along side each other whereas in mainstream it was always one curriculum differentiated into three or four groups …
Researcher	How did you work that out or did someone show you … what happened …
Diane	It was … I mean … I came in before in the summer just for half a day and I met with what was going to be my key stage leader and she gave me all the proformas and information about the children in my class … information about the P levels … she gave me a lot of the paperwork side of things … so I could go away and digest … there wasn't that sort of expectation I would come in in September and everything would be planned up until Christmas … you know … so they were very flexible in terms of … gauging where the children were … and it's still like that now from one year to the next … each cohort is completely different as well so particularly at that stage of the year there's a lot of flexibility in terms of planning the curriculum … I'd say it was kind of prepared and then sort of go away and digest it sort of thing … and then when I came in September it was then very much a case of the first few weeks of getting to know the children … understanding the behaviours first before we could really start building on the learning … know where they were at academically … because I think until we had a good idea as a class team on the behaviours …
Researcher	Did that surprise you …
Diane	The behaviours …
Researcher	The process of getting to know the children before you could do the teaching …
Diane	I suppose so because in mainstream it's very much you know day one in September these are our class rules … day two its let's get going … I suppose it is … I hadn't really thought about it … reflected on it … but you do spend a lot of time … a good few weeks just getting to know the children … before you can start building that learning up … and particularly this year we have had some particularly challenging behaviour that it took until Christmas until we could start increasing the demands on one particular child because he was just finding it so difficult to cope with full blown lessons we were doing a fifteen minute timetable and that's something you don't have experience of in mainstream at all … and the children I had taught in mainstream that I thought were challenging … I now look back and think no it was not challenging at all … I was an NQT and early in my career but even so I look back and can see now all the different strategies I've got now that I would have put in place if I had known them then and it probably would have made day to day for me and those pupils a whole lot more easier …
Researcher	So in those early days then what helped or who helped …
Diane	I suppose my key stage leader in terms of giving me something before summer to digest and to have a think about the pupils and I'd met a few whilst I was in … so that really helped and then in my initial first term I would say definitely the key stage leader … really approachable and accessible because she was in the department she is a teacher so she's obviously got loads of strategies … similar class just a bit younger so … she was very helpful in terms of getting to grips with the curriculum and the expectations … the autism and behaviour co-ordinator as well particularly for the behaviours … I was very reliant on her knowledge and expertise for probably the whole of the first year … you know … the children's behaviours didn't remain constant

	throughout the year and new things would crop up and I would go to her and say we've tried this … is this right or we've tried this and it hasn't helped can you suggest others … and there are key people in the department that are very helpful to go to in that initial stage … then of course you have your formal observation cycle … so out of that you get a bit of additional support in terms of planning and …
Researcher	You had to manage a team of teaching assistants …
Diane	In my previous school I had had quite a lot of people in my classroom anyway because as I say it had a unit for deaf children so we had had someone signing during my lessons … some of the time not all of the time … and then I had a pupil who had a statement who had one to one support and then I had an additional TA for the rest of the class … so I kind of had had quite a few people in my class … but obviously shared amongst 30 or so children but I was really managing a team of two I would say in my mainstream placement whereas here it's from day one been managing a team of three … and that was … it was more … there was a kind of politicsy kind of thing with teaching assistants here particularly … where there were staff groups that don't necessarily always go together so they all start in September with these are the staff teams and then by October some people have shifted because they were not getting on and things were not working out and people not liking the class they were in and I got a bit of change in my very first year here in that I had one member of staff member moved from secondary because she wasn't enjoying her class she was in and she had had an incident with a child … so she was moved into my class and someone else was moved out … that sort of thing … so there was a lot to take in in terms of the management because I think the … where your day is so sort of intense and you're expecting your staff to work very intensely from day one and give them lots of direction … I think that was quite a lot to take on board whereas in mainstream you can say right you're going to work with that group and can you support them like this and they kind of left to it whereas here because it's so full on there is a lot more direction particularly with behaviours and this year the challenge has been staff who are quite inexperienced and having to sort of guide them and help them with their training needs as well …
Researcher	When you transitioned in how much support did the TAs give you …
Diane	Actually the staff member who was moved from secondary … she's been here a long time … she's a very experienced member of staff … actually she probably gave me a lot of help in that first year in terms of knowing the routines knowing the sort of structure and suggesting things the children might respond to … certainly the more experienced members of staff are most valuable in that sense … especially within the classroom … if there was a problem you can't always go to the ASD co-ordinator straight away and if it's there in the moment she was always around to ask advice from and because she was that experienced a member of staff I would say she was very helpful … some of the other staff I would say I kind of felt that they were learning at the same pace as me … in terms of the class I had I had two … one member of staff who's very experienced and one who was quite new in my class and then someone who was in the middle and had been here about a year so I felt kind of we were in the same sort of place but the experienced TA was very useful in terms of guiding me … oh you know she would say when I was in so and so's class this teacher used to do this do you think it might work for this group … and I would go oh yes maybe or no maybe not and that sort of thing … I think probably the experienced TAs don't get enough credit for the sort of support they give to new staff and teachers I think … definitely …

Researcher	Do you think a mainstream school has a different set of assumptions about the children that are in it to a special school …
Diane	I feel yes … I feel instinctively that children in special … I'm only comparing two schools really … in this special school I feel the children are viewed much more as individuals than they are in the mainstream setting … I don't think that's the fault of the mainstream setting I think it's the numbers in the school … the numbers in the class … and I think it's very difficult … it's one of the things I've said since I've moved out of mainstream I don't think I knew any for those children in my mainstream classes by the end of the year how I know these children by Christmas … because you've just got too many and you can't know them inside out like you know these children … so I think it does feel a bit like in special schools the children's needs and the children's behaviours are on a much more individual basis whereas in the mainstream because of the number of children you have got you almost just have to do kind of sweeping behaviour support programmes for a whole class and there maybe one for a specific child who …
Researcher	Are there different expectations for the pupils therefore …
Diane	Yes absolutely … there were different expectations in … I still think there were some pupils in my mainstream school who I can think of and the expectations and their backgrounds and conditions were considered when we took into account their behaviours and how we managed those behaviours … but I still think the expectation that they will participate in lessons they find quite difficult … that expectation was there … whereas here if a pupil finds a lesson difficult you find a way to ease them back in … like they sit in the corner of the room and don't participate and then they sit and join in for 30 seconds and get a reward and it's that sort of building those skills up … and you've got the time to do that and you've got the staff … whereas in mainstream it's just not practicable to support the children in the same way to manage those behaviours … so …
Researcher	Do you think there is a different view of teaching in a mainstream school in comparison to a special school …
Diane	Not necessarily because we are still expected … the children are still expected to make good or better progress in the way you would in a mainstream school it's just the steps for them to make good or better progress are so much smaller than the mainstream pupils steps … the main expectations of their learning is still there and the expectation of doing well planned … well structured … well resourced … lessons is still there … I do think the type of teaching you do does vary particularly when you compare the mainstream classroom to the PMLD classroom for example … it's a completely different type of teaching … but I think comparing sort of the mainstream classrooms and the more able groups that I have worked with here … we tend to follow a similar pattern in terms of the curriculum it's just much more differentiated … so we still use the National Curriculum to plan the sort of areas we are going to cover and we still do it at the age group they would do it if they were in mainstream it's just much more differentiated … so I think it's really difficult in many ways you try to treat these children very similar to if they are in mainstream school really and try to make them independent but I think in many ways you can't do that when you are looking at them on such and individual basis as well …
Researcher	Do you think that when you are in a group of teachers in a mainstream school there is the same culture of teaching as it is in the special school …

Diane	I'm not really sure to be honest …
Researcher	Would they be the same in giving you support …
Diane	Yes … in my experience … it's difficult … because I went in to my old school as a NQT that support was ingrained … the whole sort of NQT year and that sort of thing and I always felt in my old school that I could go and speak to my phase leader at that time and instead of going to the ASD co-ordinator I would go to the SENCo because I think those support networks were there and I used them probably as much … no maybe not as much as I used them here but I think I did use them at that stage … quite a lot for teaching strategies … behaviour management and that sort of thing so I think it's still there … I think it's maybe a bit more ad hoc …
Researcher	Do you think that the actual teaching role is different … in a mainstream school to a special school …
Diane	Yes … I do … I think for the pupils that I teach they're coming from a home environment where everything for a lot of them is sort of how they want it and they come into school and we 've placed a lot of demands on them they don't necessarily want and we have to facilitate their learning in spite of the fact they're in an environment they feel is quite difficult and makes them anxious … takes them out of their comfort zones … I think you have to be a sort of a … it's kind of hard to explain … it felt more formal when I was in mainstream I think … I felt like I was at the front of the class and doing a bit of teaching and then going to each group whereas here it's a lot more of hands on … all the time … a lot more interaction with the pupils throughout the lesson rather than that sort of stand at the front speak to everyone and then go to little groups it's a lot more go to every single child and check that they have understood and then move on … there is a lot more one to one work here which makes the role feel very different to mainstream …
Researcher	Thinking back did to that sort of change … did you feel comfortable with that kind of a change … was there a tipping point …
Diane	Yes I did because I felt more comfortable in this sort of role than I did in mainstream because I felt that one of the problems I had with mainstream was I felt I was racing through the curriculum and not really teaching them what they wanted to learn and what was useful to them … here you get a lot more freedom to teach them skills that are useful to them … to teach them those independence skills and to teach them how to communicate and how to interact and how to make eye contact … you have a lot more time to teach them things that are going to be useful to them and it felt a little bit in mainstream you were teaching them things that actually weren't necessarily inspiring them but that was what was on the curriculum and I felt that inflexibility made it quite difficult … so this kind of role suited me a lot better so I think this kind of made it easier because I was a bit more relaxed and a bit more … oh yes this suits me … than I had been in mainstream I think …
Researcher	Did you at any stage worry that you weren't being a teacher or you weren't doing a good job …
Diane	Yes … I think you do a little bit … I think when I first started … my TAs used to give me a hard time because I was doing lessons up until Christmas … it was partly because of the behaviours … keeping that structure and routine in place … but they were like can't we just watch a DVD or something and I'm 'no' … so I think my expectation of what the pupils can cope with was probably a little too high … at times … but I think it does sometimes feel like when you take them to soft-play for example you kind of think

	should they be doing this or should they be doing some more maths or handwriting or something but actually what they are doing in there is interacting … they are playing … they are taking turns … you know they are communicating … so actually … it takes a long time for that to feel ok than actually just changing the curriculum … it took a long time for that to feel like it was alright to just go to soft-play and let them play with each other and enjoy … and enjoy interacting and communicating with others … so I think there is lot of that thinking you should be powering through and making sure you cover everything in the book …
Researcher	So how do you know that you are doing a good job … in the special school now …
Diane	I think when the children are happy … which on the whole … behaviours … when we analyse what the behaviours are triggered by its mostly around sort of control and anxiety about their environments and the demands … I think that for the most part … given their sort of needs … the children are happy in school and I think that particularly these sorts of conversations get had at annual reviews and the parents will do a bit of feedback on a form … and say does your child feel happy at school … does your child feel safe at school … does your child learn at school … and I think that's the … having that contact from parents and them saying … oh yes my child happy at school they are always happy in the mornings … I think that tells you … you are doing a good job … and the contact books are another way of getting that from parents … and you get that feedback from parents and I think sort of having the children enjoy their time in school is probably the biggest sort of thing … and then obviously when it comes down to it … the data you get out you know … going on BSquared and saying oh yes you know now than can do this and now they can do that … seeing that progress … you known that's where you see that whatever you are doing is working because you can see … you know … at the start of the year they were not holding pencil and now they can overwrite their name for example … also I think it's a combination of different things … its feedback from other people but I think some of it comes down to have they made progress according to the data … having said that there are some things that are not measurable so on BSquared you can't say that three of our pupils have been toilet trained this year and that sort of thing … so there are lots of things that are difficult to measure …
Researcher	So is it easier in a mainstream school to know you are doing a good job …
Diane	I suppose … yes … I suppose it is if you are just looking at that data … as your main focal point … then yes I would say probably … but then in mainstream likewise you would only get one formal meeting with parents each year you might get some informal feedback in the playground … so that sort of relationship between you and the parents and you and the child is not as intense as it is in special schools so I think that is probably for me I think that gives you more feedback than the data does … which I think is probably where the mainstream is focused …
Researcher	If there was a teacher coming into the special school from a mainstream school what would be the first things you would say to them … how would you help them …
Diane	I think if I could have … if I had been allowed by my previous school … to spend more than an afternoon here you know before I started … even a day would have been nice but a week would be better … because it is such a change … I think time is probably what you need more than anything … to get your head around the sort of … the types of needs of the children … the behaviours … the curriculum … there is so much that is different … I think you just need time to take that in … it's very difficult when you are

going from one school to another to negotiate that time but I think that's what going to be most productive for a career progression type of thing … I think that's the most important thing … I almost think as well that actually the stuff you get before the holidays is useful but again its having that time to meet the children because I was only in for an afternoon and I only met two or three children and even if I had just had 10 minutes with each of the children so whether I knew they were verbal … you know made eye contact … had behaviours I needed … you know just that time to sort of say hello to the children … so they knew my face … I think that is probably something that needs to be built in as well as an actually structured 'meet your class' type thing because I don't think that's consistent across schools in my experience … I don't think anyway … so … that's thing really you can't get the time … and I really think that is probably one of the biggest things … there's lots of little things that would help someone I suppose move from mainstream into special for example signing … I had done it all and got my BSL Level 1 at my old school I came in here and it was really easy to start signing and it wasn't a problem but for staff who are new and haven't done that before … they then go on a Signalong course … this school is particularly good at putting the things in place to support people from other schools and from mainstream … like Signalong and they do an Autism course … an MDVI course … general induction into who's who and who does what … there's a lot in place actually at this school … I was really lucky there was so much to support people moving from mainstream … but I think the biggest thing is definitely time but I think those little things if they are in place at the special needs school and they are done early although it's a lot of information and it's a very very steep learning curve … it's necessary to learn quickly I think … to have the impact sooner rather than later on your class …

INTERVIEW 4 (Tina)

Researcher	*What was that transition like for you …*
Tina	There is certainly a difference in terms of the general learning style and the teaching style … for example not every class in mainstream uses visual timetables … and that's de rigueur in special schools for example … specific timetables and the way things are laid out it is quite different from mainstream as well as I'd say and there's a lot more structure than in mainstream … to attend to the certain needs of certain children it needs to be that way and it wouldn't necessarily be as structured in such a way … with visual timetables and things like that … what else can I say …
Researcher	*In terms of the skills of the teacher … what transfers easily …*
Tina	Subject knowledge … behaviour management … being able to work with a variety for children … differentiation … all of the basics of any teacher are definitely transferable … assessment and knowledge … those are the main things I would say … they are definitely transferable whether you are teaching in college or mainstream primary or secondary you can bring them to any school I feel …
Researcher	*And you found it easy to use those skills …*
Tina	Without a doubt I think using what I had in mainstream because literacy was my forte … my specialism … it's what I did my degree in … it's what I'm interested in … I learnt a lot of different phonics programmes and literacy interventions in mainstream which weren't necessarily happening in special schools or in my previous one and I have been able to use a lot of that knowledge such as information from Reading Recovery … phonics teaching and different interventions I have learnt along the way I have been able to use here and at other schools as well which I have found invaluable …
Researcher	*So how much have you had to adapt them …*
Tina	Some … not at all because if I'm working with CVC words its certain building blocks for words they're not really adaptable and I haven't yet needed to because it's simple and at the level of the children … questioning and things … I might have needed to adapt my questioning style to make it much more appropriate or direct or get to the bare bones of my questioning here … whereas I might have used a lot more language in mainstream … that has definitely had to change in the way that I have worked with children in special needs … for me I can speak really flowery and go off at a tangent and I have really had to hone that to work here … being precise .. definitely …
Researcher	*So how did you do that …*
Tina	You have to think constantly because if you are a person who would go off on a tangent or flowery you know … you would go off and explain more … you have to be … think about it more in a linear way for example … you've got to do this and not use too many words about it … then we are going to do this … break it down into very small little steps and think I don't need to be saying this … so you are constantly in your head having that dialogue … I think eventually it becomes much more natural but you do have to think about that … it was a massive learning curve really …
Researcher	*So would that be the biggest difference between your experience of mainstream and your experience of special school …*
Tina	No I would say it is the biggest but I would say language is very very important … and I've heard it said not only by myself but heard it in other schools where a certain teacher might have gone into a room in a special school … the language needs to be much more succinct … much tighter .. not so flowery etc. … that's very important …

Researcher	*So that's a key difference what other differences are there so you've said things that are similar what are things that are different …*
Tina	When you're working in mainstream you've got a different blend of children … you have all different types of children … you will have lots of children with special needs … children who are higher ability looking at level 5s and beyond etc. … you've got all different children here that you're working with children with specific needs and who would need much more one to one attention etc. … whereas in mainstream you don't necessarily need that … you can have children go off and it's not that you don't want children here to be independent don't get me wrong … lots of different needs more here …
Researcher	*So how does that impact on you as a teacher then …*
Tina	You have to make sure you're adapting to those needs much more in tune of what our children need here specifically and you know the child greater … you have to really really understand that child … what is a key motivator … in mainstream you've got thirty children and you can't possibly know every single thing about those children … here you have to make it your job to know those children inside out really … in terms of what motivates them to work … whereas in mainstream some children you can … some children you can … you've got a group of six or seven children and you won't know each and every one of those children individually you will tailor plan and hope that most will get it … here everything has to be tailored to each child … more succinct planning …
Researcher	*And doing that tailoring … is that straightforward …*
Tina	To me it is … I don't think it is to everybody … but to me it is because I think here … we used APP in mainstream and that it a lot more better to plan for children but here I think the Solar System is amazing because it helps you to pinpoint exactly what the child is at and where it needs to go next for me as a teacher it's a brilliant tool … APP was in mainstream and that was quite good but again you're not doing it for one child but a group of six … so that child in that group might be the top of that level or the bottom so they are not really getting complete tailoring are they … whereas here if you are keen to do that and do it well then you will tailor it … but you have more time to do it here because you don't have thirty children … so if you are going to get spot on for every child's need then you would be doing it for thirty children you know whereas here you're not …
Researcher	*So when you started here what would you say were the key things you needed to know quickly …*
Tina	I needed to know behaviour plans about the children behavioural needs … I needed to know their specific need … I needed to know about their likes and dislikes … their motivators … to me to get to know the children first and foremost before you can even teach them … you know I needed to know what makes the children in this class tick … are there any particular medical needs was extremely important although for that you are heavily heavily reliant on your teaching assistants …. That's not something you would generally tackle … not at all … definitely not … and if you did it would be something like and it would be very rare and it would be asthma so the asthma pump would be biggest thing you are going to deal with in a mainstream it is very rare …
Researcher	*Well you mentioned the Teaching Assistants what about managing that team … was that something you saw as different or was that ….*
Tina	That's a huge thing … the most you will have in mainstream is two teaching assistants

	here you are managing 5 and that is a huge thing … definitely … understanding how to work with them and all of the things that go along with that … that was huge …
Researcher	*And how did you manage that …*
Tina	At first it can be quite tricky because … if you went into a mainstream school you would go in you're the teacher this is how things go this how the learning goes … in this school you are much more part of a learning team and you want to bring everybody along with you … you're heavily reliant on those teaching assistants as well and you've got to make sure that hang on a minute we're all part of this team and it's not just me trying to lead the learning … although of course that is a very important thing … also it was quite tricky … so it's kind of a given gospel in a mainstream school you would walk into a classroom and your teaching assistant would be there … here it's much more well we have known the children for some time and these are their needs and hang on and you have to listen … it takes you a while to realise but you do …
Researcher	*What were the things that helped you realise that … and develop that role with the teaching assistants …*
Tina	Thinking what's best for the children … what is the best thing here … these teaching assistants have got a wealth of knowledge … they might not know about the Solar System and what the children need to do next and they might not know about the planning but they know about these children here and we are all here to do the best for the child so its listening to them and listening to their ideas … sometimes as a teacher you want to go in there with your own ideas … it's quite easy to be quite blinkered and say I'm going to drive the learning …
Researcher	*Do you think teaching assistants in the mainstream school have a different skill set to the ones in the special school …?*
Tina	Different skill set … I think there are some very highly trained teaching assistants here who can deal with medical needs which I don't think you would deal with in mainstream … here the amount of medical training they have is amazing … that is a massive skill set … that's tremendous … if you look in mainstream school a lot of TAs there are leading intervention schemes and they are leading them with up to six or seven children at a go and they are planning the teaching … and they are not even HLTAs and they could be planning the intervention … delivering it … helping assess … getting all the resources ready … so they will go and do all of these things each and every day … and I think that is quite a big skill thing … they are not HLTAs but it is expected as part of the literacy hour they will lead an intervention group each and every day …
Researcher	*So when you came into the school who helped you find out the things you needed to find out …*
Tina	S my key stage manager … I'm heavily reliant on … she definitely helped me … the Teaching Assistants were the key people as well … that helped me in terms of the children and knowing their needs … office staff as well were very important … really you've got to ask if you don't know things … there are loads of things you don't know … loads and loads of things … and then somebody asks if you have done this thing – learning all the time but you have to do a lot of asking …
Researcher	*Thinking about as a teacher in a mainstream school and a teacher is a special school as you come in … do you think as a teacher you have different assumptions about the children in front of you or do you think you have the same assumptions about the children in front of you …*

Tina	To be honest the key thing here is high expectations and I have high expectations of any child I work with and sometimes that can be a bit too ambitious for other people … I think that is probably one thing but you have high expectations and I don't think that should change for anywhere you work … if I know … it depends on the level of my children … they might be level 4 but I am still going to work my socks off to get them to level 5 I might have J who is on a P5 at the minute and I am going to work my socks off to get J up to a P6 … it might take her longer but I am still going to work on exactly what she needs to do to get to that level P6 … you've got to be ambitious for her … that would never stop .. so yes …
Researcher	*Is there a big difference between the school cultures of a mainstream school and a special school …*
Tina	Yes … definitely … I would say the culture in the mainstream school is much more rigid … it's very formulaic … this is how it is … you know … you were called Mr or Mrs … very Victorian I would say … the special school has moved away from that to become slightly more human and more personalised to their children and I think you take away all that putting you on a level there's a lot more humbleness and you have to be really ….
Researcher	*Do you think …*
Tina	The culture is very different and I think it's much more friendly …
Researcher	Do you think there is a difference in the teacher's role or status between the schools …
Tina	Yes … I would say it's much more hierarchical in mainstream … as in you're the teacher … the teaching assistant … and the children … here you are much more part of a team … the way you dress … the way you are … I think you are much more part of team here … come into a classroom and you might not necessarily know who the teacher is … go into a mainstream and you would know who the teacher is … for example here it is much more we are a team …
Researcher	*When you did that change did you find it an easy one to make …*
Tina	No it wasn't hard at all … you have to think what is best for the children … you have to change a mind-set … no it didn't take me long at all …
Researcher	*You didn't feel in any way that it had reduced your status as a teacher …*
Tina	Maybe challenged but not reduced … you just looked at it in a different way … I don't think it would be for everybody some teachers in mainstream do like to have you know this is how we are and this is how it is but they don't necessarily want to be part of a team they want to be me … but I think you just have to change your thinking
Researcher	*What about the messages schools give you about what they expect of teachers and what they think a good or competent teacher is like … is there differences in that …*
Tina	No … but I haven't been to any staff meetings where we have talked about teaching and learning … it's been about maths etc. … but the impression I get and from the literature I've had … I've had the school pack … and from mainstream the expectations are the same we expect good teaching we expect high standards so you know obviously I'm sure a meeting about it … the standards are the same … the expectations are the same really …
Researcher	*Did you think that before you came into the special school …*
Tina	I don't know … possibly at one of my previous schools the expectation wasn't that high and I found that a bit disconcerting because I am quite an ambitious person in terms of where I want my children to go and in one of my previous schools I didn't think it was as important and that disappointed me a little bit and it was the only special school I

	had worked in and I thought this isn't right really … then you could go to any mainstream school … and a lot now whether you are an outstanding school or in notice to improve the expectations there are always on you we are going to improve but you know … this one particular school I worked in … whereas here it is not like that at all …
Researcher	*When you come into the school do you feel that there is a new person stage that then moves into one when you have made the transition in …*
Tina	Yes … it's been much more easier here than I think it is in mainstream … here staff are generally more friendly and I've noticed that at other schools I've worked at … there seems to be a much more friendlier ethos in special schools whereas in mainstream schools that takes a lot longer to be accepted and feel part of the team … because don't forget in mainstream teachers work one on one they don't work as part of a team … it's really a teacher and one other teaching assistant … the teacher there is very autocratic … really they just get on with their job .. and its smaller … there just not as friendly … here you've got a big staff and there is that team ethos and I think people here are much more open to welcoming people in definitely and other schools I have worked at as well …
Researcher	*In mainstream is there a competitiveness between the teachers …*
Tina	Definitely … its promoted … hugely competitive … massively and because people work one on one everything is behind closed doors … suddenly look at what I've done type of attitude not look at what we've done … massive competitive culture … definitely …
Researcher	*And what is there in a special school …*
Tina	I don't think it is as outwardly in your face competitive but it is still here … I've seen it … that's good because you want to raise your game and it is here and people do say it they have done this or that but it doesn't seem as 'look how wonderful I am' … there seems to be much more of that in mainstream …
Researcher	*So in terms of your own preferences for the best environment for a teacher which do you prefer …*
Tina	Oh here without a doubt … its suited more to me … although I am ambitious for my children I think I'm not the sort of person who would be overly competitive with my colleagues etc. and look how great I am … it's a bit too … it's not the kind of person I am … I am a team based person … it just feels better for me really … I'm not the kind of person who wants to be all singing and all dancing look at me how fantastic … it does go on in mainstream all the time
Researcher	*So if you were talking to a teacher in a mainstream school telling them what it's like in a special school and trying to persuade them … what would be the points that you made*
Tina	You've got to want to work with children with special needs haven't you … and do the best for those type of children … if you're a person who wants to work with level 5s who are excelling in maths it's not really for you … it's really down to what you want to do … but you've got to have a strong interest in working with children who have got additional needs … and wanting to really get involved in that and adapt your teaching for that and I find that a huge challenge … that's the biggest challenge to me … adapting my teaching …
Researcher	*And what helps you in doing those adaptions …*
Tina	As in time … or what …
Researcher	*I don't know …*

Tina	Ok … well I constantly want to research and understand … so for example children with sensory impairments … not autistic children because I do have experience with them but those with PMLD I'm still developing my experience and wanting to do lots of research at home at the moment …. reading around and trying to think about developing the curriculum for them … so that's one aspect I am looking at the minute … I'm sorry I've forgotten he question …
Researcher	*The adaptations …*
Tina	Being proactive … I need to read around this I don't know everything so I am going to have to read about it or ask somebody or I am going to think about training …
Researcher	*Is it easy to find people to ask …*
Tina	Yes … definitely … if you're not a proactive person it's going to be tricky …and there is always information you can read … and I am quite a reading person … I do a lot of learning form reading … as opposed to asking … sometimes asking … I do learn that way …
Researcher	*An if you were devising a programme to support someone who is new into a special school from a mainstream school what would you put onto it …*
Tina	First of all Makaton … because you need to be able to communicate in an effective manner … so Makaton training is very very important … I think knowing about the different needs that you might come across with your children … so really really understanding … so for example literature about module one in autism … and understanding about that and understanding why we use things … like why we use a visual timetable … why is that important … some of the symbols you might come across … communicate in print training … clicker 5 … how to access clicker 6 training … all those different softwares because really they are not available in mainstream … and here they are invaluable tools … I think that is important … different ICT games you would use … I'm still learning that you know … we live in a software world and teachers use it all the time now … how to work well with your team … because you're moving from a team of one to five and how do you manage that …
Researcher	*How would you help someone who is doing that move … what tips would you give them …*
Tina	To step back first of all and just assess the situation … what is going on in the classroom … how is teaching being led so far … how are the teaching assistants managing the routines … what is going on … take a step back first of all for an assessment of them before possibly jumping in a little bit … what else would you do … take time to get to know your staff … they're a useful mine of information really … get to pick their brains … for example … those are a few ideas I'm sure there are more …

INTERVIEW 5 (Mary)

[Mary withdrew from the research due to personal reasons]

Researcher	What was the transition like …
Mary	Well it was quite hard at the beginning to be fair and I remember my first weeks when I came here it was shocking … it was shocking … I didn't know if I could cope with all of this but after two weeks I just realised that's the case for me so … yes it was quite positive …
Researcher	Coming out of those two weeks then did you find there were some skills that you had that you were using in the mainstream school that you could transfer and use …
Mary	Well yes … because basically I think with the special needs children you need to be able to work with them because not everybody's got that thing … not everyone is able to work with the children … maybe some people are not strong enough mentally … maybe they are just scared … a lot of people are just scared of special needs children I think … but I think you need to treat those children like mainstream children however you are treating them like youngsters if you know what I mean so … definitely the skills that you are using in the mainstream school you are using here as well … you have to be more patient and I think more calm … you know what I mean … so … yes …
Researcher	So in those first two weeks what was so obviously different …
Mary	Behaviour … different behaviour … not necessarily challenging behaviour … just behaviour … you know you have got children with different disabilities in here and … like some of them are hurting themselves … some of them are shouting … some of them obviously look different as well … which … you know about things like that but you … if you don't need to deal with that you don't realise how it is … so … those two weeks was for me like … can I deal with it … can I cope with this and I think it was mostly in my head … can I deal with it will I know what to do … how am I going to react if the child will be aggressive or how am I going to react of the child will be in danger for themselves … like hurting himself … am I going to be able to step in and not be too scared of him … all those kind of things …
Researcher	And is that what happened … you had to be more involved with managing the children's behaviour than you had been before …
Mary	Yes … definitely … I had never had any experience and in the past I had worked with special needs children but they were just … learning difficulties … nothing major like you know in here so I didn't have any experience ….

Researcher	So the behaviour was a major difference were there other differences …
Mary	Well for me the difficulties was as well because I was a PE teacher so suddenly I became a class teacher and how to approach those children and how to adapt my teaching to meet their needs … am I going to able to their needs you know … my expectations are they not too high … because I think that's a big difference as well … your expectations and also as a teacher you are really … not frustrating … but really … what's the words … not very motivate … something that would not motivate me was trying to teach them something but I didn't realise that those children are taking everything with the little steps … you know for example if I was teaching adding … if they could add one finger and another finger that was a success but for me as a teacher I am not teaching those children … you know .. I am trying to teacher them one and one and this is easy … one and one altogether is two but some of them couldn't understand it … so I was thinking no I am not a good teacher … I can't teach … so expectations for those children and also what you are expecting from yourself … you know you are trying to really make a big difference because we teachers we are there to make a difference … right … while trying to have an impact upon children's lives we are trying teach them something but when you are trying for two or three weeks to teach the child one and one is two then you are thinking something is wrong and definitely something wrong with my teaching so I need to think about how am I going to teach and that was really difficult for me …
Researcher	So coming out of those first two weeks … what were the stages that made you realise this was the right place for you … and you would be able to do it …
Mary	I think … if you don't know something you are really scared of it … that was me at the beginning … I was really scared of everything then … being in touch with those children basically you know trying to build a relationship with them spending time with them you can't just … I don't know if you say this in England but in Poland we say you can't just throw yourself into the deep water straight away … and that's what has happened with me really … I threw myself in to really deep water and that was scary for me … so just take it slowly step by step stay with those children try to see how they are … try to get to know them and then slowly … don't push yourself … don't rush everything … it's not going to work and also you know the place where you work and the people and don't be afraid to ask … I was horrible at the beginning … I thought that everyone was going to have enough of me as I was asking everyone everything and I was asking about silly things but if I wouldn't ask then for those people who are working there already everything was obvious but for me it wasn't obvious … you know … I didn't know that … I didn't even know how I should talk to those children … how to prepare the resources … even which web sites to use … which will be appropriate for the children … so just go and ask ask ask and people made a big difference and the environment as well …
Researcher	So who helped …
Mary	Everyone … assistants … really they are so good and so valued … obviously we are the teachers for the children but TAs are always with them … I know there are some teachers who are thinking I am a teacher so just ignore assistants … no but they are with the children all the time … they know them best … so starting from TAs finishing with the headteacher … don't be afraid to go they are there for you to help … so everyone really …
Researcher	Would you say when you were in the mainstream school that teachers have a different

	set of assumptions about the pupils they are teaching … that you do when you are a teacher in a special school …
Mary	Definitely … its different here … what really … not maybe encouraged me but what I didn't like in the mainstream school … I didn't have too much experience with the different schools but the school I worked in I didn't like the way everything was about the results … you know .. everything was about results … the school had to show the results … the department had to show the results … you as a teacher you were not a good teacher if you were not showing the results … everything needed to be on the paper which sometimes is not good … you … I think that here in the special needs school you really concentrate on the child and no one will charge you on the results on the paper and if the child is making huge progress that's not what makes you into a good teacher you know … everything is concentrated on the child in here … on meeting the child's needs whereas in the mainstream school it is all about the group … about how the school is progressing … I remember once we had training about A level or something else … and they said this is a good school because the results were good the percentage of GCSEs with A* to C was 70% or something I don't really remember how it was but I thought well but how do those children achieve the A*s to Cs you know … I was a teacher so I knew how they achieved it … I know that we were pushing them and we were trying to get them the best results which is good but it was the way we were trying to get them those results … you know … whereas here you always concentrate on the child's needs and even if the child is making the progress and then suddenly it moves back you still record it and no one will charge you on this … it's just the child and then you need to adapt your teaching through to that child which I think is an amazing approach and how I think it should be that's why the children are happy here they want to come here they are motivated by coming to school and they want to learn which is different in a mainstream school where you are forcing them to learn … in here they want to learn … and I think that's the main difference and it makes me feel that this is the place I want to work in … in this environment … I would never go back to mainstream school … no …
Researcher	So that's the difference in the cultures between an mainstream and a special school … being results led … are there other differences in the culture of the schools that you noticed …
Mary	I think also the way … how people are working with each other … I think it's … from my experience there is a competition between the teachers whereas in the special needs school we are all working together … I mean in this school … we are all working together … helping each other … we all know that sometimes some people need to be moved away from the situation and then the other people will step in … which is not like in a mainstream school which is no listen I am dealing with it stay away or you can't deal with it so you are not good enough … or whatever … it's like a competition between the teachers in the mainstream school where in the special needs school this is a culture of working together … you can't cope with the situation by yourself … you need to work and cooperate with the teachers and everyone is working you know together and that's a big difference as well between them …
Researcher	And did you work with teaching assistants in the mainstream school …
Mary	Yes I did have my teaching assistant … but obviously here you have got smaller groups and you've got more assistants … in the mainstream school I had teaching assistants but it was different … those teaching assistants I worked with they were fantastic they

	were really good … they did their job … but they were only working with the statemented children not with all of them but really a lot of children needed help … so that's another thing that is different … there is more support for the children in here which is obvious because they need it however I think the mainstream children need help as well and also another thing which I have just reminded myself … I remember I was a tutor in year 7 and then year 8 … what I didn't like … and it was secondary school … I had a boy who had learning difficulties but he never had any statement … and he was really difficult … his behaviour was really difficult and in each lesson he was very frustrated … he was very angry … he was very challenging … but the thing was he couldn't write for example his name … couldn't read … so he didn't have the help because he didn't have the statement … you know … and he was always treated as a bad behaviour … so detentions and all things you do with the children … calling the parents … you know … treating him as a bad behaving child … but he just needed help … but it was frustrating because the English teacher told him to read something or have a five minute silent reading where he couldn't do it … so you know that's the thing as well … here we are meeting the children's needs … there it was the curriculum that needed to be followed so …
Researcher	Were there things you did as a mainstream teacher that you don't do here that you miss …
Mary	Only from the PE point of view because obviously PE is all about physical activities … and is also lots of competitions … going out … tournaments and things like that … obviously our children it is different … I am not a PE teacher and I am glad I am a class teacher … that's a different thing … teaching PE in a mainstream school and teaching PE in a special school … here it's very slow … and the children will just roll the ball … but I want them to play the ball score the goal and things like that … so that's the only thing I would say I would miss if I was working as a PE teacher … because I am a class teacher I don't think I miss anything …
Researcher	Do you think that the actual teaching role is different … do you feel yourself being a different sort of teacher …
Mary	Yes … definitely … its more … you need to follow the curriculum obviously … teach the children maths English and other things … but obviously the mains focus is on social skills in here so you're not just a teacher like teaching maths and things you need to teach them everything more like … like 'aunty' … maybe not 'mum' … its more concentrating in social skills and trying to prepare those children for real life …
Researcher	You don't think there is any contradiction between doing those sort of things and being a teacher …
Mary	Yes but … here you are showing it more than in a mainstream school if you know what I mean … in a mainstream school you just go and just do your subject … where here you do everything … you know …
Researcher	There is that view isn't there that here you have a masters degree but you're teaching someone to go to the toilet …
Mary	Yes but that's why not everyone can work in a special needs environment … just because I've got a masters degree doesn't mean I can't teach someone go toilet because its … yes I do have a masters degree but I know with my work to teach one child to go to the toilet … it will have a bigger impact on his life rather than teach the child scoring the goal or other sorts of things … this is the beauty of this work you know that this child will take it away and it will help his quality of life … whilst making

	him do a somersault … well it will help obviously in a mainstream school it is very important as well because it is all about well-being and healthy lifestyle and all that sort of things but I think his going to the toilet is much more important … and also sometimes it's much harder to teach the child … special needs child is more challenging rather than the mainstream child to do the somersault … you know … and it's not only a somersault you are teaching them obviously even if you've got a masters degree in my subject yes you can teach the child to somersault and maybe you need masters degree for it because not everyone will be able to do it but sometimes if you think about it … it is sometimes to teach the child be confident and believe in themselves … not only … it's all I think a part of these …
Researcher	How do you know when you are doing your job well …
Mary	I had outstanding observation today so you know there are people who are telling me …
Researcher	Are you very clear before the observation starts what you need to show …
Mary	How do I know I am doing my job … I feel comfortable with what I am … I feel confident about what I am doing as well and I know that the children are learning and I know they will get this what I want them to … even talking about this going to the toilet … I know I am doing my job well because after some time … a year … the child will go to the toilet … you know so … that's showing me that what I am doing is the right thing and also with our children … special needs children … even if you can't do something right they will tell you straight away … they will show you straight away … the behaviour … showing their frustrations … they are very honest as well … so they will tell you and so you can see …
Researcher	What about when you were in the mainstream school was it clear what I meant to be a good teacher there …
Mary	Well … my impression was that a good teacher … obviously you had observations as well … but my impression was the results just showed … that was how they were judging you were a good teacher or not a good teacher …
Researcher	That was your experience …
Mary	Yes … the results showed if you were a good teacher or not a good teacher … and that was really it so you know … that's how I knew no one would tell me off they would look at the results and say well done your children progressed well … I didn't like this approach …
Researcher	Did you feel you were a good teacher …
Mary	I felt … well the school I worked in was a very challenging school and I always said to my friends and family and whoever asked me I think I am a good teacher because I have got a good relationship with the children … so for example what I missed there was that it was a very challenging school and the children were very challenging behaviour wise … very challenging … and I knew that … the children were doing at least half of the things I was asking them to do so you know having a PE lesson for example for one and a half hours it was really a big challenge so I was really happy if I could go through the warm up and I could go through half of the main part of the lesson and I knew that because of my relationship with the children they will do it for me … you know … however I knew also if someone would come and observe the way I am talking to the children … it is not something they would call outstanding teacher … if you know what I mean … it's completely different in a different school I guess … when I was back home in Poland there was different things … obviously we have a

	different approach to the teaching … the children are much more motivated than they are unfortunately in England … there is still … the children are working for themselves whereas here we are working for those children and you know … and they having the marks and the motivation and if they don't do well then they know that next year they will have to stay and repeat that year … and I think that was a big difference as well … but my experience from the school I worked in here in England … mainstream school unfortunately was like that so …
Researcher	When you moved into the special school was it very clear from the outset or did it take a while for you to work out what good teaching was …
Mary	It was quite clear … because I was told obviously what is expected from me … however from me it was quite confusing because like I said the expectation for myself was much too high I think … and quite often I went back home and I was in tears on the phone to my mother … 'oh I can't do it' … because I thought this is not something I was supposed to be teaching … but I had feedback from other people … telling me that no don't worry you are doing really well … you know the children are really getting what you want them to get … and they are learning … there is good learning and there is good teaching there … but for myself it was like no its not …
Researcher	Do think that was around getting the expectations right …
Mary	Experience as well … I think I just wanted too much too quickly …
Researcher	And you weren't seeing that what they were actually doing was success …
Mary	Yes … they were … what I was doing was alright for everyone else … but not for myself … I couldn't see it … maybe was my head …
Researcher	And changing that was through talking to people …
Mary	Yes … talking to people and observing other people as well … you really need to go and you really need to be not too ashamed to say can I see … would you mind if I just came to your class and observe … like I said it was the one and one … to me it was a tragedy that I couldn't teach those children … but everyone else was so excited that those children … after a while they knew that one and one was two … but for me as a teacher that was no teaching you know … one and one they should get it straight away because it is so easy and so obvious you know … so that was expectations yes …
Researcher	So if you were going to help someone who is coming into the school from a mainstream school what would be the things you would help them with … what would you tell them … give them … show them …
Mary	I would definitely tell them to be patient and to not give up … just to observe first … take the small steps … don't try to prove that you know everything already … sometimes I remember one of my TAs … we are still working together … she came here with her daughter and we met somewhere and she said … she introduced me and she said … this is J my teacher and I said no its you who are my teacher … so you know just don't think that you are the expert because you went for the interview and you got the job … no … take it easy … take it slowly … it took a while … you know … it took me a while to get good observations … at least a year you need to give yourself to try to get experience … it is different … definitely … take your time …

__INTERVIEW 6 (Alan)__

Researcher	Can you give me a bit of background what sort of school was it that you moved from …
Alan	It was a 1.5 from entry … semi-rural school … primary school near D … I was teaching years 3 to 6 at various points in my time at the school …
Researcher	Thinking back when you made the transition form that primary school to here … what was that experience like …
Alan	Personally for me it was quite hectic … it was a lot different … I think because this school has a lot of secondary school pupils because there's a large secondary department … and lots of the senior management are from secondary backgrounds … the way it was run was a lot different to a primary school … so that took a little bit of time to get used to I think … that was first real impressions …
Researcher	What do you mean …
Alan	Just … in terms of organisation and the sheer amount of staff … the sheer amount of teachers … support staff … coming from a school where you had sort of 4 teaching assistants in the whole school … 10 teachers to … we've got almost 100 support staff … the sheer scale of it was slightly overwhelming to begin with … I think that was the sort of thing that I found hardest … something I hadn't really expected …
Researcher	Were there things that you felt were the same … that did transfer …
Alan	Yes … the curriculum is what I was teaching I was secure with that … the children and the age groups … I know obviously their needs are different … the children are relatively similar … surprisingly similar …
Researcher	Had you expected them to be more different then …
Alan	I hadn't but my teaching interview here … although I got the job I feel I didn't cope

	brilliantly … but there was one boy in particular I was teaching and I ended up teaching him for two years here and I got to know him really well … but initially it was an interesting start …
Researcher	So there were aspects of your teaching that did transfer and there were aspects that didn't …
Alan	Yes … I think the skills are very similar … something I think … I found I didn't have to adapt my teaching style too much between mainstream and here … I think that … I have always enjoyed the less able in the class and always got more out of that which is one of the reasons why I came here … and I found that the skills I had picked up teaching the lower ability and the special needs at my last school when we set for literacy … worked out quite well … the … I found a lot of the skills in the classroom were the same just needed to be slowed down perhaps … slow down … yes … slowing down myself … just consciously thinking about … slowing down my teaching style and slowing down the way I spoke just to enable more take up time … signing helped a lot … because I am naturally very slow at signing … so that slowed my speech down as well … something that didn't transfer across very well was the fact that I had never managed a class team … I had had one teaching assistant a couple of days … a couple of afternoons a week before … having a whole class of three sometimes four teaching assistants was very … was challenging to begin with … I found at the beginning I wasn't very good at delegating and things and splitting the class into groups and getting my head around explaining what each group needed … I found I was spending either too much or too little time … to sort of explain and delegate tasks within the classroom …
Researcher	Do you think that was the key difference …
Alan	For me I found that that was the big difference … yes I think that was something I found difficult at the beginning …
Researcher	And how did you get through that … what helped you …
Alan	Actually something that helped me the most … was how good the support staff … they are very good and there is a mix of experienced staff and relatively new staff and they all work quite well together so I think I had a good staff … possibly in the first year I had been deliberately put with the good staff … that helped a lot …
Researcher	Who else helped … what else helped …
Alan	I think … colleagues were very helpful as well as my immediate managers … so phase leader and deputy head … were all very approachable and understanding … you inevitably get things wrong …
Researcher	What did you need to know …
Alan	Things such as admin … assessments … annual reviews … in mainstream it seemed quite … even though you would have children with statements in your class you were divorced from the annual review system … or at least I felt quite far away from the process … it was all done by the Senco … so my understanding of that process was fairly limited … although I had pretty good knowledge of some of the higher P scale levels for English and maths it was sort of getting to grips with all the P scales from P3 upwards and all the foundation subjects as well … adapting and planning for those different levels within the class …
Researcher	What did you get from your colleagues …
Alan	Support mainly I think … I was helped by L who started at the same time as me had come from mainstream … she was very close in proximity … the classroom next to me … it helped I was able to develop a good working relationship with her … she didn't

	mind me asking stupid questions …
Researcher	Do you think you had different assumptions about the children from mainstream to special …
Alan	In some respects yes in some respects no … in some ways they are very similar and in other ways they are completely different … each child is similar and different in a different way I find … I guess I imagined pupils at a special school to be more of a homogenous group … and when I got here each child is completely different … which is fairly obvious but … I was struck at how different and how each child has their own similarities and differences to one from a mainstream school … I think especially at our school where lots of our children have communication problems … in a mainstream school the fact that all of the children would be communicating with each other and interacting makes them appear more homogenous … but here you can really see each individual character …
Researcher	So when you say appear more homogenous in the mainstream school did you teach them as if they were …
Alan	No … but that's one of the reasons I wanted to move into special school in mainstream I had a class of 32 or 36 and I didn't feel I got to know all of the children at the end of the year you would come to writing the reports and you wouldn't … there would be some children you would think I could really know more about them … it's awful but it happened … so in some respects no … and then in some respects yes …
Researcher	Did you think that the teaching cultures were different in the two types of school …
Alan	I think in every school the teaching culture is different … every mainstream school and every special school … I think a lot depends on the ethos and the management of the school … certainly its different to the school I worked at
Researcher	What did you think was different in terms of the management …
Alan	I think because it was a smaller school in terms of staff and mainstream I felt … I think the staff felt closer and more integrated … here and it goes back to feeling more like a secondary school it feels more managed in a way … I don't know if that is the right way to describe it … not in a bad way or a good way … that could be the style of management … it could just be because it has that amount of staff to manage
Researcher	Do you feel the role of the teacher is different …
Alan	Not particularly no … I think in both settings … you're essentially trying to do the same thing … you might be doing different things to get there … but essentially in both settings my job was to make the sure the children progressed … I think that the way you do it may be slightly different … you might use different strategies … different curriculum … but essentially I'd say it was the same …
Researcher	You didn't find yourself doing quite different things in the special school … In terms of the expectation you would do as a teacher…
Alan	I don't think there was … I can see how some people might find coping with some of the needs difficult but I don't think that was something I really felt was difficult … some of ours have very physical needs and self-help skills that aren't the same as mainstream schools … I hadn't encountered before … looking back I don't think that was one of the things I found difficult about the transition … I feel the support was around to deal with any questions you had … certainly with issues surrounding child protection for example and what you did in some of the situations you would never encounter in a mainstream school were different but I don't think it was one of the things I found difficult … it was the first time I have really thought about that I went

	through feeling pretty informed in the induction period and had any questions answered but looking back I am wondering why I didn't really … I think I was more concerned about covering the learning in class … I found that more difficult than the needs of the children … their physical needs …
Researcher	So you took the needs of the pupils in your stride …
Alan	I think managing the staff … managing a team … and to an extent delivering the curriculum I found harder than meeting the pupils needs … I had done care work in the past … I don't know if that might be a reason I found that those aspects of the job easier …
Researcher	Who helped you with the curriculum side of things …
Alan	A variety of people depending on what part of the curriculum I'd go to … in that respect it was quite similar if I had questions about the RE curriculum I'd see the RE co-ordinator much as I would have at my last school … the problems I found was that at the beginning … I started in a class that didn't basically have a curriculum … didn't have a long term plan for the class because the way that the year groups had come up into the class meant that there was a big bulge in a certain year group so it was an extra class … that didn't quite fit into the long term plans for the subject and I think I found that quite difficult to begin with sort of fitting in that respect … in the fact that a number of classes had been doing it for many many years … so I would be getting behind with my planning … am I doing this right … I felt I was asking a lot of the same questions to a lot of different people …
Researcher	How did you know you were getting it right …
Alan	That's a good question … I didn't get told of for it … I think it was a case of … part of the problem was … a lot of people weren't sure especially in the foundation subjects where I fitted in either so I think they were happy to guide me but I think what I deeded at the start was do this and this and this and then I needed to get creative I think they didn't want to prescribe too much to me but at that time I could have done with a little more prescription … just for that starting period … but then I don't think that's …
Researcher	So when did you feel that you were getting it right …
Alan	I think it took quite a long time really … I think it took into my second year here really until I felt I was sort of … working as well as I was at the end of time in mainstream … I'd been very successful in my last couple of years teaching in mainstream … I felt I had gone back to the beginning almost … but then I felt that at the beginning of my time in mainstream so I think it's a … you do need time to get used to things …
Researcher	So what are the elements of that …
Alan	When you start to notice people coming to you and asking you … for me I don't think there is an actual point it's a gradual process … I think I do take quite a long time to adapt to things and to feel comfortable … I don't think there was a particular point … I think it was just once you knew what to do in certain situations … I stopped having to go and ask people what to do … and to actually realise I was making suggestions things … going to people and suggesting things rather than going to people and taking their suggestions … which obviously I still do as its part of the job to still learn from other people but I think to reach a point where you are sort of in a reciprocal relationship with your colleagues rather than feeling you're sucking their experience from them …
Researcher	Getting to that place where you feel confident in your role … what part did formal observations and feedback play in that …

Alan	I think they went a little way to in your reassure you that what you are doing in your teaching and in the class is good … I think I could have done with a lot more observations of others … perhaps at the beginning of my time … but obviously the time doesn't always allow for that …
Researcher	What did you need to learn then …
Alan	I think adapting the curriculum for the least able in the class … I struggled with a little to begin with … little things that make your life easier are always things I tend to pick up from observations … good practice … just picking up on good practice and things you had never thought of but seem obvious seem to be the most important things I get out of observations and also reminders of things … oh yes of course I haven't done that in a while … that's something I should be doing more of …
Researcher	And is this school a culture where this can happen …
Alan	Yes I think it is I think sometimes there should be more observation and time made for observations but its finding that time … there always seems to be a lot of paperwork … unfortunately that's the way teaching has gone … I can't imagine that being any different in any other school … I think the management does a lot to foster peer observations and especially in the last couple of years … which reminds me I am being observed by someone next week … as a peer observation not part of a performance management observation …
Researcher	So they are coming to learn form you …
Alan	Yes … I think management have done a lot to foster that … it's just trying to make the time … unfortunately a lot of us have our PPA at similar times … which is just the time you want to go and observe your closer colleagues but they are all on PPA …
Researcher	Did you get to visit other schools …
Alan	I have visited other special schools … I didn't when I started here I feel that may have been useful … but I think more time to visit other teachers at this school would have been more useful that that …
Researcher	So if you were putting together a support package for someone who is transferring from mainstream to here what would be the mains aspects of that package … would that be opportunities for classroom observations
Alan	Yes that would be the one thing I changed from my induction period … yes would be time to look at other teachers and time to reflect in their teaching in that induction period … I think I got good support going through the process of assessment and annual review from phase leaders and I think that was really helpful and had time with the head of key stage as it was then now we split it into different phases … lower middle and upper … when I joined the school it was key stage I 2 3 and 4 … so it was my key stage 2 leader to go through things and that was helpful … I think possibly observation in other key stages because then you see more extremes of … because our designation has changed we are starting to get different pupils with different needs … so there is a distinct feel to all of the key stages … they are slightly different … I think it would be beneficial to see bits of each …
Researcher	Going back to your colleagues in the mainstream school do you think any of them would have made this transition easy enough …
Alan	I think some of them would … I think some would have found it difficult … I think some wouldn't have considered it … and I think some would have been really good at it …
Researcher	What makes the difference do you think …
Alan	I would say it's easier here … I think you have to be more patient and thick skinned

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	here … some things are emotionally quite difficult … and you experience things that you wouldn't possibly at a mainstream school … one of my pupils last year had cerebral palsy and although he had left the school to go to respite he died this year and that sort of thing would be extremely uncommon … but unfortunately is more prevalent in a special school due to the variety of conditions we have got … I think the behaviours we have with some of our pupils can be emotionally tiring as well and you need a certain resilience and patience to deal with that …
Researcher	Did you know you had that or did you discover that …
Alan	I don't think I knew I had it … I think I suspected I had it … I knew I had the patience to cope with behaviours because I had dealt with quite difficult behaviours in the past … and always felt I dealt quite well with the challenging behaviour … I guess I did feel I had the emotional resilience to deal with it …
Researcher	So when you making the decision to apply or move … did you feel your teaching skills would stand you in good stead in the special school …
Alan	O hoped they would … I wouldn't go so far as to say I knew they would … I knew what I liked about teaching and I still do … looking at special schools … It's something that has interested me and something I had got the most out of in mainstream was working with the lower ability … and specifically those with statements … I didn't know anything for certain but if it's challenging … I do like a challenge … sometimes it's a bit more of a challenge than a challenge … but I think I wanted to experience it … and I knew if it wasn't for me it wasn't the end of the world … there'd be plenty of doors still open … I think it would be harder for someone who was later on in their career to move and to make that jump … especially in today's job climate …

INTERVIEW 7 (Laura)

Researcher	Can you tell me a bit about the school you transferred from …
Laura	I' m only newly qualified … I've only been teaching three years … so I came from a school originally where I had worked as a helper … a TA … and I was encouraged to go onto a teaching programme … so I did that .. and then I went to … did my PGCE and went into a quite a small mainstream school … I'd say I learnt a lot there … it was actually very very good … unfortunately because of the nature of the area it was in and the schools around it … it was closed … a number of different reasons … so then I went on and out to G … and my experience out there was … it was a small village primary school … can't think exactly how many pupils.. I think there was just over hundred … or just under hundred pupils … so it was quite a small primary … and that was where I did my first year … working in there … I didn't have any responsibility other than class based … I was quite new to it really … very scary .. very different from where I had come from … the school where I had originally started teaching … not teaching but

	where they encouraged me to go onto teaching … it was a different sort of catchment area … so the pupils were very different …
Researcher	So you are at this small school in G and you decide to come to this school …
Laura	Well … unfortunately there was a number of issues and there was no headteacher … so I felt for me personally I wasn't developing and growing the way I really wanted to … I had sort of begun to get slightly disillusioned … and thinking oh hold up this is what I really wanted to do … so anyway I made the decision to leave … and saw an advertisement here for a TA in as much as I was considering for a long time this was the area I wanted to be in and because I had qualified and my children had all grown up I had no responsibility as far as they were concerned … so when I came for the interview and talked to the headteacher .. that really this disillusion with mainstream and I had wanted to do special needs and I enjoyed working with special needs children when I was TA.. HLTA elsewhere … so I would like to give it a go from the bottom up … and here I am now … got my own class and I'm teaching … the headteacher saw something there and you know …
Researcher	So did you come in as a TA …
Laura	I came in as a Teaching Assistant … I was a qualified teacher … and I came in as a TA in as much as I knew nothing about this school … I knew nothing about the needs of the children in here and I thought for me this would be make or break as to whether this is where I want to be … and this is where I want to be … I love it here …
Researcher	That was two years ago … when did you take on the teaching …
Laura	September … I did some cover … last year … PPA and those sorts of things … and everybody was very happy … and then the opportunity came up and the headteacher said would you like the teaching post … and I said yes please … yes from September … I think for me I needed to see what happened right at the very bottom … to sort of where I am know … at the bottom … as in grassroots … knowing what the TA were doing … what their role was here because their role here is huge …
Researcher	So when you came in form your mainstream experience … what were the immediate differences …
Laura	Obviously the amount of staff to pupils … the ratio of staff to pupils … each class with one teacher and three TAs … the level of training that is available within the school … and that's sort of set in stone … you are trained to the best you can … and obviously the pupils and the needs … I had worked with pupils with maybe autistic spectrum disorders and you know but at a much lower level than mainstream … PMLD pupils … pupils that have no way of communicating particularly to you apart from the assistance of a Big Mac or you know I-gaze boards that sort of thing … that's their communication and learning all of that was very interesting … just a completely different …
Researcher	A completely different … were there some things that were similar …
Laura	Well the curriculum for a start … I mean we do follow the national Curriculum … the same as any other mainstream school would do … you know the expectations are the same we have high expectations of our pupils the same as any other mainstream school should have for their pupils and their staff … assessment … all of those … generally the same … so yes there were huge similarities … but there were big big differences … and it's a completely different way of thinking … I came I thinking in a mainstream way and know I think in this school's way …
Researcher	So what's thinking in mainstream way …

Laura	Thinking in mainstream to me was … a huge amount of focus on … well it is paperwork … there didn't seem to be enough and there should be … there should be … fun enjoyment and excitement and … there seemed to be lot of emphasis on what pupils can put on paper and that sort of thing and … I just feel … we have paperwork here but the things we do with pupils … the emphasis is on fun enjoyment and excitement and I …
Researcher	Do you think the assumptions you have about the pupils are different in a mainstream school … in your expectations … the type of relationship with the teacher …
Laura	Well when it comes to relationships I'm … although I only have seven in my class now … I think I know those much much better than I had the opportunity to know the seventeen I had in the school where I worked because there was so much marking so much … paper based … we do collect the evidence … but its collected in a very different way … we photograph things.. we record things … we film each other … we share … you know it's just completely different …
Researcher	Do you think the teaching is different in a mainstream school …
Laura	I think it is very difficult for me from the point of view of I'm quite new to this … I've only had a short amount of time to get used to being the teacher within the classroom … I think to a certain extent it's harder in a way because here .. because you are managing the team as well as the pupils … organising what they will do … and in mainstream I had a TA for half a morning every day … that was a bonus … here I have there are four of us in the class all of the time … and managing all of what we are going to do … is a sort of a juggling act in itself … it's quite interesting because I enjoy that side of it as well … but it's a lot to think about …
Researcher	Do you think your status as teacher changed …
Laura	I think it's much much more teamwork … but that is because there are four of us in there and we have to work as a team I can't see everything that my pupils do all of the time … because they do a lot of activities outside of the classroom … I will work with one pupil and the other four or five might go with other TAs ..,. so I rely a huge amount on them to bring the information back and share with everyone of us and it's in depth because our pupils make tiny tiny steps in their learning … you know … how we report that to each other is quite in depth …
Researcher	How did you know you were doing a good job in mainstream …
Laura	How did I know I was doing a good job … I don't know … no I do … because the children were learning and their results showed it when we did assessments together … and you know other teachers we were all sort of coming up with the same sort of statistics and that sort of thing … but again a lot of it was levels and that sort of thing that pupils were on … although we have IEPs here … each pupils has an Individual Education Plan … we do work to the targets … but I think a lot of the targets that they have for our pupils are things that will move them forward and we can see them quite clearly being able to … make their own cup of tea … for example … I can see that clearly when we go into the Food Tech … they know kettle … filling it up … put the switch on … they can push the plug in and I can see all of that …
Researcher	So in the mainstream school you can't see the …
Laura	It's not that you can't see it … I think the expectations on the mainstream are just very very different …
Researcher	So how do you know you are doing a good job as a teacher here in the special school …
Laura	Because I know my pupils and I know what they can do and I know what the next step

	is … I know … basically I know them better than I did my mainstream pupils … because of as I say all of the additional things I felt under pressure to do there … don't get me wrong there is still pressure here to hand things in on time and you know … assessments and everything … I just think I am able to be creative and know that the pupils are learning from my being hugely creative here … the bigger and bolder you can be here …
Researcher	So how did you know that was the way to be here …
Laura	Because everybody else is doing it … that was what everybody else was doing … and I learnt that from being in …
Researcher	So you had opportunities to see what others were doing …
Laura	Oh gosh yes … I was working as a TA with a fantastic teacher … who showed me a huge amount in the school … lots of opportunities .. there's always opportunities to go into other classes and see what they are doing … there are always learning opportunities … from just walking in the corridor … just you know lunches …
Researcher	Is that different from the mainstream school then …
Laura	No … I think to a certain extent it is just taken for granted there that they should be walking nicely … so perhaps going back to what you said earlier … the expectations are different … the expectations are still high but different …
Researcher	When you were in the mainstream school would you have had opportunities to go into your colleagues classes and see how they were teaching …
Laura	Not a huge amount … no … and again maybe that's where the disillusionment came from … there wasn't … as I say the headteacher is very much into us sharing our expertise … our skills … and everybody has an open door policy … so can I come in and see such and such … you know … and obviously you have to run it by SMT … but the general consensus is if you want to see how someone teaches or you want someone to come in and do team teaching with you … it's just the accepted thing here … as I say support and advice ever since I've been here … if I just talk or email I will get an answer back or someone will say I can help you with that … whereas sometimes I felt in mainstream there was just a feeling that if something went well for me I'm not sharing it and that could be the schools I have been in … and to a certain extent the school that I started in right back when I did helping and TA and everything was very different to the two schools I did my teacher training in … so …
Researcher	What do you think are the key skills a teacher needs to teach in this school …
Laura	A huge amount of patience … I know you need to have patience elsewhere but I think here because our pupils are so so unpredictable you need to able to know when to step in and when not to step in … when they're on a tipping point of behavioural issue … being prepared to stand back and say hold up I can't cope with that pupils right at this minute … and somebody else will come in and do that … and that's not seen as a negative … it's just the unpredictability of our pupils that we have to accept that sometimes that pupils will not respond to us in way shape or form … they may not respond to the other five who come along and try and help but my experience of mainstream is that they are your pupils and you need to deal with them … hugely creative … explore every avenue you can find … how many different lessons can you do with water … you do with foam and all of those things … and then if you have a pupil that is only engaged by water or foam then you have to be creative about how you use those elements and you have to be prepared to go round to the other class and say what have you done and as I say it's very good sharing here with ideas and support …

Researcher	Thinking back to when you were transferring and you arrived here and you started at the bottom how long before you felt you had got a handle on it … and who helped you …
Laura	Oh everybody … it is very much a family here … in as much as everyone is 'is everything ok and what can I do for you' … you might get little emails to say how is this going or how is that going … as I say the teacher I was with .. I was lucky to come in as a TA … the huge amount of responsibilities on a teacher weren't on me straight away so I could learn all the different elements of being in this school without all added pressure of being teacher …
Researcher	You were asking teacher like questions … did that bother people …
Laura	No … everybody was aware I was a qualified teacher and there was no secret about it … everybody was aware and were saying why … and I was just open and up front and said that this is possibly where I would like to go and there weren't any special school teaching jobs around at the time … and as I say for my own peace of mind … I had decided I had to make the decision as to whether this was where I wanted to be …
Researcher	Did you think that coming in as a teaching assistant before a teacher was a good way to make the transition …
Laura	Yes … because I know why sometimes my TAs might be out of class for twenty or thirty minutes … because they have got an issue with toileting or maybe one of my pupils is really not very happy and doesn't want to come back to class … and I know that they will come back and they will give me an in-depth discussion about what happened … and I know that things happen so quickly here … and that maybe they have been asked to help and support in another class where something has happened … so I needed to know how they worked first … and I think that has helped me work with the team that I have got in … don't always get it right … but that can happen there are so many people here … you know and there are going to be personality clashes sometimes that as a professional you have to put to one side and work as a team and we do …
Researcher	So if you were designing the perfect transition programme would your path be the perfect one for you …
Laura	It worked for me …
Researcher	Say you had come as a teacher straight away with all the responsibilities you have got now …
Laura	I think the opportunity to have worked side by side for a term maybe with a teacher … would have been a great way to do that … if you are coming in as a teacher because there are so so many differences from the mainstream …
Researcher	So if you could do that for a few weeks what would you expect the teacher to learn in that time …
Laura	Well working with the team … handling team of adults … helping you to recognise and understand some of the huge amount of needs that we in this school … just the basic showing you how to use a lot of resources we have … because they are specialised resources … and you do need the opportunity to have a go at them and test them out and try them … with somebody who has the knowledge and understanding to be in with you … would be good … planning … just sort of bringing out the creative side in you .. just being around pupils that we have here because it can be quite … I don't think scary is the right word … sort of daunting hearing pupils … its quiet now but sometimes it can be quite loud … some of the voices that staff are using are quite firm … but they have to be … sometimes the behaviour of some of the pupils … gosh you

	know … if you stood back and looked you would think I don't know how I handled that … but actually one of the biggest things is realising that they are just teenagers same as any other teenager that we have … they just have a special need in a different area … and they are teenagers … they just have their moody days … their good days and their bad days same as we do … and their likes and dislikes

INTERVIEW 8 (Susan)

Researcher	Just tell me a bit about the school you transferred from …
Susan	It was a secondary mainstream grammar school … in M … so my experience has been teaching English at a secondary level from 11 to 18 so … up to a A level standard … prior to working there I worked at a comprehensive school again secondary and I am

	secondary trained …
Researcher	You transferred to this school … when was that …
Susan	September … six months ago … as a teacher in the secondary department …
Researcher	And what was that transition like …
Susan	Initially it was really daunting … and it still is quite daunting when I think back how far I have come in the last six months and how much my career has changed really … the day to day job has changed … but it was really exciting and actually I felt I hit the ground running … and coped with it quite well …
Researcher	Why do you think that is …
Susan	I think because it is quite a supportive environment I have come into … I think probably in the first couple of weeks I felt maybe I wasn't getting the support that maybe I needed but having had time to reflect on it actually if I had been bombarded with training and information … from the word go … then I would probably have drowned under all the information I wouldn't have actually taken it in … so although I felt it was a little bit like sink or swim … it was quite daunting to be put into a classroom with no experience in that background and just 'there's your class there you go' …
Researcher	So how did you cope …
Susan	I coped really well with it … mainly because of the team that I had around me … my TAs were really supportive and really good and the other people around me as well … my key stage Manager … the Head were all on hand to give me day to day advice as I needed it … and there was training … but actually although I felt a little bit out of my depth … I think it was just a case of learning through experience and just getting on with it … I think I was probably in a slightly beneficial position because my daughter had MLD and I have experience of her going through the special school system as a parent I had knowledge of the system for children with special needs … it was definitely a totally different environment …
Researcher	So what were the things you needed to learn … to learn quickly …
Susan	To start off with I think my main concern was behaviour management because we had challenging behaviours and there was support on hand for that straight away … so although I was in the classroom the TAs helped to prompt me with behaviour management strategies and obviously they modelled those because they had been doing it for a lot longer and they know the children really well … and also there were behaviour support information provided initially so I had the children's communication passports and previous annual reviews … transition forms … so I spent a lot of time looking through the paperwork before the children came into the class … so I had strategies to choose from that …
Researcher	What skills that you already had worked well did you find yourself using …
Susan	Well I do have a teacher glare … that I think is quite effective … and also patience … and trying to understand the roots of the behaviour rather than 'they're just being naughty' … and to look for possible triggers and … strategies to calm down the behaviour before it escalated … so all of that was the same as it had been in mainstream really … keeping the children engaged … motivated … so that they don't feel the need … to behave in an unacceptable way … I brought in all the behaviour management strategies that I had used in mainstream previously … that worked … but I think for me a lot of it is knowledge of the children … although I came in and I felt I was doing the behaviour quite well obviously that was proved as I became more aware of the children but also … seating plans … that I always had in mainstream … being

	careful about how I position children in the class ... which members of staff I choose to work with the children ... differentiation ... all of those behaviour strategies ... the thing that was obviously different was that in mainstream secondary it's pretty much a 'hands off' situation ... you never need to touch any of the children in mainstream ... offer my arm for support or anything like that ... in the special school environment it's almost impossible to operate in that way because sometimes they need to reach out for mobility issues ... care issues ... toileting ... so that was very different ... and also physical intervention ... using SCIP strategies ... I hadn't had any training in SCIP or anything like that ... and that was quite scary when you come from mainstream which is much more sterile and formal ... especially in a secondary grammar school ... then coming into this environment where children were scratching or pinching me ... kicking and hitting ... pulling hair ... all of those things that I had just never experienced in a classroom situation before ... I had seen children be aggressive to other children but never physically be aggressive to myself they might be verbally intimidating but not physically intimidating and suddenly I was confronted with some children who were ... and its knowing how to deal with that ... quite difficult ...
Researcher	So do you think there are different assumptions that you have about the learners when you are in the different schools ...
Susan	I think ... perhaps people initially ... that the pupils ... the children ... wouldn't achieve anything ... wouldn't make good progress ... I don't think that I came into the job with that kind of mind set but I can understand other people may have done ... because as I said before being the mother of a child with special needs I knew that it was very small steps of progress and everything you celebrate ... so I think I did come in with that mind set ... measuring rates of progress is different from a mainstream grammar school where you would expect them to be moving on quite quickly ... I suppose I did take a while to adjust to .... Sometimes I would have lessons when at the end I would think ... oh they wouldn't have learnt anything from that ... and then the TAs would say they have learnt loads today look at how much they have done ... it's quite tricky seeing that from a different viewpoint ... a different perspective ... I have always had high expectations of the children and that hasn't changed ... because I think whatever they are capable of doing that is what I expect ... if they have got the ability there then I expect to push them to their potential ... that hasn't changed at all ... in terms of behaviour I suppose I do have slightly different expectations because I know the children's needs there will be moments when they lash out and will be incredibly frustrated for a whole range of reasons ... and they don't have that same self-control as perhaps some of the children in mainstream do or should do ... and I think teaching teenagers specifically is quite difficult ... because the children here are going through puberty and as I said don't really have self-restraint ... self-control ... so you see things happening that would never happen in mainstream ... it would be a serious problem if it was ...
Researcher	Do you think that the teachers have a different role ... or are seen in a different light ...
Susan	I thought perhaps in the first few weeks that maybe you were taking on more of a caring role and that was true ... but I don't see myself as a carer ... I don't see that as the role of the school ... I still am the teacher and I am responsible for their learning ... and for helping them to achieve and to make progress ... so actually no I don't think my role has changed really ... I don't see a difference in the role ... it's just here I am able to be less formal ... relax more ... show more of my personality ... have more fun ... but that is a part of the strategy of engaging children ... motivating the children ... and

	building a relationship with them and helping them to make progress … in terms of actual teacher responsibilities I still have the same level of planning I have to do … still have the same level of assessment … and I still see myself as the person who is leading the learning within the classroom … so that hasn't actually changed … the difference for me ids that whereas before I was operating as a kind of single person … single unit in the classroom … now I lead a team of TAs … so that is a slight change in role because I have got people with me all of the time whereas in the grammar school it was very rare that we had a TA come in to the classroom and when they did it was a random TA who came in … you know … occasionally …
Researcher	What about your relationship with the other teachers …
Susan	We are quite a close knit team … because here … because we need to support each other a lot and I don't feel there is the same level of competition as there was in mainstream secondary … I felt much more isolated in the mainstream secondary school because as I said I was often alone in my class through most of the day and … if I wasn't in the classroom I was in the department office … in the English Department and there was seven teachers and we shared an office space and had a desk each but that was literally the extent of my school community … you know sometimes I would only have seen those people a couple of times that day it wasn't the case that you would all go and sit in the staff room and have a cup of coffee … it just wasn't that kind of environment … so you felt quite cut off and as I said there was a lot of competition … exam results … league tables … and all that kind of thing there was a lot of competition between the teachers within the department even though we were all really good friends … there was definitely competition between teachers within the same department over results and then there was a lot of rivalry between different subject departments .. so actually science teachers didn't really talk to the English teachers very much because we got better GCSE results than them … not very helpful either because 'no I'm not helping them because they're in English' … quite strange atmosphere really … it was very unusual that the whole school got together and I have to say … to my shame … there were quite a few teachers that I didn't know their names … after teaching there for five years … and there would be teachers who would be 'hi, hello' and I would be God I don't know who that person is or what subject they teach because it's a much bigger place … it is just on a much larger scale … but here you are encouraged to know everyone and build good working relationships and they have all been extremely supportive of me and there is no competition with the results it is just that the thing that matters the most is the children … and we are working hard to support the children … so because of that everybody will give a little bit of advice or support or give you ideas … and that is really nice and I think also the way that the headteacher has the staff meetings and the briefing it does feel that the school operates as a whole unit … and I'm not just saying that because I am being interviewed here … it is one of the things that I have really loved about coming to this school because you feel like you are part of a team … and the full staff meetings that we have on Mondays all of the teachers from both sites come together and the headteacher actively gets you to mix up and work with different people and so you just build good relationships I think … so I can only say positive things about the other teachers and how nice it is to work with them …
Researcher	How do you know you are a good teacher here …
Susan	Because we do have quite a lot of lesson observations … I have had several since being here more than I would have done in mainstream secondary definitely … and you get

	immediate feedback from that … written and verbal feedback … and also because you get comments from other members of staff … they are very good at saying that went really well or I really liked that or do you realise how the children responded to that so you get that from them … but also you get it from the children you can tell from their response … the way that they are responding to the task … the activities that you do … so people response is a big one … but also K does the 'good practice' videos which she shows in the staff meetings and you get a chance to look at those and discuss them and pick up things that are good and things that don't work quite so well … when you are watching you can see elements of your own practice in there and you can gauge where you would be … so looking at the lesson observation forms … the headteacher has shown us lots of variations and I think that as a self-reflective teacher you can look at that and think ok I can I know that I do that that that but actually I don't do that … so I think that that has been really useful as well … but also and I haven't had a chance to do it yet but progress tracker will pick up the data and that will be done later in the year to track them … I have been keeping track as we go through and a lot of the children have made good progress as well with their IEP targets … annual reviews … looking at P levels …
Researcher	How does that compare with the mainstream school … how did you know you were doing well in the mainstream school …
Susan	Probably with the lesson observations as well … as I say I probably wouldn't have so many lesson observations in mainstream … maybe a couple a year … but in mainstream you didn't get that same kind of feedback as you do here … so it was more difficult to know if you were a good teacher or not … again it would be looking at assessment … going to the pupil responses … but it was more difficult to gauge whether you had actually had a good lesson … or not …
Researcher	Did you think you were a good teacher in the mainstream school …
Susan	Yes I did … definitely … I felt quite confident … because the children give you more of a response … you can tell by their reaction to you whether they value you or not … certainly I didn't feel that they thought I was a bad teacher and my results were always really good and my lesson observations were always fine .. you know good as well … so I did feel that I was a good teacher but I must say I feel like I have been a better teacher since being here which is quite depressing as I have been here six months and was in that environment for ten years … and I actually feel like I am a much better teacher now … I think because I have more feedback but also because you have a much more intimate close relationship with the children that you can see form the way they are responding to you and the way that they are changing and the way they making progress … I think it is more subtle so you can see them in a more rounded way … it is more holistic I think … rather than just the academic achievements … this is their level and having their two sub levels of progress and you know it's quite clinical in mainstream whereas here I get to see the little things on a day to day basis so I do feel I can get more immediate feedback from them which is nice but I think also a couple of times I have thought if I went back into mainstream I would be a better teacher because I would have so much more understanding about motivating the children and engaging them and just having much more fun … I would go back into mainstream and have more fun … which people criticise … you know it's not about the fun it's about the learning but I think you have to make the learning enjoyable in order to push the progress on and get the children on side and …

Researcher	If you were devising an ideal transition for you now … what would be in it … what would happen …
Susan	I think I would have had a little more information at the beginning … I would like to have had my SCIP training prior to being let loose in the classroom … and I probably would have liked a little more preparation about the toileting and changing .. swimming and that was quite a shock to me … a huge source of amusement to the TAs … what I have to help a child go to the toilet … so probably slightly more preparation … with that .. and I would have liked a bit more time observing before going in I think I spent three days at the end of my school year in July … my old school finished early because they saved up their training days and there were three days at the end so I used those three days to come in and to observe as much as possible within the classroom … that was hugely useful … and probably more than what other people sometimes get … but I felt like it was never enough … plus however many lesson observations you get you always want more because they are so useful and I would have liked perhaps to have a week where I had spent time looking at specific areas … different subjects … so to go from being a specialist in one subject to suddenly teaching the whole range … cross-curricular … just would have been really useful … just to have observed as many of those different subject areas as possible … to gain ideas about how to start off … the main thing really was the SCIP training and being aware of the dos and the don'ts … official policy with those kind of things … I was just very reluctant to do anything that wasn't appropriate … I wasn't sure to what level you were able to move the children … you know manual handling kind of issues … that would have been really useful to have known that before I came in and actually started … it would have been nice to have that initially … I did get it fairly soon to be fair … but it felt like I was several weeks in and I could have done with that in the first week … eating as well .. feeding at dinner time was probably the most stressful time of the school day for me until Christmas I think … I had never had to engage in any of those kind of activities with children and so … the dos and don'ts of that as well .. would have been quite useful to have had … perhaps a specific session on the day to day practicalities I think … but the induction programme is really good as I said … I still think if I had had all this training thrown at me I don't know whether it would have made much sense … I did have meetings when people spoke about IEPs and Annual reviews and at the time I thought I had taken it on board but you never really take that on board until you start going through it and doing the process … so maybe if I had received more training on that then it would have been counter-productive …. but generally I have been really happy … I have felt supported … buts it's inevitable even when you transfer to another mainstream school you do feel that it's all confusing … actually I did feel it was more difficult to transfer from the comprehensive school to the grammar school because the systems within the school were so different … I found it really hard to pick up on the different systems …. so in a way it's been easier to come here because everything has been different and the guidelines are really clear … so I've been able to pick up on that quite quickly ….
Researcher	Do you feel you got the help and support you needed …
Susan	Yes … if there was something I was unsure about then the TA and the HLTA in the classroom in the first instance … and if there was something they were unsure about I could go immediately to my key stage manager … and she has been really helpful and has always made time and whenever I have said 'I am worried about this' … 'I've got a problem with this' … she has sat down with me … but there was also a training

	package which I had … J who is semi-retired but used to be SMT went through a lot of the initial stuff with me and also one of the senior teachers has been doing training with me … any of the teachers … if there was something I was worried about then they would immediately answer my concerns … or point me in the right direction to find out .. so I have never been here and felt like I was on my own … with no one to go to … there has always been someone around … my deputy head has almost an open door policy … I don't know how he manages to get through his work … because people are constantly interrupting him … but he has always been there and made himself available every time I have needed to talk to him … but the headteacher too … you can approach her with queries and she will point you in the right direction … so I have felt very supported much more so than I think I was in mainstream …

INTERVIEW 9 (Christine)

Researcher	*What it's about is ... is about your experience of the transition from mainstream teaching to special school teaching ... do you want to just tell me from your* recollection what that was like?
Christine	Ok so from T to here?
Researcher	Yes
Christine	I've kind of been involved in different special needs schools before so I had a sort of rough idea of what a special needs school would be like but only from a middle school …. so the seniors … so I wasn't too sort of … I don't know … frightened or unsure of what I would be coming into … um … but I think I wasn't even now I don't know … I wasn't prepared for anything that was going to come my way … it was lovely sort of getting to meet the children I think I did half a day or a day in school when I met them but obviously it was coming up to the end of term and they weren't aware of me and I was just kind of a strange face sitting in the room looking at them all … um .. I got the CD from M and tried to learn as much as I could about them but I genuinely don't think that you can gauge anything from a CD

(interruption in interview)

So where was I? CD and information … so I think you know only seeing them for half a day or a day I forget what it was … reading you know information about them … it still kind of wasn't preparation .. I felt that … not that I … maybe I needed more … but I just don't think you can experience special needs until you're here active in the classroom … learning about the children for yourself … that takes weeks if not two terms .. I think it took me at least a term to kind of get to grips with the routines and the timetables and the different rooms within the school and different programmes that are run by outside agencies and you know what social services cases I had in the room and I was literally learning nearly every day I think something new that I didn't know existed in the world but existed here and you know the sensory room and hydro pool and timetables for individual children and I think it was entirely overwhelming for the first term and I think the second term I was enjoying the children more and I kind of had a good relationship with a lot of them and the more challenging children as well … I felt like I kind of found my footing with some of them and I experienced things with them that I you know from mainstream you don't have … particularly very violent outbursts from children or a child that will suddenly you know lean over and bite you and having to kind of adapt being in an environment that isn't particularly safe all of the time was quite interesting and I think I had to overcome a few kind of fears of right that child's going to thump me and I'm scared about that and … I'm actually it's a thump and then sort the situation out and I think yeh a lot of just a lot of information paperwork and then you know the most important bit … learning about the children and their tics and what's going to set them off and what they like and what will encourage them to get on with their work and yeh two terms were quite … |
| Researcher | Did you feel your skills as a teacher in T were of use? |
| Christine | Yes in that I think T has quite a high percentage of special needs children anyway and the class I had I had for two years and they had three very different autistic children and that was quite a nice kind of... I really enjoyed getting to work with each of them and finding out what made them tick as well and what would make them want to sit down at the table and do a bit of work and they had a nurture group |

	which was kind of back at key stage one so I was always quite interested in what they were going off and doing and a different way of learning so yeh there was a slight yeh like that might happen but no not particularly I think coming here I had to just know that I just was never going to have a silent classroom unless a miracle passed by and um I can't um I can't stick to the timetable this child is going to do this or something happens over there I'm have to adapt and do different things you know … if I've got a TA off … that messes up that group of children … what am I going to do and kind of thinking on your feet I don't think obviously in mainstream you are juggling thirty children so you do have to think on your feet as well but it is far more kind of rigid to timetable and there is targets to be met and all of this .. and actually here I think here it is just you go with the children and that's a really nice way of kind of working I really enjoy that picking up how they're all feeling in the morning and just like maybe … Michael's not going to go for that goal today so we'll try something different yeh its certainly much more flexible yeh
Researcher	So that thinking on your feet that you say is the same in both contexts but how are *you doing it here … thinking on your feet … coming up with solutions?*
Christine	I genuinely don't think my brain switches off till the children leave so the second they come in the room I'm looking at every single one of them and I'm seeing if you know if Steven's crying and that would be quite an unusual thing for Steven to be upset so why is he upset is he poorly is … and you know you can't get a verbal response form him so you're searching to find something you know … with Arthur as well … is he calm today or is he kicking off in the corner and you know … how is Michael has he been crying or is he ok … it's just checking how each of them has come in what's gone at home to try and support that and then going with it and if I can see we are all a bit bubbly and it's not so calm … we'll sit down and have a bit of quiet time and you know and just adapting that in the timetable just sit and chill and turn the lights down and have the fairy lights on and brings them all down a little bit I don't know if you um I don't know if Paul is being really sick and he has to disappear off and I've lost two members of staff and I'm standing in the middle of a numeracy lesson and I've got two other members of staff left with me and you know I've got little runners all over the place and different children just to be like … aaaaaand stop … and come back and get the chairs and sit them down and do like a clapping game or pass the parcel type game on the go or something just drop whatever activity it was and go with it and I keep things calm if I feel its rising up and they're flapping a bit no stop stop stop it and they've come back together again and try something different um I think you know you get people walking into the room saying to you oh we've got this time slot for this child and you know speech and language are saying can I have Anne this time at this day and yes yes you can but you will have to come back and remind me because I'm thinking about too many things right now to remember that Anne's going to be at 1.30 on a Tuesday afternoon next term that's not going to stick in my brain so um yeh just its just being thinking of the children thinking about the next step what might trigger that person if they are not happy to go down to dinner what way can I work around them being happy going to dinner … I don't know .. just little things little tricks that you are constantly thinking of all day to try to keep them going …
Researcher	And so in that transition what helped you to get a grip on that process?
Christine	Um I think the team that I went in with were pretty fab and it was um quite a shocker to see how some TAs worked with some of the children and I thought you know I think I am quite softly spoken and I don't really raise my voice in the room and that's kind of the style I have always had in mainstream and wanted to carry over … and I was taken aback by you know some TAs who would be … and stop

	that … and that's not ok … and oh dear and I thought oh my gosh what's going in why are we shouting at these children? And um there's this kind of and then actually I think it was Tom one day and Claire just said oh dear you have made me very sad and that was like the first time I had heard that oh dear slogan and very sad and he stopped straight away and sat down on his chair and I'm like right ok calmly calmly softly softly doesn't always work all the time and it's good to kind of adapt and to picking obviously … can that child take that from me at that time or are they just pushing their luck … are they you know just not in control of their bodies today um because I think I toughened up quite a bit um and I don't know you kind of um change your voice for nearly every child in the class you know if its whole class teaching I'd be quite calm but then if you're one to one then with Anne then I would do like a high pitched singy voice for her or Steven got the weird croaky thing on the go change and you just change and adapt and try and communicate with each one
Researcher	*I'm getting from you that in the mainstream classroom there you've got assumptions about how the children are in mainstream and for the most part you're assumption* is that *they are ready to learn and you won't have to change things very much you* might have to as you said for one or two children on the autistic spectrum you recognized you need to something slightly different for but for the majority they are ready to learn?
Christine	I think there is that … for the scary powers that be that are in the school that are … right when I walk into the classroom I want children working and children learning and so you do feel like there is a pressure on you that even if you know a child is feeling a bit wobbly because they have come in from home you know maybe dad got arrested last night and everyone was up until one o'clock in the morning you kind of try and give them a bit of time to chat with you in the morning do a bit of colouring and but you're always aware there are twenty-nine other children behind me and you know I think the majority yeh are ready but there are always the individuals who will … need a bit more time and I felt horrible because I felt I was never able to properly give them the time and I had quite a complex class a lot of social services involvement and um I was always totally aware of these kind of social aspects that I needed to do with them but also at the same time there is soundswrite to come at 9.15 and have they done their handwriting at nine o'clock did they do a page and ok its literacy now and then you know snack time playtime back in numeracy and it's kind of er relentless timetable of objectives that you need to cover and if a child is falling behind there's not a huge amount that you can do with them with only one TA in the room to kind of pick them up and keep them going I hated I think that was one of the real things I hated that because you would see a child that was struggling and you couldn't reach them because you know you have the majority who need to get on with their day …
Researcher	*So in the special school is that expectation different or not there or what's changed?*
Christine	I think it's that er its same thing that they are ready to learn but that it's not that they're ready to learn to write a page of handwriting … they're ready to learn to er I don't know do er um cursive writing it's not sort of so broad its ok what is Arthur able to learn today? And it's more using those small targets for him and just applying the ones you think he can actually achieve that day rather than trying to ram something down his throat that he's not in the mood to or you know is able to learn that day
Researcher	Was it helpful to you as a teacher when teaching in mainstream to have the curriculum and the targets so clearly set out for you?
Christine	Um at T was an interesting example of being led very much from the top um and er

	even though I enjoyed being a fairly new teacher I enjoyed having the structure of er the plan for the term the objectives laid out for the term every lesson for every week and every day … you knew exactly what you were doing um I always enjoyed trying to make each lesson very creative but then you feel very restrained by time so there were lessons that went by and I um didn't enjoy that at all I don't feel like I could have done this or I could have done that whereas I think here yes you are still you know I still look at the national curriculum I still use learning objectives from them and take from bsquared as well and bits like that but I just love that it's so open and creative and I think um being given that kind of leeway that trust from like yourself and the deputy headteacher that actually we know what we are doing at that we can look at the national curriculum and make it relevant and it doesn't have to be written down in front of you and you have to follow it and um and I think given that trust as a teacher is quite well it's something that I hadn't experienced before and didn't feel like there was a lot of trust and that they needed to check absolutely every piece of work you were doing every lesson plan and I think that kind of took away a lot of enjoyment and being creative with having people going that you might have done that with them but then did they achieve that and being really hard they need to get from a 1c to 1a in a term and do you think by doing this style they are going to achieve that um and so I have just loved being a bit whacky and creative and it's been really nice I had that when I first started and then I think you get so panicky about sats and things that you kind of you don't want to have a group outside explore the sand because if someone walks past what are they learning … how is that going to get them a level 2 um so yeh I don't know I just loved being able to go with what I think and what I think is relevant as well … to learning objectives
Researcher	So do you think the teaching role is different because of that or the same?
Christine	I think with special needs your teaching role is um I feel like you can be far more … I'm struggling for the word … kind of more involved with each child and that's allowed … you're allowed to choose interactive play with them and get to know them slightly more in depth and actually really care for each child in your room and want to know … to get the best from each of them in a very individual way and you have to learn about every individual child otherwise you they are not all going to succeed whereas in mainstream you kind of have the bracket of higher group middle group lower group and nurture group and you just have to bracket children and actually you know … Aiden and Danielle they were the same table but they were so different in their different abilities and yeh I've totally forgotten the question because I went off on one …
Researcher	It was a*bout what the teaching role was … so in the transition was there a time* when you thought I'm not being a teacher anymore or...
Christine	There are days if I'm honest when I say did I teach today you know from doing your GTP and having rigid lessons and things like that … there are a couple of days go by when you know I'm not entirely sure I felt much like a teacher today but actually it's just a different style altogether and um it's a far more free I find anyway … a liberating way of teaching … is having a smaller class being able to have the time for each individual child even though I feel sometimes I don't have the time it's still being able to sit with Donald on the vibromat and let him see cause and effect by pressing that button and giving him you know twenty minutes of my time and I kind of I love doing that and in the beginning I thought that's not really teaching but yea it is teaching Donald how to have cause and effect just for him to have some kind of sensation from something in the room … so even though sometimes I feel like you know I'm not doing my proper you know this is it I've got it up on the

	board and I'm going to give you one tick if you sort of think it's ok two ticks if you really achieve the target its yeh it's the objectives that are still important it's still what you're working for but you've allowed to be far more caring and get to know the children far more …so if you were to get Peter crying I'd be able to cuddle him and tell him it's alright and give him a bit of squash and in mainstream you wouldn't you'd kind of get that's a bit inappropriate should you really be cuddling a child from year 2 … that's year 3 … I don't think so … so um I kind of get to be more compassionate with the children as well
Researcher	Was there a time when you felt tha*t now ok I'm a teacher here?*
Christine	Um when I first started I felt like Claire had a little checklist of things I needed to go through to become a St. Nicholas member of staff so it was you know taking a pounding from Tom that was a big tick on the list and the fact that I didn't call any of the others and just took it myself and I think getting up and doing the Christmas carol concert last year that was another tick she was like welcome to the team so there are like little things in your class you kind of get more integrated into the school um but I think I think I probably felt like I was a teacher that maybe I could teach these children maybe after the first couple of weeks where I think some of the TAs have said to me oh yes you're really good for someone who's from mainstream and like you know you get on with the kids and I thought oh thank you very much and I was sort of well if they think I get on really well with the children and I am able to interact appropriately with them then that's it isn't it if you can communicate with the children then that's your job done …
Researcher	So it was important to get some positive feedback from the Teaching Assistants?
Christine	Actually it is I think if you don't have them on side then you don't have support do you within the room um and once you've got them onside then
Researcher	*Well there is a view that says well you know here's the teacher these are the* Teaching Assistants and they just do what you tell them to do
Christine	But yeh that is the rule I think mainstream yeh perhaps but then there is only two of you and you know top dog and 30 kids and they are all looking at you and you are the person that giving the information pretty much um but here when I came um there were so many other additional jobs that I'm not doing that they are doing and taking charge of and you know changing and meds and all of those additional things that are just not relevant in mainstream they're there doing and it makes their job um title far more they're not just teaching assistants yeh they are supporting me teaching the children but they are also you know nursing the children and changing the children and um so the role of TA for me in the room is very different I call us all teachers in the classroom so if I'm talking I'm like you know what teacher are you sitting next to when I'm doing the hello song and I think that's important that the children see us all as important adults within the room because if I'm not in they need to know Claire is an teacher and its ok because you can trust her because she is going to look after you continue doing what I am doing I think the children aren't silly they know that I am the one that sits in the chair and does most of the talking um but we are all working as a team to support that class and I think you show respect to the TAs and you know don't question their ability and what are you doing and write up a full timetable of everything that they need to do if you give them that bit of leeway then they are going to respect you for it and they are going to want to you know show you that they can … there's no way that I could have gone in n with a timetable in my first week shown it to Claire and be like can you follow this please because I didn't know what I was particularly talking about in the first week and she did and she taught me quite a bit … then I learnt very quickly yeh you've got to have their respect

Researcher	Were there other teachers that helped?
Christine	Um well I kind of started with Chris at the same time but um I think we were both I think whoaahhh a bit so we just had a chat and say did you know about this no I didn't actually um it felt quite nice to have someone who I felt was on a par with me in influence levels and some things um I really admired Hilary when I first came here I thought her sense of humour was hilarious and I did wonder if it was appropriate but that was like my mainstream … can you say that … and saying that to a child I don't know can you um and the way she had a relationship with the TAs in her class it was quite bantery it kind of makes the class a really nice positive environment to be in because you feel like you're working with your friends and you want to get things done well um I think I looked to Hilary um and I didn't really get a chance to go round and see teaching styles so even to this day I'm a bit like well I'm like am I doing this entirely correctly I've had a few observations obviously and I suppose I must be doing what everyone else is doing um but you only kind of get to see other teachers when you're going swimming and how they control their class then and if you're in the hall on Friday and bits like that pick up different ways of talking ways or different ways of being or different phrases I hear people use so I have to say mostly it was probably Key Stage 2 group that I looked to and also M when I came in for that first day I thought she is amazing her whole life I hope I can be like her um and I didn't get to see her much after that but you know um yes it's fairly limited who I could see but um it's nice to bounce ideas off Chris and also talk to Hilary who was quite good at listening as well …
Researcher	*So you say it's difficult to know whether you're doing it right or not… you must* have an idea in your head about what doing it right is.
Christine	There is yeh obviously there is a way I would like things to be going and bits like that but I don't know I think maybe just a bit of a mainstream thing you would like to kind of know how other people are doing … and like are you … obviously each class is different and so it's different but when I was at T a lot of the teachers were kind of really look to what the other classes were doing what other creative ideas they had and um we were such a small school um that when I did the garden thing for my um growing vegetables at this girls house everybody kind of knew about that what was going in I was able to give feedback about that and I don't know another class mentioned some amazing roman display or something you do know about it and ask how it was going and I quite liked that you could do that and like hmm that's a good idea and take a few bits and then do your own version and bits like that and I quite like bouncing creative ideas off other teachers as well um and I meant that this was what was different especially because you've got different kids in the classes and you can't just like … Leroy is kind of similar to Paul but how you dealing with him at the moment um but you know if you kind of get a few ideas off other people or things you have seen like that's a nice song where did you get that from and bits like that but I guess there is not a huge amount there's only as much I know people do amazing things and I've kind of want to check that I am doing good stuff in my room as well 'cause I guess it's more I want to know I am giving the best to the children so I'm doing proper research and making sure that I am you know have an amazing Christmas song that I'm not missing out and I've got it in my room too …
Researcher	So you were a good teacher at T and you are a good teacher here so do you think there are things in common that you are still doing that give you that feeling that you are doing your job well?
Christine	Um I think um that at T my teaching style was noted in that I was quite calm and created quite a nice atmosphere in my room and all of those bits and bobs and had a

	good relationship with my TA and the children really respected what I was saying because I had a good relationship with them and um I think that's the same thing here in that I like to create a calm room even if children are not listening you know I'm still trying to keep my voice nice and calm for the rest of them and I like to think I've got a good relationship with the other TAs in the room and that actually the children respond to what I am saying because they want to get positive feedback from me rather than you know sort of negative attention um so those skills are still applied from mainstream to special needs and … I don't know … I think I was creative at T and I like to think I was still being creative here and thinking of new ideas for the children and I suppose that the you are there for the children anyway you want to get the best for them and from them it's the same here you want to give the best to the children and you want to see them doing their best as well so I guess that standards don't slip if it's just the way you go about it achieving that target …
Researcher	Did you find yourself spending your evenings preparing stuff for the next day when you were at T or marking books that you took home and is the same thing happening now?
Christine	In mainstream the paperwork was just relentless and that's part of the thing that zapps the fun out of being a teacher in mainstream for me and I think just having I know it sounds silly but even not having to hand your planning in every week so someone could check it and make sure that you were doing the right thing and you were following what you were saying and um I like being creative and having ideas but when I am having to sit down and do my weekly literacy and then my weekly numeracy and then my topics for every afternoon and then my soundswrite and then my warm up for this and if I've got an additional group on the go yeh like a wedge and that just one week and um I don't know if that's just T planning style … probably is … if I'm honest but um I genuinely hated it and I had to give up half a day of PPA and that would be your literacy and your numeracy half done and then you would have to give up your Saturday morning or your Sunday evening to catch up and have everything ready and then there was resources you needed to find as well and your photocopying for thirty kids for three different lessons in the day and setting up the room was insane you've got so many tables to get round everything was quite big and quite stressful I think and then when you add Sats on top of that and assessment like really heavy assessment and then doing the exams with them I think and I just thought this is not teaching this is paperwork and this is writing it down yes here yes obviously there is paperwork to do and you've got your daily lesson plan um but it's not anywhere near as stressful as having to do the detailed lesson plan for absolutely everything which is what I had to do at T and um I think that what's kind of brought back the enjoyment of just teaching is that I've got my daily plan I know that is roughly what I want to do with that group that's what I want to do with that group then if it doesn't go to plan we will do something different and then that ok you know I haven't managed to tick that off just yet and it allows you to be far more creative because you've got more time to think about things you can do in the room more resources that you can find things like that I found I found the paperwork hugely stressful at T and I know a lot of teachers felt really bogged down with it as well um
Researcher	And if you are reflecting back on things and I said what were the two key things that could have happened that would have made the whole transition work better what would they be?
Christine	Um I said to the deputy headteacher that um when had my chat with her a while ago … my professional development whatsit … and er I said you know I'm pretty glad you didn't tell me a lot of what I was walking into otherwise I would have just been

overwhelmed before I had even begun and even though you know I learnt I was pretty exhausted for the first term um I think if you overload someone too much with information and things like that then they are coming into the school thinking oh I need to set up a speech and language thing for this child and the hydro pool for that and um a sensory room for this and you're not actually thinking about getting to know the children which should be first priority and you're thinking about paperwork again so in that respect it's not maybe then to have had maybe a week in the school and I know that is really hard when you are teaching somewhere else but I think a weeks a good minimum for transition for being here so um trying to sort of form relationships with the children and you know we have students in and they are only in for a week and then they kind of get to know just start to get to know the children and then they are off again and I think that's a good amount of time but I know it's highly impossible and impractical um you know more time to get to know the children and then I don't know maybe to have explored the school a bit more um it was lovely getting shown around but I was like I will never be able not use the sensory room I don't understand all those switches and it's not until I had training a couple of week s ago that I could you know what you can put a switch onto that wheel I did not know that I think maybe to er have had a practical hands on session in rooms that I would be using with the children might have been handy so I'd be slightly more aware if what could be achieved in those rooms but that's pretty much it I wouldn't have wanted to have known any more …

Thematic Analysis

Interview Number	Key change experiences	Main similarities	What was learnt first	Who/ What helped in the transition	What do you need to know in the new setting
1	• **Different structure to the day** • **Specific specialised programmes to deliver** • **Learners not independent**	• **Subject knowledge** • **Differentiation** • **Basics of teaching**	• **Language use** • **Getting to know the children**	• **Key Stage manager** • **Admin staff** • **Personal reading and research**	• **Behaviour needs** • **Medical needs** • **Motivators** • **Managing TAs** • **Communication systems**
2	• **Difficult first two weeks** • **Behaviour of the learners** • **In the s/s children want to**		• **Managing behaviour** • **Going from a specialist to a generic curriculum teacher**	• **The TAs** • **Classroom observations**	

	• learn • More about social skills than curriculum		• New expectations • Adjusting teaching to individual needs		
3	• Lot to learn very quickly • Skills don't transfer easily • The behaviour of the children	• Overall expectation of progress • Planning • Some strategies	• Signing • Being creative • Slowing the pace • Needs of the children • Politics of TAs	• Good induction programme • Key Stage manager • TAs • Classroom observations • Time to get to know about the pupils	
4	• Smooth transition • Different less formal atmosphere • Smaller numbers in class • Better relationships with pupils	• Behaviour strategies • Practical teaching	• Less formal in s/s • Pitching teaching right • Language	• Senior Leadership Team	
5	• The size of the school	• Curriculum skills • The children were similar	• Slowing down the teaching • Signing • Managing the staff team • Adapting the curriculum	• TAs • Teachers • Curriculum leads	• Admin systems
6	• Anxious start • Managing the staff • Less pressure on targets and more freedom	• Same elements just in a different form • Differentiation	• Using the TAs experience • Knowing the curriculum	• TAs • Observations • Key Stage Manager	
7	• Staff-pupil ratios • Training • Pupil	• Curriculum • Expectations • assessment	• 'make or break' for personal wellbeing • Knew	• See others • Support and advice	• Managing a team • Resources • Planning • About the

			what a TA did		pupils
	• needs • More creative				
8	• 'daunting' • 'hands on' • Behaviour problems	• Behaviour management strategies • Motivating pupils • differentiation	• using teacher 'glare' • planning • assessment • motivation	• supportive • TAs • Key Stage Manager • Personal link to SEN through family	• Behaviour management • The paperwork •
9	• Not frightened or unsure • Takes a term or two to get to know the routines • Behaviour needs • Less numbers and less rigid timetable and targets	• Needs of children with SEN • Still be calm and reward positive behaviour	• Being flexible with the timetable and the activities according to the pupils needs	• The TA team • Colleague teacher in similar situation • Key Stage Manager	• The routines • The needs of the children

	What are the assumptions in each setting	On being a teacher	How do you know if you have got it right	What works in transitions	What sort of person succeeds	Are there different school cultures
1	• Same high expectations	• More hierarchical in m/s • More team work in s/s • More friendly in s/s • More competitive in m/s			• Want to work with children with SEN	• In m/s more rigid and formulaic • In s/s more human and personalised
2		•	• Confidence • Children learning	• Observations • Taking small steps • Use the TAs knowledge and skills	• Not 'scared' • Want to work with SEN pupils • Patience • Calmness	• In m/s it's about the results • It's very competitive in m/s

					• Resilience	
3	• They are different to each school irrespective of type • Individualised expectations in s/s not in m/s	• Need to maintain role in front of TAs • Need to be more individualised • Need to think more holistically	• Data results • Children are happy • Comfortable in self • Feedback from parents/pupils	• Observations • Meeting the pupils		• Similar supportive cultures • More formal in m/s • More individualised and class control in s/s
4	• Not really different • High expectations in both settings • Relationships with the learner are different	• Happier in the special school • More stressed in m/s	• See progress • Feedback from students • observations	• good induction programme • meeting the students	• creative • confident • wanting to specifically work with SEN	• togetherness in s/s • isolation in m/s • sharing culture in s/s not in m/s
5	• both similar and different • depends on the needs of the learners • more time in s/s to respond to the individual needs	• generally doing the same thing in both settings	• your colleagues ask you for support and help • it takes time • it's a feeling you develop • observations • feedback • data results	• observations of colleagues • visiting other schools	• patient and thick skinned • emotionally resilient	• each school has a different culture • it links to the management of the school
6	• to raise the levels of attainment in both settings	• bad personal experience in m/s • job satisf	• children are learning • appraisals • positive attitude to getting	• training in the specialist programmes • understanding the individuality of	• certain interest and 'mind-set' • patience … more like	• less pressured in s/s • mor3e stressful with targets in m/s • more

		action coming from planning for the learner in the s/s	it sometimes 'wrong' • trust	the children • admin. and record keeping • working with TAs	understanding • preference for it	supportive in s/s and more trust • fixed culture in m/s
7	• more focus on paperwork in m/s • less fun in m/s • less opportunity to get to know the pupils in m/s • not observing each other in m/s	• came as a TA disillusioned with being a teacher • then switched back into teaching role	• children are learning • the results • practical outcomes • different expectations	• shadowing teachers (as a TA)	• I love it here • Lots of patience • Good at team management • Good with the resources	• In s/s there is recognition that at times you may need help and its accepted • Not so in m/s • Creative and sharing culture in s/s not in m/s
8	• Different assumptions about behaviour and attainment	• More caring in the role • It's a more balanced role	• Lesson observations • Training in staff meetings on good classroom practice • Progress tracking	• Being part of the team • More information • More training in specialist strategies and skills • observations	• feel a better teacher here as know the children well • more holistic and rounded approach to teaching	• less formal in s/s • not alone in the classroom like you are in m/s • more of a team in s/s • less competitive in s/s
9	• in m/s the expectation is that learning and progress can be seen all the time • in s/s similar expectation but	• in m/s there was more guidance and clarity about what was expected	• acceptance in the eyes of the TAs • observations • seeing other teachers	• pacing the new information and expectations so there isn't an overload • getting to know the children • knowing the	• someone who enjoys teaching	• Not just educating the children but caring for the children in s/s • In m/s the paperwork is relentless and

understanding of the social and emotional needs behind the learning behaviours	from the teachers • in s/s more trust to be creative • more rewarding as a teacher when its more creative and less prescriptive		environment and its resources		the planning excessive making it stressful • Less creative in m/s • Getting the best from the children same in both settings

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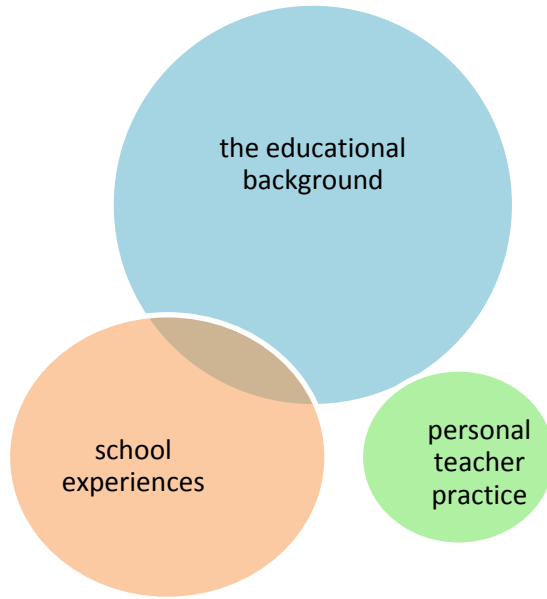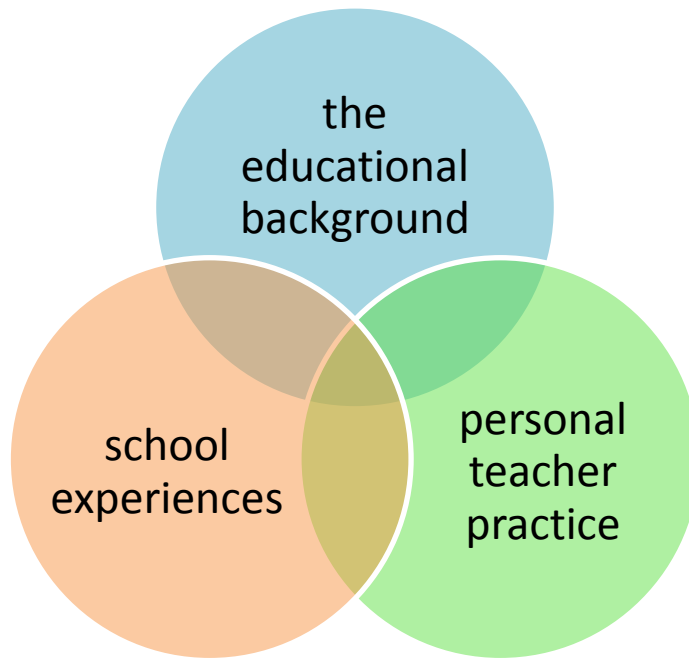
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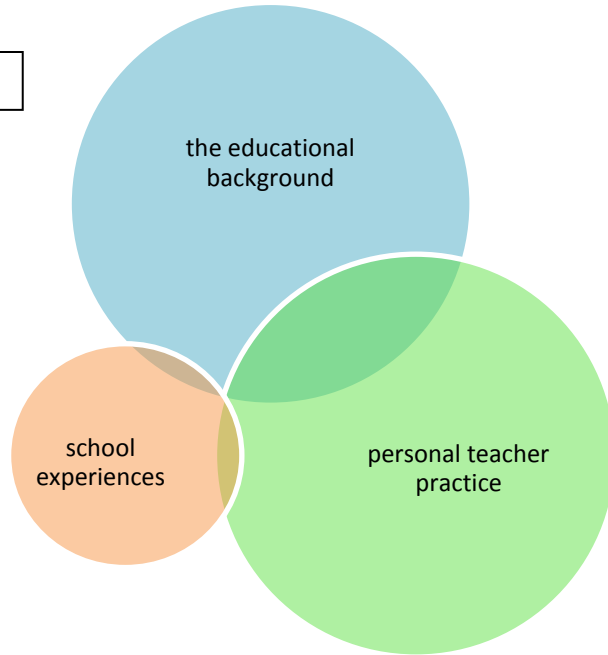
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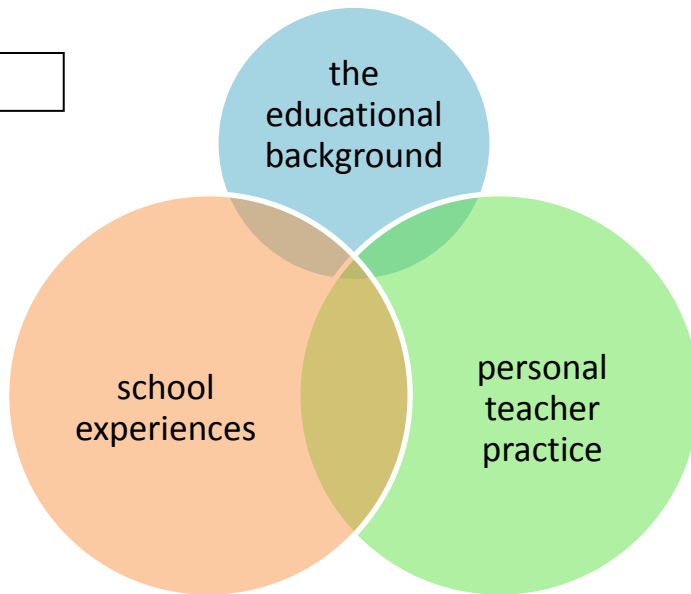
Interview 5

Interview 6

Interview 7

the educational background

school experiences

personal teacher practice

Interview 8

the educational background

school experiences

personal teacher practice
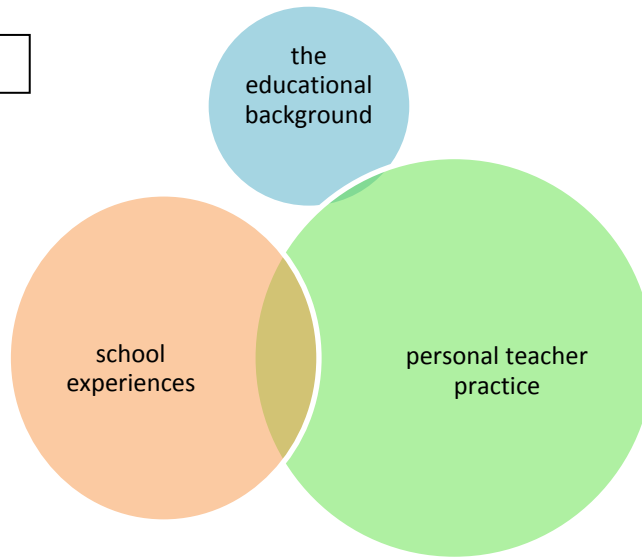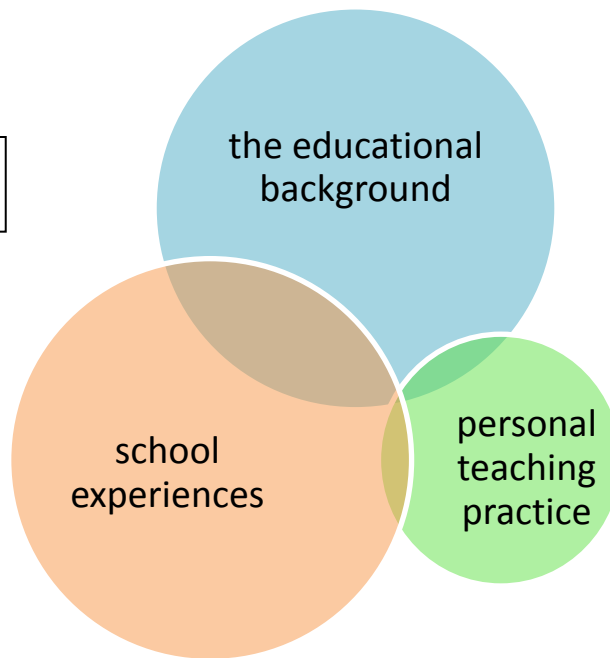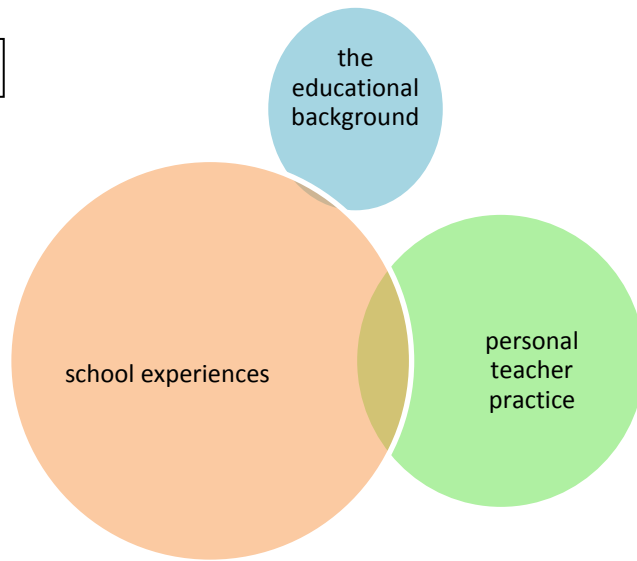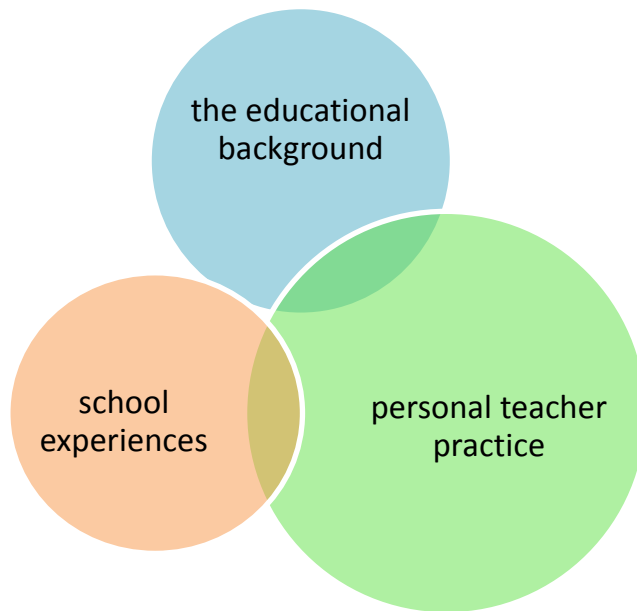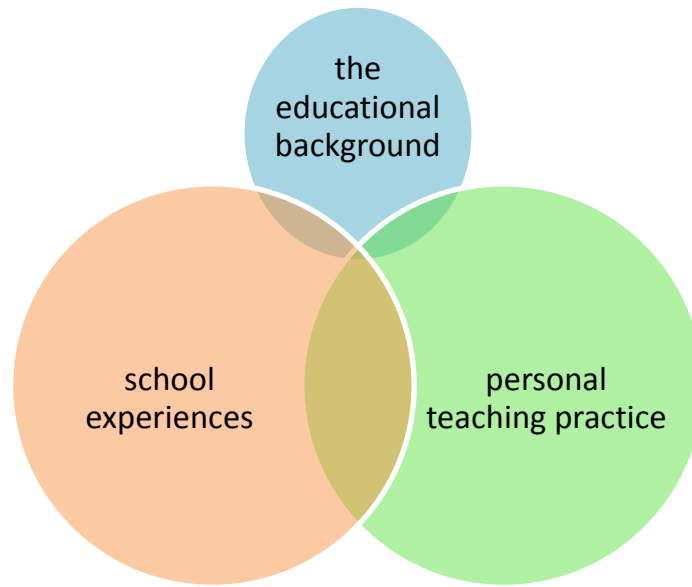
Interview 9

SECOND INTERVIEW 1 (Mike)

As I hope I explained to you last time I am doing some research on teachers who move from special school to mainstream school and their experience of that transition and the questioning and analysing that has come up with a model of what that transition is like and all being well will suggest ways in which it can be supported or improved … what I am going to tell you now is a bit about what I have found out so far and I would be interested to know how you feel about it and how it relates to your own experience … what teachers have said to me is that there are four key things that they felt impacted quite significantly when they underwent the transition … so the first thing is the changing or matching of your expectations of the learners … was a considerable difference in what you could gauge as a good expectation of what learners would achieve … that was one of the main things … and getting that right and what it felt like when you weren't getting it right … that was one area … the second one was managing a large team of teaching assistants … that was referred to quite a bit as well … many had had experience of working with teaching assistants but managing a team that size and with their roles was a big change …

Yes definitely

And the third thing was and this was sort of different for different people and it was sort of getting to the culture of the school and a sense of what the school's systems and operating procedures were … getting to find out how you did certain things and how certain things happened … and the fourth thing was getting to know the learners … so forming a relationship with them and that necessarily takes time and that it was different from possibly the sorts of relationships or lack of relationships that you might have had in mainstream with the learners … so those were the four things so first off what are your comments …

Yes I to some extent I would agree with all of those things and I think possible from my first interview they came up to some extend … I would definitely say the expectation is quite an important one obviously the expectations of success from mainstream to special are quite different and I think changing how you look at that was a huge step for me and I would say managing the team well … in mainstream you would look at having maybe one TA for all or part of the day and to move to special where actually you will have a team of staff of maybe three or four people and there is definitely a lot more emphasis on that in the special school … so I would agree that they probably are the four key things …

In terms of your own experience which do you think … if you had to rank them which would be the most significant and which the least …

Well I suppose most to least for me would depend upon perhaps … I would probably put least for me was managing the team of TAs … that's not necessarily because I don't think it is quite a change but I think form the school I was at we had a provision for special needs anyway and there were

students who came in and out of my class who were accompanied by one to one TAs so I would have one or two and possibly three in some lessons so it wasn't as big a change for me as some of the other things … I would probably say the biggest thing for me to get used to would be the expectations of the pupil's learning and I think that links in with the fourth one you mentioned about knowing the students … in a special school there is a lot more emphasis on building those personal relationships with the students and then the expectations you have of them come from that relationship so I think those two are tied together and I would say they are jointly the most important …

Following up on that the next bit is … those were the issues and I am framing them in a model and it links to what you have just said so … it's sort of where do those expectations come from … so where do they come from … where do you find them … how do you get to them … and what I am suggesting is that there is like three areas or sources from where these expectations might come from … there is one that is really way out there in the background everywhere so that is like Ofsted and that sort of stuff … that's what you should be doing … that's what it should look like …. What should be happening in your classroom … there is another one that is like here in this school we do things in this way so there is like a school one … so it's like going to see what another teacher is doing or the manager came and saw what I was doing and helped me understand what the expectations were … and then there is a third one which is like a personal one which is sort of getting around to saying I feel that I get expectations right when I know the learner …

Yes … I think obviously there is a part for all of those things that work collaboratively there has to be … the Ofsted expectations and I think obviously the way things are changing the special schools are having to have a little more emphasis on that now … I think possibly where in a mainstream school the main emphasis is on Ofsted and national expectations in special schools its more the personal … so getting to know the students and understanding what the expectations are for them … so I would sort of say it's kind of reversed to the situation in mainstream …

When did you find this out or did you know it …

It's probably something I expected … obviously when I worked in mainstream school everything was guided so much by the Ofsted expectations where the national expectations were for the end of the year … that kind of thing … so I anticipated it would be kind of different but then obviously it's something that as I started to work here became more apparent … things like progress and progression guidance are taken into consideration here but I think there is a lot more scope for the personal goals for the students to be involved … that's something I realised more and more …

So when you said you anticipated it … why were you anticipating it do you think …?

I think it's partly having worked in a special school several years before … and It's difficult to say I think it's looking at the Ofsted guidelines … it's all very mainstream focused and even now looking at the curriculum review its very mainstream focused so I just feel … rightly or wrongly … its more down to what the school feels and the individuals in the school feel …

And do you think that view is part of the way the school operates …

Yes … I definitely think it is much more that expectations for success should be done on a personal basis … obviously there has to be some kind of background progression guidance to make sure the pupils are making good or outstanding progress but I think the school use is much more personalised than in a mainstream school …

And do you think that as a teacher … if you're going to be grounding your expectations of the learner on the learner what do you feel about what you were doing in the mainstream school then …

I suppose it's very different … it's not like its negative the way it was in mainstream … I think that for the majority it works well … I think where it doesn't work is where you have the students who are unable to keep up with the expectations that are put upon them through Ofsted and Sats and things like that and I feel that these are students that end up getting left behind … some of my personal feeling is that individualising the expectations more means that you have greater success for all students … so it's not that I think it's a negative thing in mainstream school it's just that it doesn't necessarily work for all … it's not inclusive of everybody …

Would it work the other way … a special school approach ought to be inclusive even of those who didn't necessarily need it …

Yes I think so … where it would be difficult to have that kind of approach in the mainstream is just because of the numbers of pupils … its much much more difficult to get to know a class of students of 30 on such a personal and individual basis … but I do think it allows sort of greater success for personal expectations …

So if there are learners in mainstream setting who don't need that relationship to support their learning and they can be successful learners and achieve well … are you aiming for that with the children in the special school or is it a different model entirely …

I think obviously that that is the ideal … it is to allow independence of learning as much as possible … but here students aren't able to do that without the support being there first … there are probably students in the mainstream school who from a very young age are able to learn independently but I think in a way a lot of students here need the foundations put in first and then ideally they can ion the future learn more independently … I think really that the personalisation allows them to see their own success and I think that is a much greater encouragement for that in the future …

Within the culture of the school how is this relationship with the learner encouraged and defined …

I think obviously it is encouraged by the levels of support we have … and have students work in much smaller groups … with the team getting to known the individual students learning needs a lot quicker … we sort of have personalised learning for the students … we have a very clear idea of what they know and where they need to go in the future … and that is something throughout lessons is shared

with the students … so I think we are building all the structures for that kind of independent learning in the future …

So how is it framed for the learners are they sort of being made aware of how much help they need for learning …?

They are made aware of how much help they need for the learning … I think they are also equally made aware of when they able to work without help and that is encouraged … it's a difficult question really …

In each of these there will be the notion of getting the amount of help right … how do you get to position where you have got the help right …

I suppose it does all come back to knowing the students … teachers knowing the students … you do have a kind of predetermined idea of what the students are able to do …

So there is a professional judgement …

There is a professional judgement … obviously we have more formal assessment tools which go towards the build-up of progress … I think from my point of view and I can't speak for everyone there is a large element of professional judgement …

But when you come to moderating your judgements on where the students are at there is agreement on what the students have attained with no help or with some help …

Yes the moderation … we have to follow the same process you follow in mainstream school … we had a smaller kind of phase moderation … which then spreads out into whole school moderations … and then inter school moderations with other special schools and mainstream schools … and obviously the criteria has to be the same to achieve the certain levels it has to be independent work but obviously there are sort of definitions of what independent work is anyway … but …

There must be some sort of agreement … I was wondering where it came from … is there a school culture … we expect learners to be able to achieve and we will say what they have been able to achieve …

Yes I think there is a school culture and I think it does stem from a sort of national expectation of what level of support it needs for it to be considered a …

And are you comfortable with that …

Yes … I like the more personalised … I found mainstream a little bit prescriptive and I found the expectation that all students would be moving at the same rate a prescriptive thing … I like personally getting to know the students and making sort of professional judgements about where their learning has come from and where it needs to move to next … I think it leaves a lot more scope actually to teach … to be a teacher …

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SECOND INTERVIEW 2 (Alan)

As you know what I have been researching is the experience of teachers who transfer from mainstream schools into special schools and I have interviewed nine teachers and had time to read through and draw some tentative conclusions or themes … the first thing I want to do is run these themes by you and get your views on these things … what I have looked at is that there seems to be four things that are common for those teachers undergoing that transition process … the first key theme is the one about matching expectations to the learners … the second theme is managing a team of teaching assistants … the third theme was getting to know and adapting to the culture of the school … what are the systems … procedures … policies … and then the fourth one was understanding and getting to know the pupils as individuals and building relationships … so those were the four themes what are your views …

Yes I think that I can see … I think certain things I think if you move from any school to another school there's going to be different procedures and policies for everything … I think when you move to a special school it's the extra policies that you had no idea existed in mainstream … or if they did you had no reason to look at them really … the sort of … the needs of the children are such that it is sort of … yes you need to be more au fait with the child protections and the behavioural policies … much more so than in a mainstream … where behaviours are usually restricted to sort of a range all the other teachers have experienced… so it's case of going to ask advice of a range of colleagues … because here all the children are completely different it's a case of you going beyond the experience of your colleagues to further your policies and management … just further … digging deeper … certainly in terms of the expectations of the children … I think it's …. I don't think I found that a huge difference … certainly the … it's more the getting to grips with the … how you make the children progress … and different methods for doing so …

So adapting your teaching strategies …

Yes … certainly there … expectations and progress are two different things really aren't they … how much you expect them to progress … and I guess when you have got a larger class of children who you have less time to interact with … your expectations are very much informed by national indicators for progress … so for those at the top of the class you would expect them to do this amount of points progress and they should be on this level … as here your sort of looking at so many more factors … looking at different sets of data for different needs… so even though you have your

own expectations the expectations of each child is much more difficult to grasp than the expectations of a child in mainstream school … even though it shouldn't be because ideally you would like to look at each child and look deeply into their needs … even in mainstream … that would be the ideal … but I think in a special setting you are forced to do that … which is good … but you can only do that because of the smaller classes …

There is national progression guidance that is supposed to give you some lead as to what expectations …

Yes we've got that for special schools … but in general that would be the case … but if you were looking at individual children in the class some won't achieve that some will … some needs will mean that they won't be able to achieve that progress …

Where in all that sits your professional judgement or does it not sit anywhere now …

I think that's definitely important but I think that you are … I think I is important to look at the children and there's a lot and especially with our children with more profound and severe needs … there is a lot that you will see that would be put in annual reviews and reports and will be going to CHIN meetings but won't necessarily show up on a progress graph as well … so you take into account their academic progress and also their progress in … that may be too small to even show up on BSquared but is a major step for them and for their parents as well … I think you're judgement is important in terms of … you.ve got the view of everything … but that is something I sort of found difficult to start with was the not meeting my expectations and I felt my expectations were … I felt capable to look at their needs and assess if they were making good progress and where they should be … but it's just … I found it difficult comparing that to … where that fitted in with national data and target setting …

So it fitted in with our personal view about what should reasonably expect the children to learn but did that fit the school's expectations …

I feel so … I think that … something that is quite hard because you are going in at the beginning of an academic year and you asked to set challenging targets but you don't know the children so it takes a few weeks and you sort of feel after a few weeks that that target I set …

But if it's not just the beginning for the year but the first time you have stepped into the school …

A whole new set of levels as well … most people would have dealt with P levels at some point in mainstream but they won't have been … I don't think I had ever been looking at P levels for the foundation subjects for example history and geography … I never knew there were history and geography P levels … I remember looking at the P7s and 8s for reading and writing and maths but I don't ever recall any others …

I got strongly form your interview as you said that you were secure in your teaching and the adaptability of your teaching skills but you needed support in terms of the curriculum …

Yes … I think I found the curriculum the hardest to grasp … but that is all tied in with the levels that …

So how to teach you're confident in but it's the what to teach …

Yes … I think that was my experience … I think it didn't help with y class who sort of … because the school had got bigger my class was an extra class who didn't fit into a place in the … so overall planning I felt was quite excessive … I think it was just … perhaps it was me because that's in retrospect the planning was so important and perhaps that was me putting more importance on the planning than should be because in essence every lesson you would look at where the children were at … so I don't think it would really have mattered what I was teaching … it would be referring back to their levels … I think it was more coverage .., am I covering everything … am I putting the right emphasis on this and how much time should I devote to literacy and mark making and skills …

Is that because it was important in the mainstream setting …

Possibly … that's what I am thinking now … I think that yes it is the sort of coverage is important in the mainstream sector … have you covered all of the national curriculum but here it is not so important to cover all of the national curriculum because a lot of the skills are not going to be applicable to them … especially taking each child individually … taking a child I have currently who is working at level 3 and it's much more important to look at the national curriculum for those working at P6 level … and I found that quite hard to balance … sort of how … what do I teach as a subject .. I know what to do for these children but how do I incorporate that into a coherent series of lessons …

And what have you come up with now …

I think I finally got it … because I have gone back and revisited what I did in my first year this year I have managed to make it much more stream lined and how it should have been in the first year really …

SECOND INTERVIEW 3 (Tina)

If you remember my research is about teachers who move from mainstream school to special and I am looking at that experience and now I have had nine teachers and I have been able to pull out four key issues that seem to be common between everyone and I am going to tell you what they are and see what you think … one of the key things was about getting to be able to adjust your expectations of the learners from what you were expecting of learners in the mainstream school to what you expect in the special school … second one is managing the team of teaching assistants even if you had had to manage a teaching assistant previously the team issue was significantly different … then there is one that is common and people say it would be in any change of job and that is adapting to the school culture so that's getting to know what the school systems and procedures are and how the school does things … planning formats … meetings … It's all that adjusting to the culture of the school … and then the fourth one is understanding getting to know and forming relationships with the learners in your class … in that you form different relationships with the learner than you do in mainstream school … so those were the four themes … so what do you think …

I don't think that surprises me … when you expanded on … for example you said about the relationship … obviously the way you develop the relationship in any school is key but you said its different because of the smaller classes … yes … you know .. I do agree with those … I can see that … but the biggest one you picked out for myself was the team aspect and that was a major thing because it is such an important aspect of the job … I can see those …

These were all things that immediately on day one you have to face right away … this is what I got from people … and I want to get to how individuals might cope with each of those and then all being well I could then suggest ways in which that transition process might be improved … so how do you change your expectations of the learner … where do your expectations come from … what my model for looking at this

SECOND INTERVIEW 4 (Diane)

The research is on teachers that transfer from mainstream to special school and what I have done is interview nine teachers and drawn out four main themes so I am going to tell you what those themes are and then invite your comments so … one is getting to understand the learners so it's about pitching your expectations right … not too high not too low … second one is about managing a team of TAs … third is about adapting to the new school culture getting used to the new systems and procedures and how things are organised where things are and who does what … and then the fourth one is about understanding the learners and particularly their needs … those were the four themes what do you think …

Yes … I'd say those are all main areas of difficulty when you start in SEN but I do think that learning about the school and who does what and how the school operates I think that would be applicable moving from one school to another anyway … I think that one not so much … I suppose there are some areas of that that are more specific like understanding the roles of people in the team like the speech and language therapist … so I think from that point of view there are more people … professionals to understand what their role is but I do think that is the one that stood out as being slightly not specific to SEN … that could be applicable to any school or new setting … but certainly I think understanding the children's needs and how they learn and understanding how to adapt the national curriculum to meet their needs… I think that is probably one of the biggest areas and although you kind of get to grips with it over the first term there is still … each year you get a new cohort of learners with new needs and you are constantly having to refresh your knowledge and find new ideas and new ways of teaching and thin that's the biggest area for me … because it's on going its constant … whereas in mainstream you can adapt … say you are in 4 for three years in a row you can adapt that curriculum but essentially you wouldn't have to adapt it as much as you would if you were in a special school … I think that is probably the challenge … for going from mainstream to SEN is having to do that constant learning and that constant review in the needs of the pupils …

So the curriculum changes … the pupils change … and so you are having to learn to pitch the changed curriculum to where the pupils are …

Yes exactly … your cohort every year is just so vastly different as well … so this year I have got predominantly pupils with needs around significant behaviours whereas next year I have got a similar group with different types of behaviours and less verbal … and so the curriculum will be adapted to meet that group and matching it to each individual in that class with such a diverse group of pupils … I'd say that was probably one of the biggest areas of challenge but that is what keeps it interesting … constantly adapting … constantly changing … not just sticking to the same curriculum and …

How about the issue with the TAs … as a number felt that that was the biggest thing …

Well I wouldn't agree with that being the biggest thing … I'd say it was a big thing but I don't know because I had experience of having a number of TAs in my mainstream class setting because it was a school with deaf pupils s I always had a number of people in the classroom with me anyway … so I kind of feel I didn't think that was a huge change … I think it's more … not so much managing the TAs as a group it more directing less experienced TAs and people who are new to the school or new to that type of class … I think it's the direction of TAs that is difficult and again I think it is one of those things that can be applied in any setting … if you have got a new TA they have to understand how you work as a teacher and understand the needs of the pupils … particularly in the first few months of the year … then you do do lots of direction … but I think that's the same in mainstream as it is in SEN … I don't think it's one of the biggest … I think it's how you adapt your teaching to meet the needs of the children … that's the biggest area …

SECOND INTERVIEW 5 (Alison)

I am doing my research on teachers who have transferred from mainstream schools to special schools and now I have interview nine and I have pulled out four key themes which I am going to tell you about and then you can tell me what you think … the first one is about the task and challenge of pitching expectations right quite a difference between what your expectations were in a mainstream classroom to the classroom in the special school … getting that right from having too high expectations or too low ones … the second theme is managing the larger team of TAs … the third one is the one that is about coming into a new school and having to get to know all the systems and procedures and routines … who does what and where things happen … so it getting to know the culture of the school … and the fourth one is about getting to know the learners … forming a relationship … so those were the four key themes what do you think …

Pause

The first one was about learning expectations …

That's one I didn't struggle so much with as my mainstream class … the last one I had went from P7 to Level 5 so I was used to differentiating and breaking it down and taking it up … I think … I have never suffered from having low expectations … ii do have high expectations and a lot of the time the children surprise me … I started thinking that this is too high and then they get it and I'm like aha ok … so …

That's now is it … it's still carrying on …

Yes … I've got the beauty at the moment of a class I've got for two years so I know where they are and I can pitch it almost where I left off … it's nice to see them when they come back with the progress they have made and sometimes the surprise in the progress they haven't made and they continue not to but they still need that push to make sure they are challenged all the time …

So that was one theme and another theme was the managing of the Teaching Assistants …

I've always struggled with that one and I think I always will … I am not a manager … and I didn't come into teaching to manage others … I've got various management skills but it's just one of the hardest parts of teaching … because here we change TAs every year so once you get them working and to where you want them to be they go to another class … and you get another group of TAs and you start again …

So that initial experience of coming into the job and having a team of TAs to manage is replayed every year…

Yes every year and even if you've got TAs who come back to you … we have quite a high turnover … so it's quite rare that you get somebody who comes back but even then they have been somewhere else and learnt other things and they have their own way of doing things … and I want it done this way … so It's also taking that step back from how I want it done to how we can do it as a team … making sure that I … I am better at it now … and I am sure that will progress as the years go on … the leadership courses that I have done have helped that …

Are you thinking there is a compromise you have made … so if you are in a mainstream classroom where it was just yourself or possible one teaching assistant and it's your way or no way … but then in a special school classroom when you have a team then you got to compromise a bit … it's sort of our way …

Yes … it is because my way isn't always the right way … there might be another opinion and you've also got to work to their strengths and weaknesses and I can't expect them to work I exactly my way that's not their character to come in and work in exactly my way … but I've got five TAs at the moment and a student … so really that's seven different ways of thinking … seven different ways of seeing one child's behaviour … seven different ways of seeing the challenge … we've all got to deal with that and work together and this year I've had an amazing team … really really gelled …

Why do think that was different...

I don't know … I think part of that was me I took a step back and kind of let go a little bit … this is my classroom but I need to make sure everybody id valued … everybody has their own way of doing things while fitting in with what needs to be done … they're also a team that are quite individual people … they are not here to be best buddies with everybody … they are not here to fit in with the in crowd … there's a lot of politics of people really … they come in do their job and go home … they talk to each other … they're friendly but this isn't the be all and end all for them … this isn't where their

whole social life is … they have got a life outside of school … to me that seems to have worked … because we don't then get the cliqueyness that you sometimes find inevitably when you get a lot of people working …

Do you think you are just getting better at managing them as a group …?

It might be that but I don't know as we have the student and he has taught a lot this year and so I don't know … maybe …

Then there was adapting to the culture of the school … getting to know all the systems …. How things were done … what assessment tools were used … what the curriculum was and who you went to for help with this …

Yes … we did have that briefly … it started out that once a week we would go out and do some training … but it petered out a bit … I think that is hard to … as a school to manage … in any situation … how you would give that person time … but then I feel there is always someone you can go and talk to and so if you haven't picked up on what's going on … you've got to be proactive here you have got to go and say I don't understand this because if you don't go and do that they don't know …

Was there a lot to learn in terms of the new systems …?

Well there was but you would get that where ever you go … there is always … you know playtime is at a different time … what you do at lunchtimes is going to be different … and here it changes all the time anyway …

And then the final one out of the themes … was the getting to know the learners and a number of people said that once that had happened and they had got over the initial chaos and challenge of the new stuff and they had started to form relationships with the learners things fell into place more easily …

Yes … I think that is something that is quite hard in terms of working in a special school … in a mainstream school they would accept form day one that you are the teacher and I want to get to know you whereas here they are like … oh I don't care you are just somebody stood at the front of the room… talking at me … and it's quite a hard barrier to break down especially when you are new to the school and especially when you come from mainstream where you get children who are there and on the whole wanting to learn … whereas here it's a lot of students are here because it's what they need to do … a lot of them … this is school … its where I have to go …

So are you saying in a mainstream school you are helped by the fact that the pupils know the rules of the game …?

I think so … and they are more socially aware and they are just … children of that age seem to want to meet new people and it's a safe environment so it's … technically I am a stranger but I am not … I am employed as their teacher …

So in a mainstream school you have got these things that you can use to your advantage …

I think so … whereas here you have got to … you've almost got to fight for that … sometimes … I've got a child at the moment … he's only just started to accept me as his teacher … well he's moving on next week to somebody else … they are going to have that struggle … I've had that before when you have got children for more than a year and the first year they are just like she was my teacher you're not my teacher but then they get it and can carry it on …

So in your view the learners don't understand the rules of being teachers and pupils …

Some of them … some of them are like the mainstream students they are looking forward to anew teacher and they know your name and make that connection …

So you've got a mix of some who do and some who don't …

Yes …

Other teachers have said it's because the classes are smaller and you've got more time … so you necessarily develop relationships …

It's quite hard … there are children I have taught for quite a while so I have very good relationships with them and I have had to really work at that and some of the children where I will be getting them back and they are looking forward to that … but I don't think the number of children has made me have better relationships … with them if that makes sense …

So did you feel that you had similar sorts of relationships with the learners in mainstream school …

It hasn't changed … I guess here I have always had a large class … never less than 12 or 11 … whereas I know some of the teachers have only got 6 children … I don't know really .. and then you have got more adults so… I like to make sure you work with all the children rather than just one group or … I don't know … no I wouldn't say it was easier because of the less number of children …

So your view is that the relationship is part of winning the child over to engaging with learning and accepting you as a teacher …

Yes … I think it's accepting me the environment and the team to then enable them to learn …

SECOND INTERVIEW 6 (Laura)

I am doing research on teachers who move from mainstream school to special school and I have interviewed nine teachers and out of those transcripts I have drawn out four themes that seem to be common across all of the teachers … I'm going to tell you what they are and then you can tell me what you think … so one is about pitching your teaching right so it's about what are the right expectations for the learners and that is quite a change between the learners in the mainstream school and those in the special school … sometimes getting expectations too high sometimes getting expectations too low … second theme is managing the team of TAs … the third theme was finding out about the culture of the school … how are things done in this school what are the system … the procedures .. who managed what … where were things … what happened during the day and all that sort of thing … the fourth theme was about the learners and their special needs and particularly this whole thing about making a relationship with the learners … so those were the four themes … what do you think …

I think they are very good ones to be honest it is quite interesting that you have picked those ones specifically from just nine of us …. Being able to pick out and from sitting here thinking from your

initial description … yes that's a really good one … yes …. For me I think they are the very key ones … definitely … probably the biggest one out of there … for me … I would have said … would be the last one … getting to know the pupils … to be able to work with them you do have to know more about them and you have the time to do that here … I know I have got to know a lot about the children … their families … their pets … what they did at the weekend … I didn't think I had the time to do that in mainstream …. You just don't have … for me anyway the time to do that … but for our pupils it's really important … because you then use that to draw them in to what you are to do with them … so yes it's really important … to know them and to be able to use that knowledge …

Why

Because I think our pupils are really hard to engage anyway but once you have knowledge of their likes … dislikes … families … pets … interests … you can then plan around that much more … you know they bring in photos … you can liaise with parents … they are very keen to share a lot more

So would say that the relationship is like a teaching strategy … a way of overcoming reluctant learners …

I would probably say it is … it is a way of engaging and if you can engage you're encouraging learning you're promoting learning if you can engage them in what you are doing … if they are interested in tractors or something like that you can utilise it … you can use it as a strategy …

People had different views about whether they would have wanted to have those sorts of relationships with learners in mainstream school or whether they needed to …

I think in mainstream I would have quite liked to have got to know a little more about the pupils so I could have utilised that in the same way I do here for the planning and learning … I think it is more important for ours because they find engagement much much more difficult for whatever reason and I think if you can hang onto something they have a greater understanding of and use that in their learning environment then it works better for them … but I think if you can do that in mainstream there are children in mainstream who would work better if you were able to more individualised for their learning as well … I think definitely you would need the time to get to grips with that …

Another idea that sort of links to that is that children in mainstream school know what school is about … they sort of know what a teacher is and what a teacher is going to do and what they are expected to do as pupils …

I think that is the thing isn't it… that's the maturity element the growth of a mainstream student whereas our students are very much working at a lower level … the expectation is very high … but they are working at a lower level and our students though they call us teachers … I don't quite think they understand the concept of pupil-teacher relationship whereas in mainstream … because the nature of being in mainstream they have an understanding that that id the class teacher and you're there and they know you go into that lesson as a teacher and then you move into the next one … but for ours they view that relationship with you .. they have that trust … that's because of the nature of

the pupils that we have they are more likely to want to build relationships with you than in mainstream I think …

Do you think that the relationship you have with the learner is different from the one the Teaching Assistant has …

I think from my point of view as I came here and started as TA … I have developed those relationships but I would say they do have a much more deeper understanding of the pupils … in mainstream the gap would be wider … TAs have much more of understanding than the class teacher … now whether that is deeper in mainstream as it is here I would suspect not … but as I say here I would say I could probably say I know as much about my pupils as my TAs do … I would say in mainstream the gap is wider than it is here .. the relationship and understanding …

Do you feel that that relationship is crucial to the learning or do you feel that …?

For here … yes … I say you have to have that understanding of the pupil … you have to be able to sit around a table and know from just a look or a movement or split second action or something that happens that you know that that pupils is not happy … you know … and you change what you were doing … or might move a TA closer … you might offer that student very quickly before everything escalate to go and do another job … so I think that we do have a deeper understanding for those smaller things that you can pick up on I n a classroom … than you would in mainstream … again whether that is because of the number of pupils or the relationships that you have built … you may not need because for the nature of their development and because they are in mainstream so … I think it is very important … the relationship we have with parents through the contact book through phone calls … through them bringing them to the door … I now all my parents by first name … they know I know their child … and wouldn't be ringing for no reason … I'm ringing because I'm concerned … whereas … I think we do just have a greater understanding of the pupil and as a family … there isn't the need for that in mainstream … there just isn't the need for that because they get that from home …

SECOND INTERVIEW 7 (Susan)

This research is on teachers who have transferred from mainstream school to special school and out of the transcripts of the nine interviews I have pulled out four themes … I am going to run these themes by you and then you tell me what you think about them … so the first one is to do with … the changed expectations about pupils learning levels … and so initially when you come in and you have got your class it's about pitching your teaching at the right level for the learners that's a big difference between what you have experienced in mainstream and what you experience in special … the second theme is managing this group of Teaching Assistants … the third one is about getting to grips with the school culture … the school systems … how does this school do things like assessment … target setting … who are the managers .. how do they operate … then the fourth thing is about … really getting to grips with the needs of the children … the learners … and forming

relationships … so those are the four big themes in terms of differences and things that needed to be adjusted to or come to terms with … what do you think …

I would agree they are four of the main areas … when you are doing that transition between the mainstream and special particularly for me coming from a mainstream secondary background … so for example talking about the structure of the day and the culture of the school … it's completely different to my previous experience … that had a totally different set up for a timetable … I was an English specialist so I was teaching English all day … so my daily routines were completely different from how they would have been previously … I haven't found it that difficult to make the transition across because I prefer the school day as it is in special … it has actually worked quite well for me … managing the TA s … I think I am just starting to realise how complex that can be … I have been quite lucky this year in that I have had a really good TA team and we have gelled quite well right from the outset and been working very well together and so … I haven't had many issues with that I have really enjoyed being part of the team and leading the team as well and directing them and things have seemed to run very smoothly over the course of the year … but I have started to see that in other classes there have been issues that have been quite difficult to resolve and I am starting to think ahead to next year and think about potential issues and how I am going to deal with those issues … but in mainstream I rarely had TA support coming into the classroom … although I did get on well with any TAs who came into the classroom in terms of managing them it was quite tricky because I never knew if anyone was going to turn up … there wasn't the same continuity … we wouldn't have time to go through the lesson plans as they would turn up after the children were in the class already and it wasn't the case we always had it written down what the lesson plan was … usually I had my notes and it wasn't a formal lesson plan so it was quite difficult to share your learning intentions and how you wanted the TAs to work whereas in special education I think because of the way the system is set up you have the continuity with your TA team … you have the time to communicate with them before the school day and during the school day and we do communicate very well throughout every lesson to make it very clear what it is a am expecting and how I want them to work with the pupils and they also give me really good feedback … so a little information about the children and how they are working but formative assessment which is on-going throughout the day … it is really useful to have four of us thinking about the children rather than me on my own so I think that has been of real benefit to me as a teacher … it's always interesting to confirm what you think or to hear a different view about how a child is working and I would say TAs knowledge of the pupils has been excellent … a couple of them have worked with the children before and that was so beneficial … but also as the year has gone on they have got to know the children really well … I wouldn't say that they know the pupils as well as I do but I have realised they know them from a slightly different viewpoint … whereas the class teacher looks at it from a real teaching and learning perspective sometimes the TAs see it in a more holistic way which isn't a criticism because I think part of special education is to deal with the child more holistically but I would say my view point is more focused on the learning than theirs is… there are times when I pick up on things with the additional planning time I have and knowing what I am looking for I think I pick up on that more than the TAs do … and know how to move that on … I feel that I have got a very set

role in the classroom and my role is quite different from the TA but I think we work together hand in hand very well …

When you said you were enjoying leading the team … because I don't think anyone said that …certainly in the transition … they found it quite daunting … so isn't that a process you have gone through …

My background is teaching in secondary mainstream and I have been the deputy head of an English department and it was a really large department with 18 staff … I was leading … teaching staff not TAs … so I am quite used to managing in a lot of ways … and although in my last job I was deputy head of the department and took a leading role in literacy across the curriculum I am quite used to taking a leading role if you like … so I feel quite comfortable in doing that and in fact leading the TAs has been a lot easier than leading the teachers in many ways … because they were very open … as I say I have been lucky because my TAs were really open to me coming in as a new teacher and they haven't looked at me as if to say she's inexperienced … she doesn't know what she is talking about … they have been interested to find out what I do want to do and what my new ideas are … anything I have asked them to do they have done … occasionally they have said I am not sure if that is going to work and I have taken it in board and adapted what I have wanted to do or I have said well actually that's what I want to do … and there has never been an issue with that so I probably think I have been quite fortunate … I love working with the TAs and being in charge of the team .. I wouldn't say I shy away from saying if I am not happy with what happens in the day … I've been very open and very honest and said I dint think that works well and we need to find a different strategy for doing it … what do you think about that … so it's worked really well as a team and I haven't found it problematic at all I think I have found it more challenging when I have been working with TAs who weren't in my immediate class … so quite often during the course of the week I would do swimming with different TAs and that has been alright but you need to build up a relationship there … they have allowed me to make my mistakes and supported me as I have gone along so it has been really good …

How about the pitching your expectations to the learner's ability …

I have quite high expectations as I am trying things it has been the children can't manage what I am asking them to do because I have tried to jump ahead too much and I haven't broken it down into smaller steps enough but the school have got really high expectations and they do expect us to meet the school standard … making however many p levels of progress … and so I would say it is as every but as challenging as it is mainstream in those terms … because I am a parent who has had a child with a statement of special needs and who has gone through the special school system I think I have probably come with prior knowledge that every small step is significant and so therefore I have never found … I know some teachers have come in and said the progress is so slow sometimes you feel like they are not making progress … I think I have been tuned into the fact that progress is slow but that every time a step is made it is really significant … and I have adapted to that reasonably well … I haven't got it right all the time … I haven't got differentiation right … and I have come away from lessons where I have though oh no I was asking them too much … and I have adapted it as I have

gone along and I would say that it is very much a learning process and I am not 100% there yet … sometimes it's been a bit frustrating when children don't do things you know they are capable of doing … but that was also frustrating in mainstream …

Why is it that that happens … is it because of the fourth theme … the relationship …in the research teachers have said that in the special school you need to build a relationship with the learner and that it is quite different to the mainstream school …

It's a more intense relationship I think … you know the pupils much better than what you do in mainstream … It's impossible … last year I was teaching 210 … 240 I can't remember which one it was … seeing that number of children every week I was expected to know them and their learning targets … which you do but they are not real personalised learning targets … you know them … I am confident in saying yes I did know them and what their needs were … but not in the same way I do now … a much more personalise improved service if you like … working in a special school and it was one of the things that made me want to leave mainstream school … you could never support the children in the way they needed to be supported and really you can't do proper personalised learning when you teach that number of people … it's just an impossibility … and I found that really difficult as a teacher who has got their idealistic values and they are going to hold on to those children and I am going to do this and I am going to do that …

Is it a matter of numbers …?

I don't think it's quite as cut and dried as that … it's a matter of numbers in the sense of how can you have that knowledge of that number of children but also it was that I saw them for 50 minute slots … my lessons were 50 minutes and I might see them three times a week so actually I saw them less frequently but also in mainstream secondary particularly in a grammar school that I was working in … you're their solely to teach them English … you don't have any time to find out any more information about them you are there purely to focus on the work they are producing and I think that is a lot of difference … I have always believed that teaching … good teachers are looking at the learning process … but actually I felt the focus had shifted to what was actually being produced solely at the end of the lesson … and no matter what people said about assessment for learning is all about talking to the pupils … if you give them feedback and you can get feedback with traffic lights during the lessons and things like that … when all is said and done I agree with that I think they are great ways of assessing pupils but what really mattered when it came to the crunch was what work they had produced and what level had you given it … so it was the finished product rather than the learning process they had gone through and the progress they had made if they had done that … and I felt that because the focus was very much on the finished product ultimately you didn't have time to get to know the children … to help them … assist them as well as you could … I think as well when you are in mainstream, secondary the children are becoming very independent … they are teenagers … I mean you have to have a certain relationship with teenagers that is appropriate … that is not too friendly .. I was the authority figure … the teacher is a very professional relationship and in some ways it is deliberately distant because you are there to raise their levels of attainment and that was it … and although the same things do apply to a certain degree in special education … you do

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inevitably get drawn into a more intimate relationship with the pupils you teach because you are spending day in and day out with them but also you need to be really finely tuned to all of their needs … so whether they are hungry … whether they need changing … how do they eat … how do they dress … you are looking at the personal and social development alongside their academic achievement … whereas although in mainstream you do have that duty of care to help them progress personally and socially as well … as an English teacher I was there to raise their English attainment … does that make sense …

From what teachers were saying it sound much like in mainstream schools the pupils sort of know the rules of the game and they come ready and know what a teacher is and what a teacher expects …

They do and they see you as a sort of a robot … it used to make me laugh … they would say things to me like … oh miss I saw you shopping in Tescos last night … you were buying food … and I would say yes teachers need to eat too … it's amazing … because I lived in the area where I worked as well … they would be shocked if they saw me out … it would be I saw you shopping with your children … and they don't … it made me realise that they only see that person who is standing in front of the class delivering a lesson and I honestly believe some of those children thought we lived at the school … that we slept and ate there … they don't see you as a fully rounded person … and it wasn't until they actually got alder and got to the sixth form that they though oh actually you have a life outside of our school as well … the professional relationship .. you are their teacher … you have a role … whereas the children here they do see you as being a teacher and having a set role but they also rely on you so much more for all kinds of needs and that changes your role as a teacher if you like … or that's what my interpretation of it is … and also parents view you very differently and I was surprised that you didn't mention that … I think that the relationship with parents as well is quite significant in the way that that has changed from your relationship with parents and pupils in mainstream and special education … I know it's something our headteacher was talking about in a staff meeting … she said that obviously we are here for the pupils … for the children … but a lot of our parents look to us for support which arguably is the role of social services and we can't get too involved in that side of it because we are here for the children … but I have found that the parents really look to the school for support and they are quite needy and they view differently to the parents in mainstream school … who often saw you as the enemy actually … I found that a lot of mainstream parents don't see teachers as fully functioning people but inly there to mark the work and to get the grades up and to do this and do that … I think that has been quite a significant change for me …

So the expectations of the parents …

Yes … of the teaching staff … I think it has been really good … refreshing to have parents who want to work with you … who value everything that you do and are so appreciative of your work …. But in the other hand it has also been slightly frustrating to have some parents occasionally expecting you to take on the parenting role … we care for them because we have to make sure their needs are met but we are not their main carers … we are not responsible for doing the parenting responsibilities … and for me that has been quite interesting and quite challenging … to look at that …

You weren't anticipating that …

I was a little bit … and I am not saying I don't want to look after the children and do certain things for them but it's more blurred … there's more blurring of the parents role and what is the teachers role … I think some of the parents expect you be there for them and just to do their looking after … what I would consider to be parental responsibilities … there's certainly a grey area there for some parents … not all of them …

<u>SECOND INTERVIEW 8 (Christine)</u>

I am doing this research in teachers that transfer from mainstream school to special … so I have interviewed nine teachers … and form those I have drawn out four themes that they have all mentioned … the first theme is setting the right expectations for the learner … getting your teaching targets matching the pupils learning … and that is quite a big difference from a mainstream classroom to a special … second one was about managing a group of Teaching Assistants … the third one is about in various ways getting to know the school … all the different policies procedures … who does what … what the flow of the day is like … and the fourth one is about getting to know the learners … and it's about developing a relationship with the learner … and how that is different from the relationship you have with learners in mainstream schools …

I agree with all of those … so I think in mainstream classes it's a very blanket approach … it's all stop look listen when a teacher is talking … that's what happens and that's an expectation of every single child … making them just one … you're treating them like just one child … the perfect child … I suppose you do have expectations for their learning and in mainstream you have a lot of data to work towards … particularly around year two when we did Sats and there were highlighted sheets I had to go through every term with the headteacher … and we would look at particular children who hadn't made appropriate progress … which I thought was hard as it doesn't make their background any easier and … and so if this child hasn't made this progress what could we put in place … let's throw in reading recovery … let's do more sounds write … it was just very full on and very data driven and so I think in a kind of horrible way that's how you had to set out the class … right we all need to make four points of progress by this time so this is what we are going to do … here though I think I have still kept my expectations of how the class sit look and listen because I still think that is important even if some of them aren't … they are still sitting and that is something they need to be a part of a group … so I don't think I have changed those mainstream expectations … but I think in terms of assessment its far more we work at their pace … rather than force them to jump to this particular grade by the end of the year … and if the child hasn't made huge progress I don't feel like I would get the headteacher looking at me like Christine what are you not doing for this child which I think is how it is in mainstream … so this child hasn't made progress so what haven't you done for them whereas here we look at the wider approach so ok it was the home … so Mark for example you know he had a new little baby and they have just moved house and he has suddenly got all these new things and these are factors that are put into place and then programmes are put in to support that child so it's very much you work … the main difference is you work at the pace of the child in special needs … each individual child which can stretch you quite a bit when you are trying to get your brain around that teaching … but then in mainstream they are expected to work to the target you have already set them in the future … which is … I think is unrealistic … and then when I was on this course they were saying it doesn't matter how many additional things you throw into the child if the child is still struggling with an issue or if a trauma has happened at home or something isn't quite connecting to their school work it won't make an impact at all …

How do you see the difference between the relationship you have with learners in mainstream and the relationship you have with learners in the special school …

A lot of people have asked me actually and I think … when I was in mainstream I think it was just my character I am quite caring towards the children … so if a child falls over my instinct is to go over to sort of pick them up put them on my lap … are you ok … what's hurt … you know and have a look and just comfort that child first and foremost … and I remember having one girl who had fallen over and split her lip here and it was really bloody and horrid to look at and I thought I am just going to have her on my lap because she was shaking with how much it hurt and the shock I think … and she was in my class so I it wasn't a strange child in the class who I hadn't taught … so I was just talking away to her saying what would happen … and the deputy head walked past and said to me you need that child off your lap … and I remember thinking how unfair it was that you made to feel you were doing something wrong when actually you are caring for a child here … that's quite different I think and you are restricted in how much time you can give each child as well … so at my old school they would say when I was a TA there we need to know what has happened in the evening before for these children … and I can remember in the morning this ridiculous five minute slot that was allotted to me to going to find out how this poor child had done … and it all had to be done in time for learning … and I thought just how ridiculous because actually it takes five minutes if you just are sitting next to the child and they are comfortable with you being there … and then maybe they will say something … and it was really frowned upon … any sort of pat on the bag … a great job well done … but it was pat yourself on the back … give yourself a round of applause … there was no touch between teacher and child … and obviously if you are teacher you don't go around touching the children but I think it's a real reassuring thing particularly if you teach in mainstream infants and Key Stage 1 I feel it's really vital … and a lot of those children who had learning difficulties were really struggling and they needed more of that nurturing and … management frowned on that and I think it's just one of those things in mainstream that you are not allowed to have that sort of connection with the children … whereas here … I think it was Valerie the TA in reception who said if a child falls over here it's a big thing for them and if you don't hug them you are doing them a disservice … it's what they require and I think that's kind of how it has to be … when you look at where each child is and where they are at and you are kind of given the freedom to care for the child in an appropriate way and that for example at the park Frank was just sobbing like a two year old having a giant tantrum and … when he is crying you can't just leave him because it will get louder and then he will start to get really cross …. But actually if you say come here and sit down with me … he needs to sit in your lap … and he just sat with me for ages and I rocked him a little bit and he calmed himself right down and he was ready to play monsters and that was fine … but even though he is big that was appropriate to what his need was at that time … I think the most obvious one is the smaller number of children in the class so you can have more time to give to each child …

Some teachers said to me that in mainstream the students understand what school is they understand what a pupil does and what is expected of them and they know how to play the game of going to school … but in a special school there might be some that have got the idea and some who think they have got the idea but actually haven't … so they were saying the relationship is because they don't get what school is about and you've got to go to where they are and sort of entice them in so that they will engage with learning and that is actually broadly developing relationships …

That takes quite a while … or some of the children to trust you enough to come to you with a problem or just be able to … be near you …be in the class with you … sit in the chair there … and I think things like playtimes are a really important for bonding with children and playing with them and trying to feel for what games they like to play and what their imagination is coming up with … so you can engage with them and on Wednesday I went to say goodbye to a child I taught at my last school and he is moving away and I had him for two years and he had a really horrible start in life and I remember really wanting to reach him but finding it really hard in a class of thirty and his interest was Star Wars and Lego … and what's really funny is I saw him and what he is still totally all about Star Wars and Lego … and I found it quite hard to be like … if you do this piece of work you get five minutes of Star Wars Lego on the computer … because you get all the other children in the class going well that's not fair … and when they get a bit older they understand that he is a bit different but not when they are small … that was quite challenging … I think one of the things I like most about special needs schools is that you are getting to know each individual child and you are unlocking how they learn or how to get them to talk to you for the first time … I enjoy the challenge of that …

Education Faculty Research Ethics Review
Application for full review

For Faculty Office use only

FREC Protocol No: **Date received:**

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*Your application **must** comprise the following documents (please tick the boxes below to indicate that they are attached):*

Application Form | * |

Peer Review Form | |

Copies of any documents to be used in the study:

Participant Information Sheet(s) | |

Consent Form(s) | * |

Introductory letter(s) | |

Questionnaire | * |

Focus Group Guidelines | |

Education Faculty Research Ethics Review
Application for full review

1. PROJECT DETAILS

MAIN RESEARCHER	Daniel Lewis
E-MAIL	Djl18@canterbury.ac.uk
POSITION WITHIN CCCU	-
POSITION OUTSIDE CCCU	Headteacher
COURSE (students only)	Ed.D
DEPARTMENT (staff only)	Education
PROJECT TITLE	Moving from mainstream to special school. How do teachers develop their professional competencies?
TUTOR/SUPERVISOR: NAME	Robin Precey
TUTOR/SUPERVISOR: E-MAIL	Robin.precey@canterbury.ac.uk
DURATION OF PROJECT (start & end dates)	February 2013- July 2013

OTHER RESEARCHERS	/

2. OUTLINE THE ETHICAL ISSUES THAT YOU THINK ARE INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT.

The participants will be identified by their headteachers which may then lead to issues relating to voluntary informed participation. I will make clear that there is no requirement upon them to participate and their withdrawal would result in no repercussions for them. Also that their contribution would be confidential and not reported to their headteacher nor identifiable in the final research. The participant's contributions will be anonymised and held securely. Participants will be sent drafts of their transcripts for comment.

3. GIVE A BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE PROJECT in no more than 100 words. (*Include, for example, sample selection, recruitment procedures, data collection, data analysis and expected outcomes.)* Please ensure that your description will be understood by the lay members of the Committee.

The project is the thesis for my Ed.D studies. It addresses the issues raised by the Salt Review intro the supply of teachers to special schools. I propose to interview 8 teachers who have recently transferred from mainstream school to special school in four different schools. The schools will be of a similar nature. The teachers will be identified by their headteachers and then be interviewed by myself using a semi-structured interview format It will provide information and support to schools in planning to improve the induction and the transition experience for these teachers.

4. How many participants will be recruited?	8
5. Will you be recruiting STAFF or STUDENTS from another faculty?	NO If yes, which Faculty? **IMPORTANT**: If you intend to recruit participants from another Faculty, this form must be copied to the Dean of the Faculty concerned, and to the Chair of that Faculty's

	Research Ethics Committee.
6. Will participants include minors, people with learning difficulties or other vulnerable people?	NO If yes, please add details.

7. Potential risks for participants: - Emotional harm/hurt* - Physical harm/hurt - Risk of disclosure - Other (please specify) *Please note that this includes any sensitive areas, feelings etc., however mild they may seem.	Please indicate all those that apply. YES NO YES /
8. How are these risks to be addressed?	There is the possibility that the nature of the questions might raise difficult emotional issues for the teachers. I will sensitively consider the effect that the interview is having and stop it if it was having this effect. The participant would be reassured that they need not participate further and that there would be no repercussions. By ensuring that the data is kept securely on my encrypted laptop and anonymised the participants will be protected from any possibility that their comments may be seen by third parties.
9. Potential benefits for participants: - Improved services - Improved participant understanding - Opportunities for participants to have their views heard. - Other (please specify)	Please indicate all those that apply. YES YES YES /

10. How, when and by whom will participants be approached? Will they be recruited individually or en bloc?	The participants will receive direct communication from myself having been identified by their headteachers. This will be prior to making the appointment for the interview. They will be recruited individually.
11. Are participants likely to feel under pressure to consent / assent to participation?	They may do as their headteacher will be asking them in the first instance. My communication with them will make clear that they do not have to participate and that if they do they can withdraw at any time without any repercussions.

12. How will voluntary informed consent be obtained from individual participants or those with a right to consent for them?
    -    Introductory letter
 	
    -    Phone call
	Please indicate all those that apply and add examples in an appendix.
	
	NO
	YES
	NO
	NO

- Email - Other (please specify)	

13. How will permission be sought from those responsible for institutions / organisations hosting the study?
     - Introductory letter
 	
     - Phone call
 	
     - Email
 	
     - Other (please specify)
	Please indicate all those that apply and add examples in an appendix.
	
	NO
	NO
	YES
		Atta ch any:

14. How will the privacy and confidentiality of participants be safeguarded? (Please give brief details).	The transcripts will be kept secure on a password protected laptop. All contributions will be anonymised in the transcripts	
15. What steps will be taken to comply with the Data Protection Act? - Safe storage of data - Anonymisation of data - Destruction of data after 5 years	Please indicate all those that apply. YES YES YES	
16. Give the qualifications and/or experience of the researcher and/or supervisor in this form of research. (Brief answer only)	The researcher has a M.ED and is following the Ed.D course. The supervisor has a doctorate and supervises Ed.D students.	
If you are a member of CCCU academic staff or a registered CCCU postgraduate student what insurance arrangements are in place to meet liability incurred in the conduct of this research?	I am insured by KCC in my professional role as a headteacher	
How will participants be made aware of the results of the study?	They will be emailed the thesis	
17. What steps will be taken to allow participants to retain control over audio-visual records of them and over their creative products and items of a personal nature?	They will be assured that their contributions will be kept securely and destroyed after 5 years	*Part icip ant infor mati*

on sheets and letters
Consent forms
     Data collection instruments
     Peer review comments

DECLARATION

- I certify that the information in this form is accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief and I take full responsibility for it.

- I certify that a risk assessment for this study has been carried out in compliance with the University's Health and Safety policy.

- I certify that any required CRB/VBS check has been carried out.

- I undertake to carry out this project under the terms specified in the Canterbury Christ Church University Research Governance Handbook.

- I undertake to inform the relevant Faculty Research Ethics Committee of any significant change in the question, design or conduct of the study over the course of the study. I understand that such changes may require a new application for ethics approval.

- I undertake to inform the Research Governance Manager in the Graduate School and Research Office when the proposed study has been completed.

- I am aware of my responsibility to comply with the requirements of the law and appropriate University guidelines relating to the security and confidentiality of participant or other personal data.

- I understand that project records/data may be subject to inspection for audit purposes if required in future and that project records should be kept securely for five years or other specified period.

- I understand that the personal data about me contained in this application will be held by the Research Office and that this will be managed according to the principles established in the Data Protection Act.

Researcher's Name: Daniel Lewis

Date: 21.02.13

FOR STUDENT APPLICATION ONLY

I have read the research proposal and application form, and support this submission to the FREC.

Supervisor's Name:

Date:

CONDITIONS ATTACHED TO APPROVAL BY THE COURSE RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

	NAME	DATE
Approved by Course Committee		
Checked by Faculty Committee		

CONDITIONS ATTACHED TO APPROVAL BY THE EDUCATION FACULTY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

	NAME	DATE
Approved by Faculty Committee		

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Project title

Moving from mainstream to special school. How do teachers develop their professional competencies?

Researcher's name: Daniel Lewis
Supervisor's name: Robin Precey

- I understand and agree to take part in this research project as it has been explained to me.

- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.

- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.

- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential.

- I understand that I will be audiotaped during the interviews.

- I understand that data will be stored safely and will only be accessible by the researcher. I will be sent a copy of the transcript and the research findings.

- I understand that I may contact the researcher or supervisor if I require further information about the research, and that I may contact the Education Faculty

Research Ethics Committee of the Canterbury Christchurch University, if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.

Signed ……………………………………………………………… (research participant)

Print name …………………………………………………… **Date** …………………………………

Contact details

Researcher: *djl18@canterbury.ac.uk*

Supervisor: *robin.precey@canterbury.ac.uk*

RE: ethics application

Engelbrecht, Petra (petra.engelbrecht@canterbury.ac.uk)
Thu 02/05/2013 12:48
To:
Lewis, Daniel (d.j.lewis18@canterbury.ac.uk);
Cc:
Miles, Emma (emma.miles@canterbury.ac.uk);
You replied on 02/05/2013 14:10.

Dear Daniel
It seems as though the previous message did not reach you and once again thank you for your revised form . Approval is now given under chair's action.
Good luck with your research!
Regards
Petra

From: Lewis, Daniel (d.j.lewis18@canterbury.ac.uk)
Sent: 21 February 2013 11:06
To: Engelbrecht, Petra (petra.engelbrecht@canterbury.ac.uk)
Subject: RE: ethics application

Dear Petra

Thank you for your email providing feedback on my ethics application. I have attached my resubmission addressing the issues you raised. I would like to commence my research soon and so would welcome further guidance to assist me in gaining the necessary approval.
Regards
Daniel

TASK 1
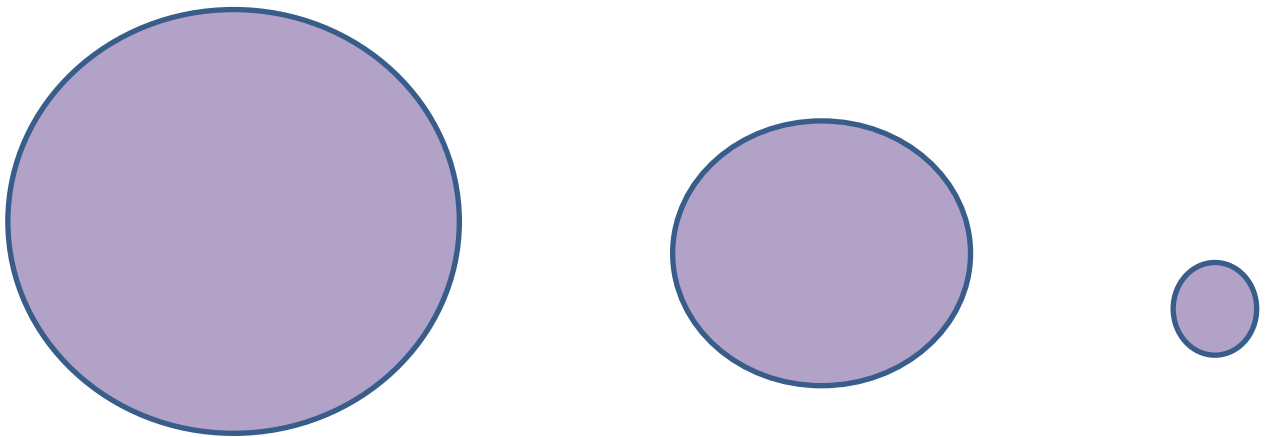
Task2

Please rate each of the following statements 1-7 where 1 is low and 7 is high.

Are your expectations set by:-

1. The learner's ability?
2. The learner's special needs?
3. The learner's previous performance?
4. The school's targets?
5. The school's assessments and curriculum for that learner?
6. National targets?

The school's culture is set by:-

7. The expectations of OFSTED?
8. The headteacher's vision?
9. The staff group?
10. The area the school is in?
11. The needs of the learners?

Teaching is about:-

12. The relationship with the pupil
13. My professional practice
14. Getting the most out of the learners
15. Raising standards

My professional development is most influenced by:-

16. Courses I attend
17. My colleagues
18. Watching other teachers
19. My managers
20. My own reading and questioning

I find change:-

21. Challenging
22. Exciting
23. Creative
24. Manageable
25. Stressful

TASK 2 GRAPHS

INTERVIEW 8 - CHRISTINE

INTERVIEW 7 - SUSAN

INTERVIEW 6- LAURA

INTERVIEW 5 - ALISON

INTERVIEW 4 - DIANE

INTERVIEW 3 - TINA

INTERVIEW 2 - ALAN

INTERVIEW 1 - MIKE

QUESTIONS 1-6

QUESTIONS 7-11

QUESTIONS 12-15

QUESTIONS 16-20
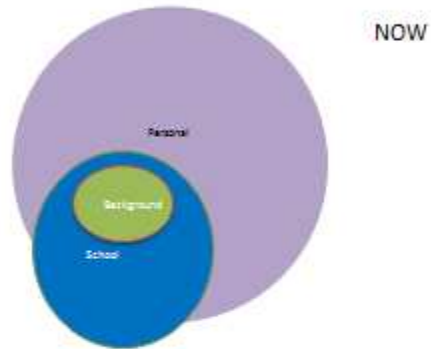
QUESTIONS 21-25
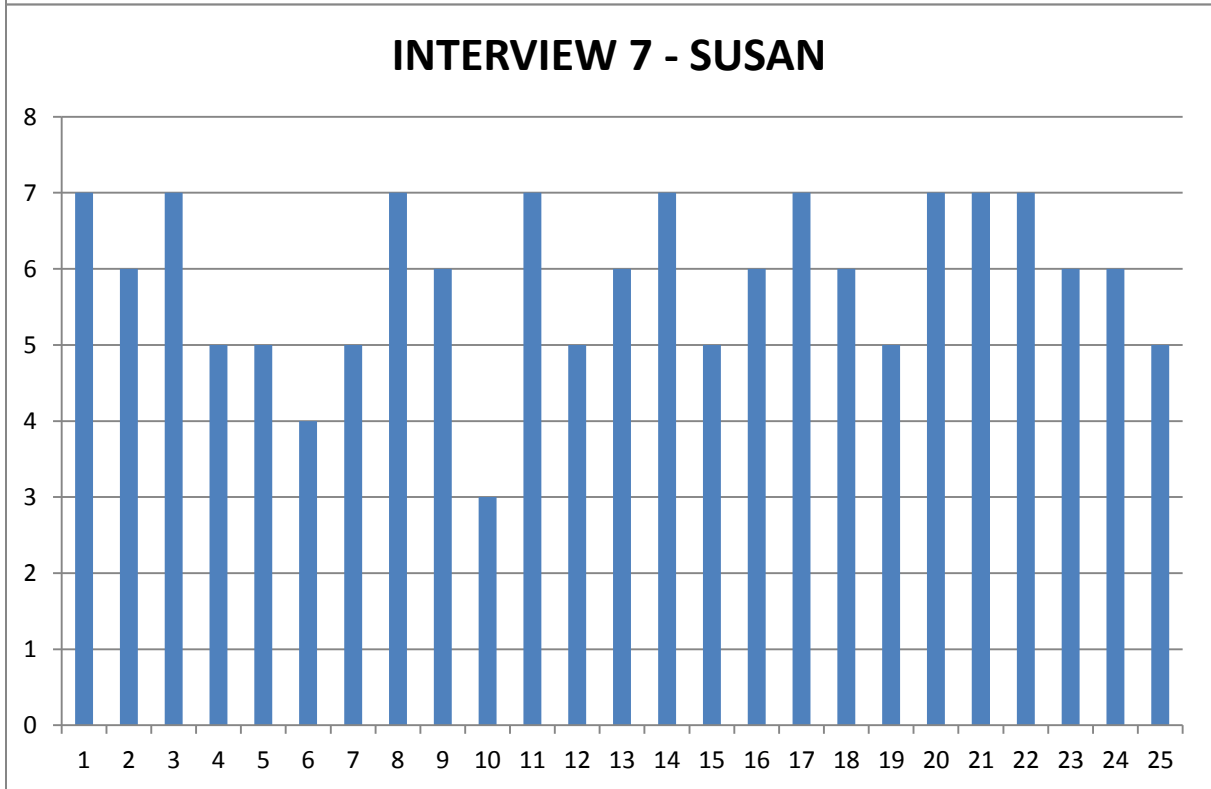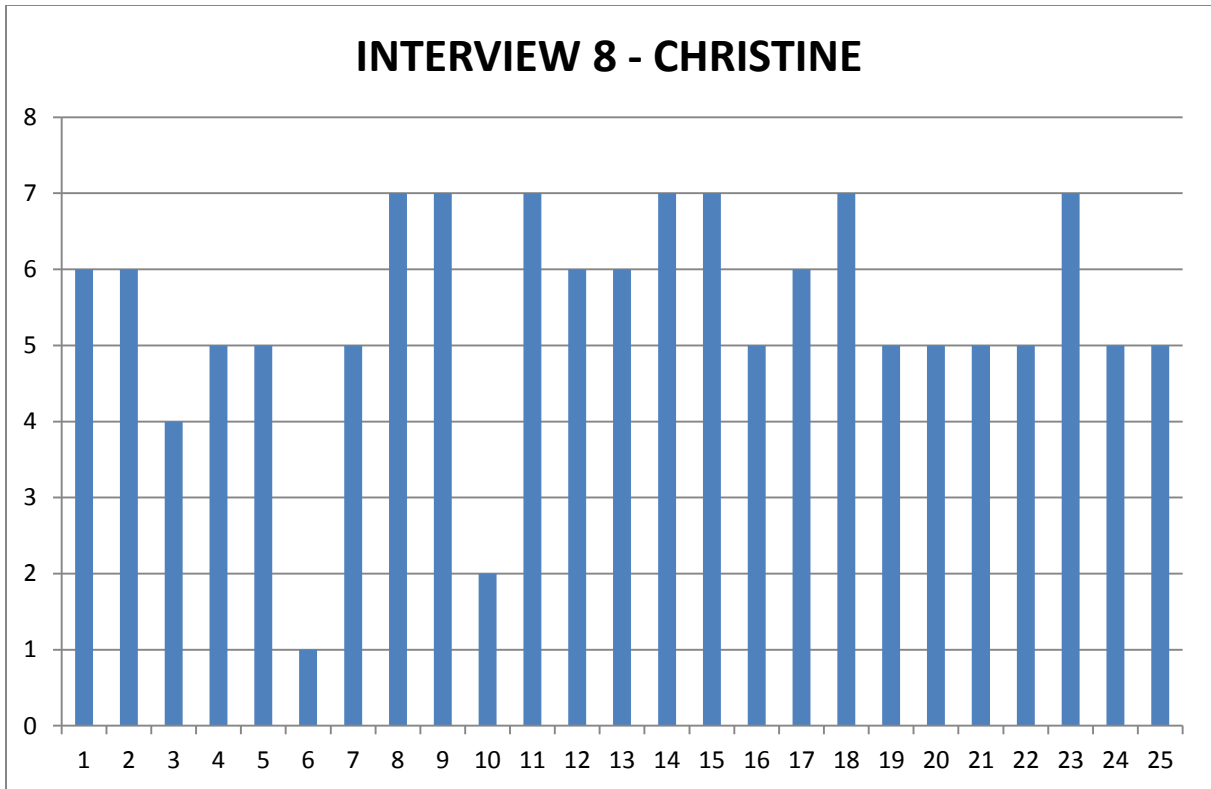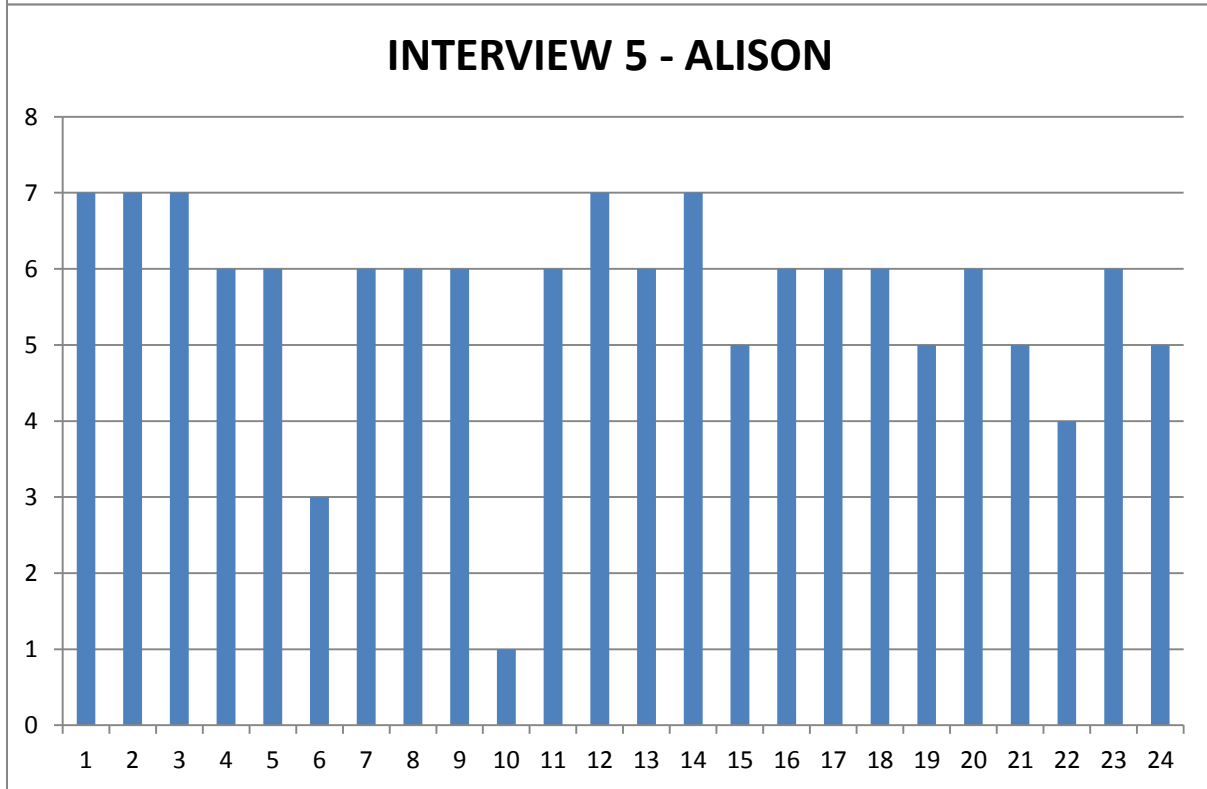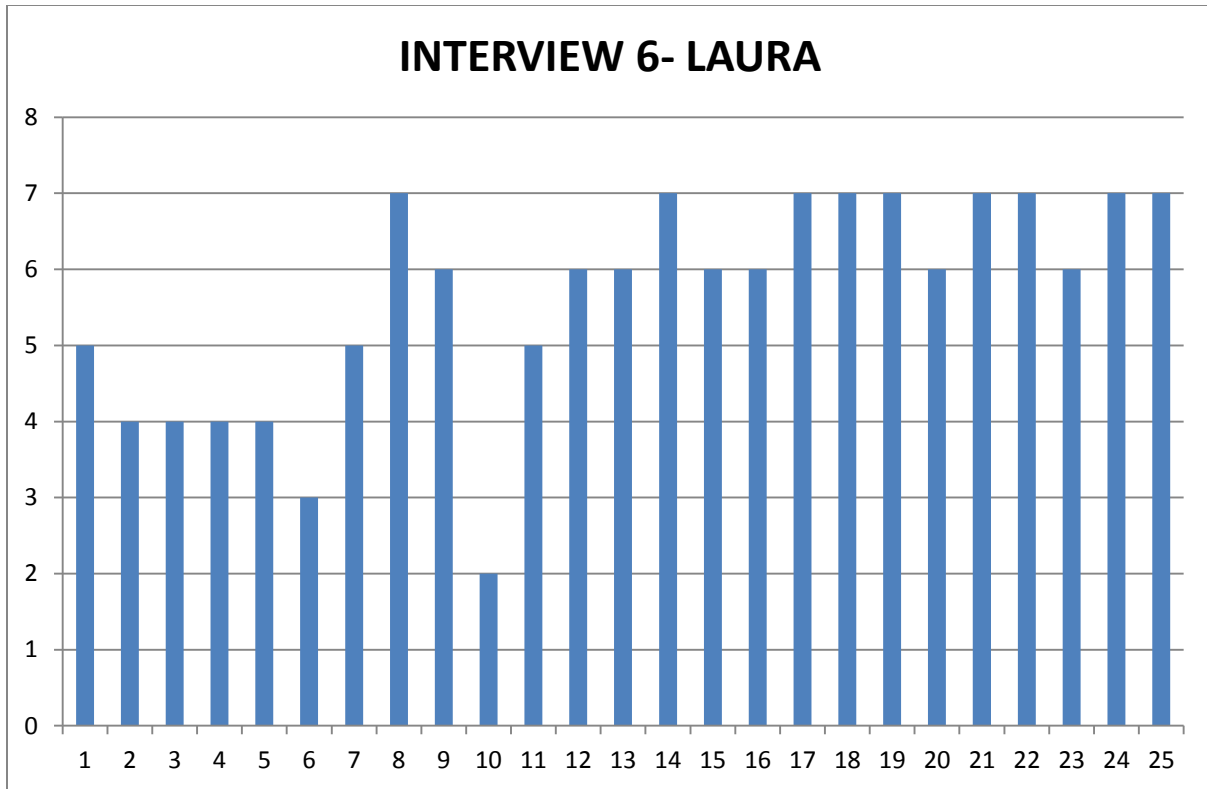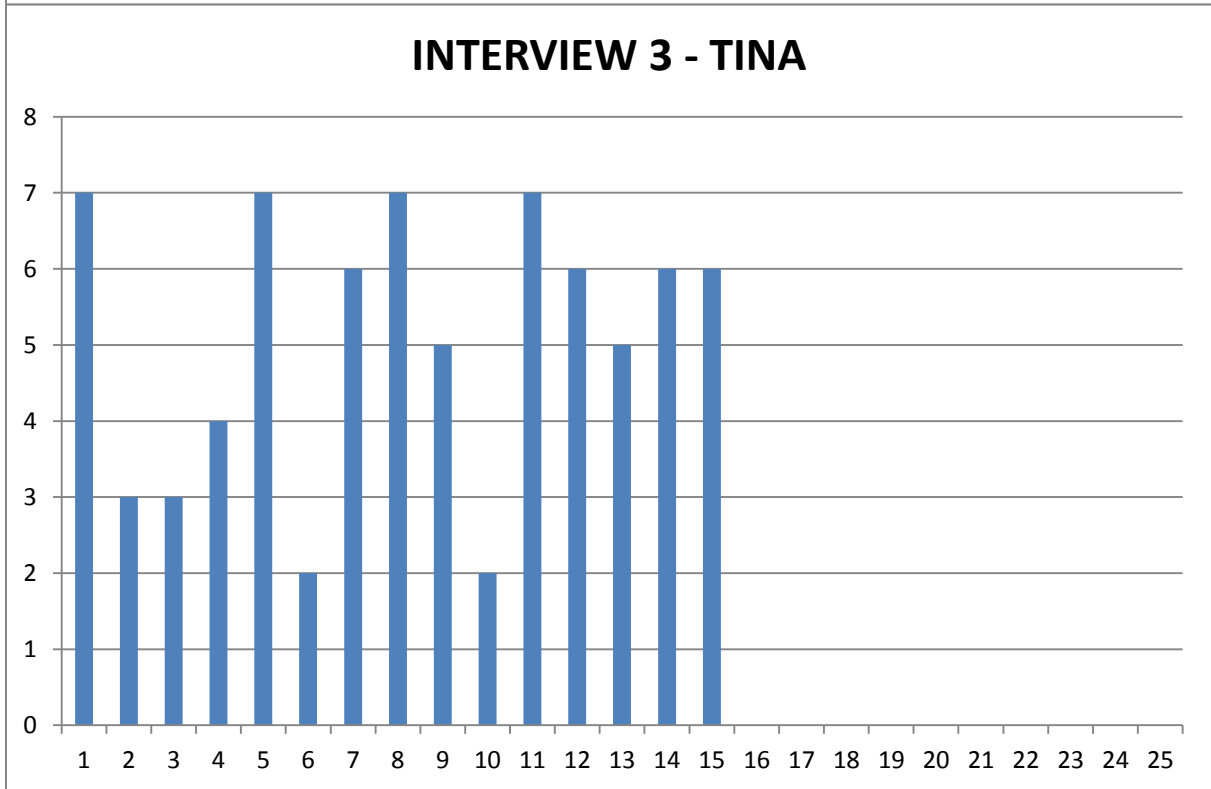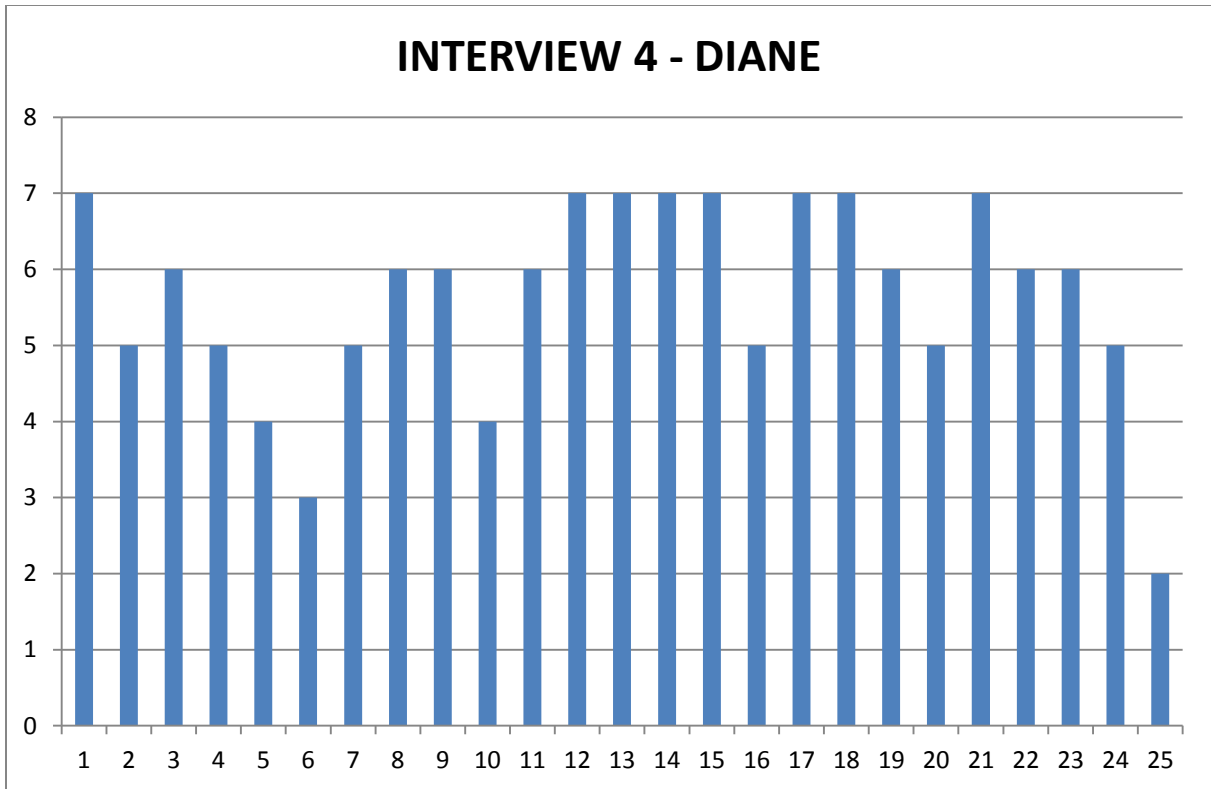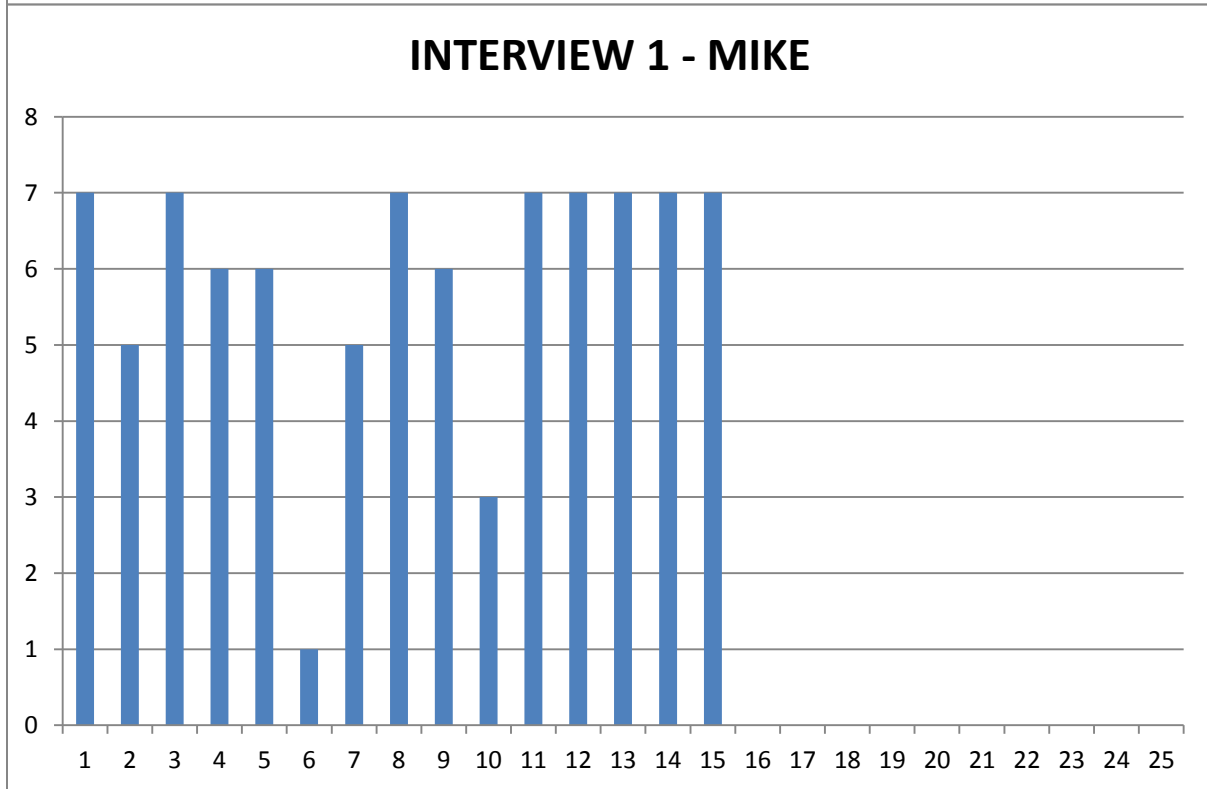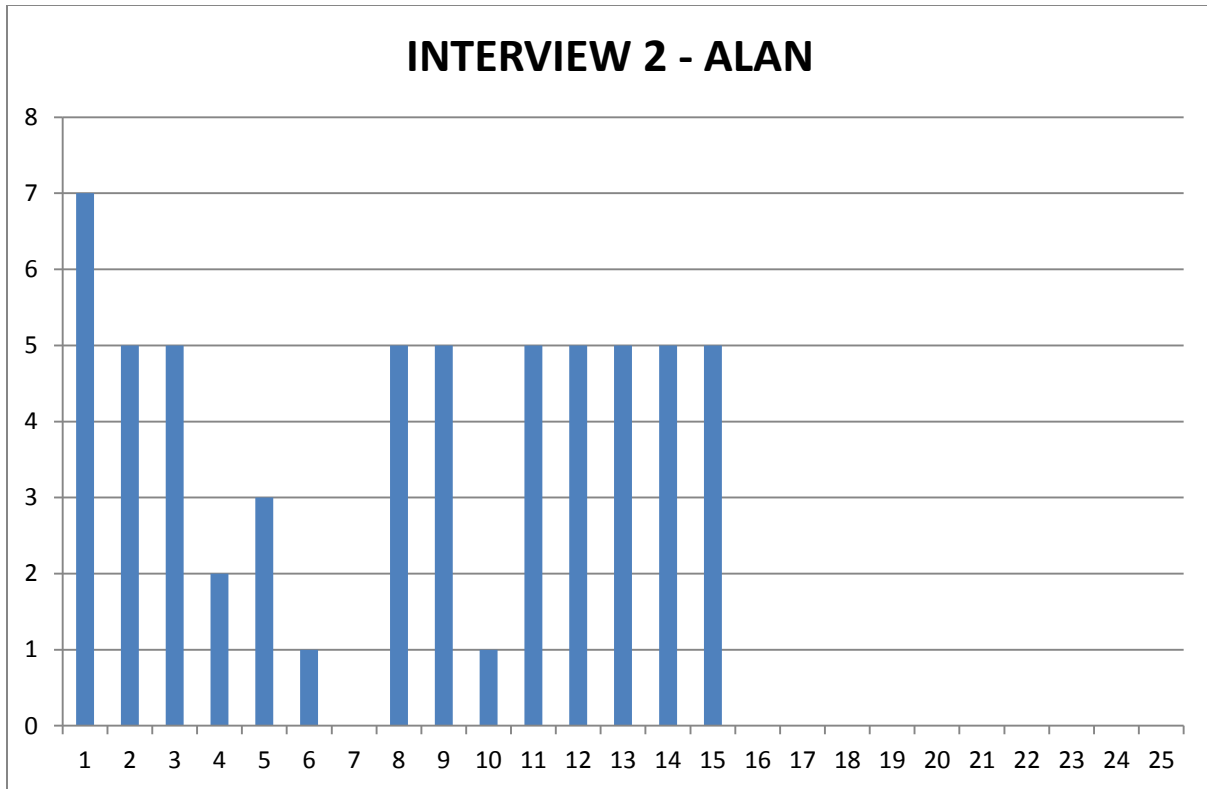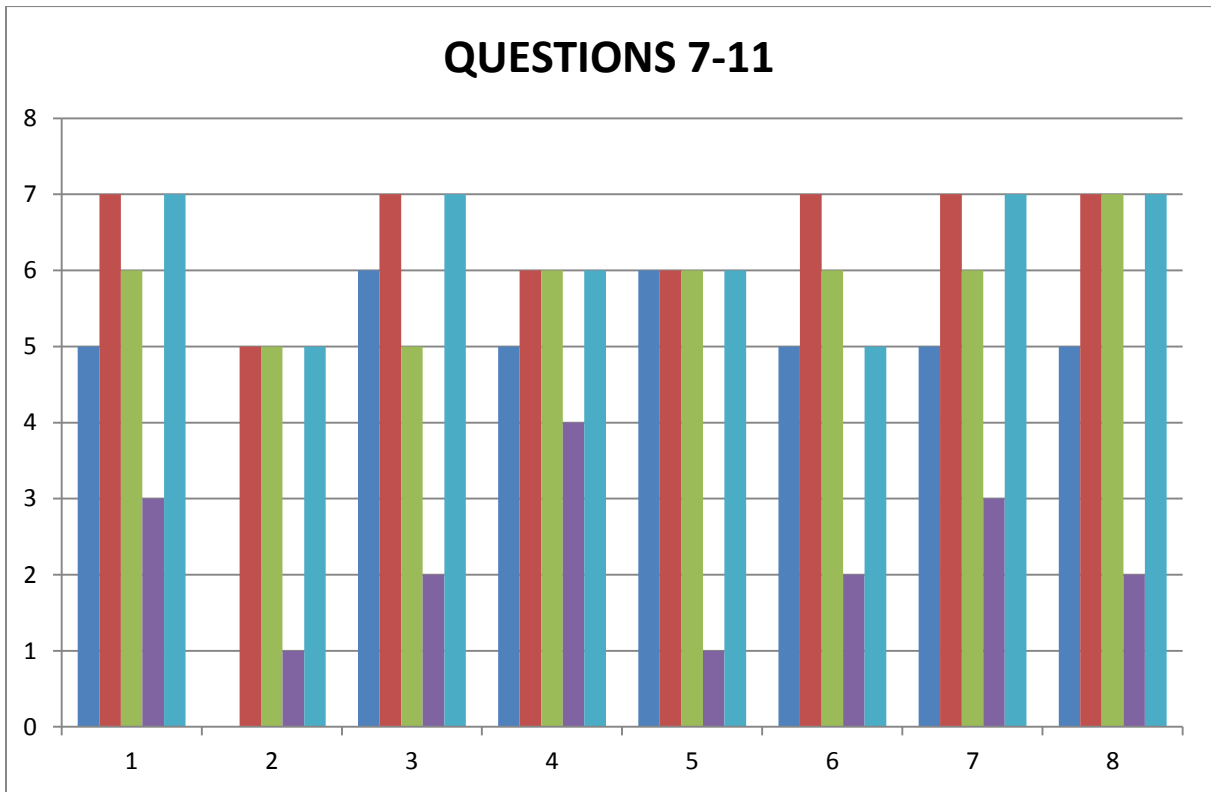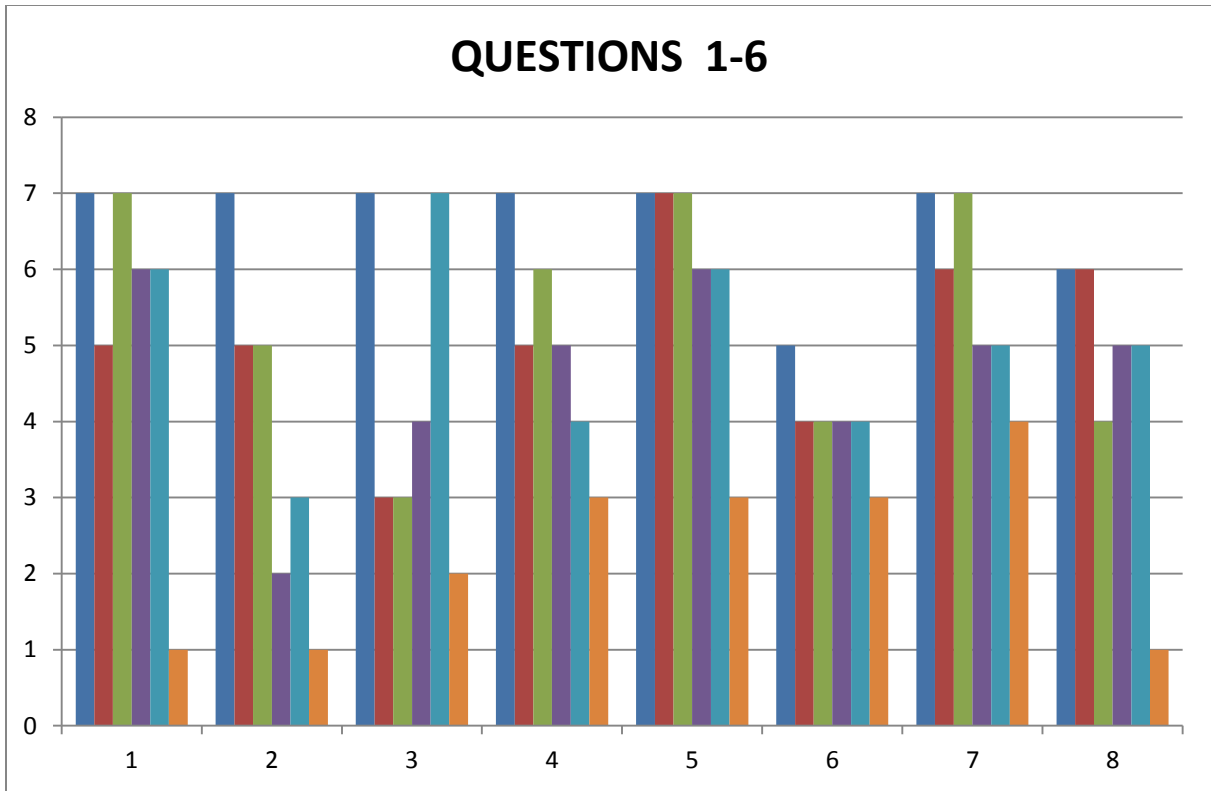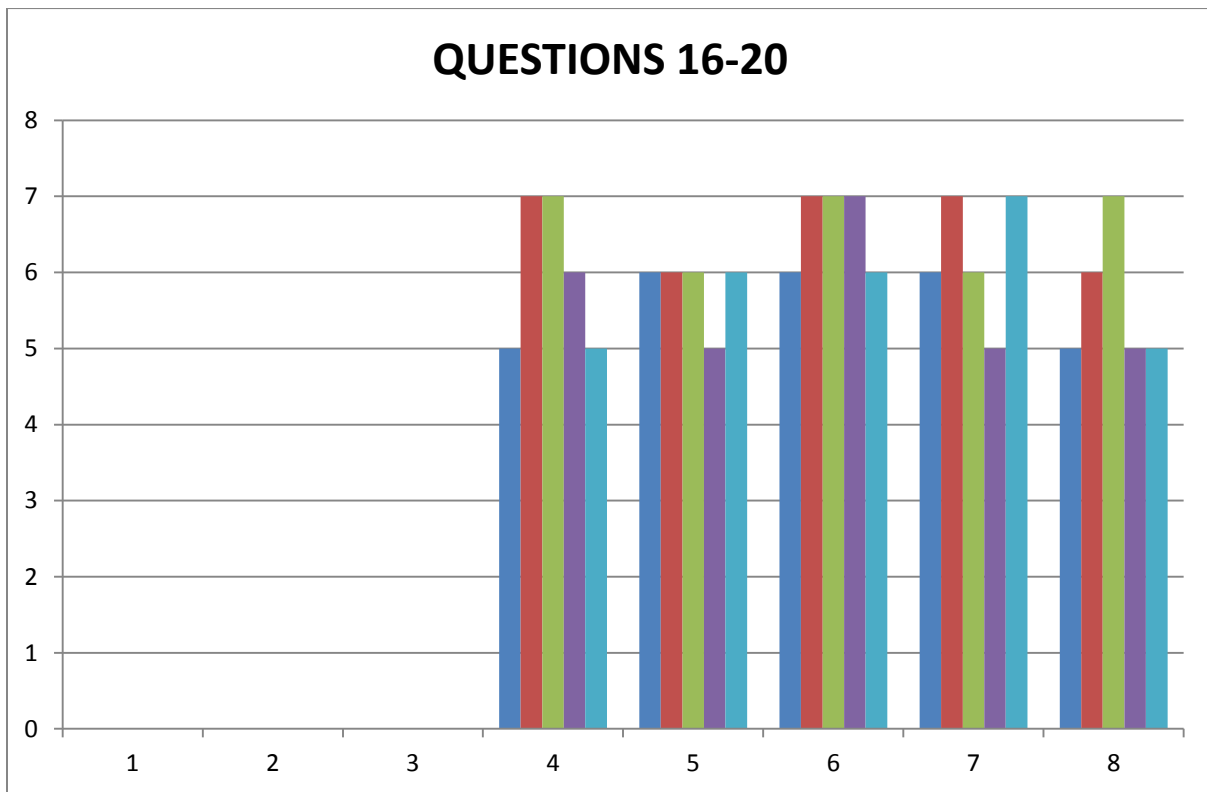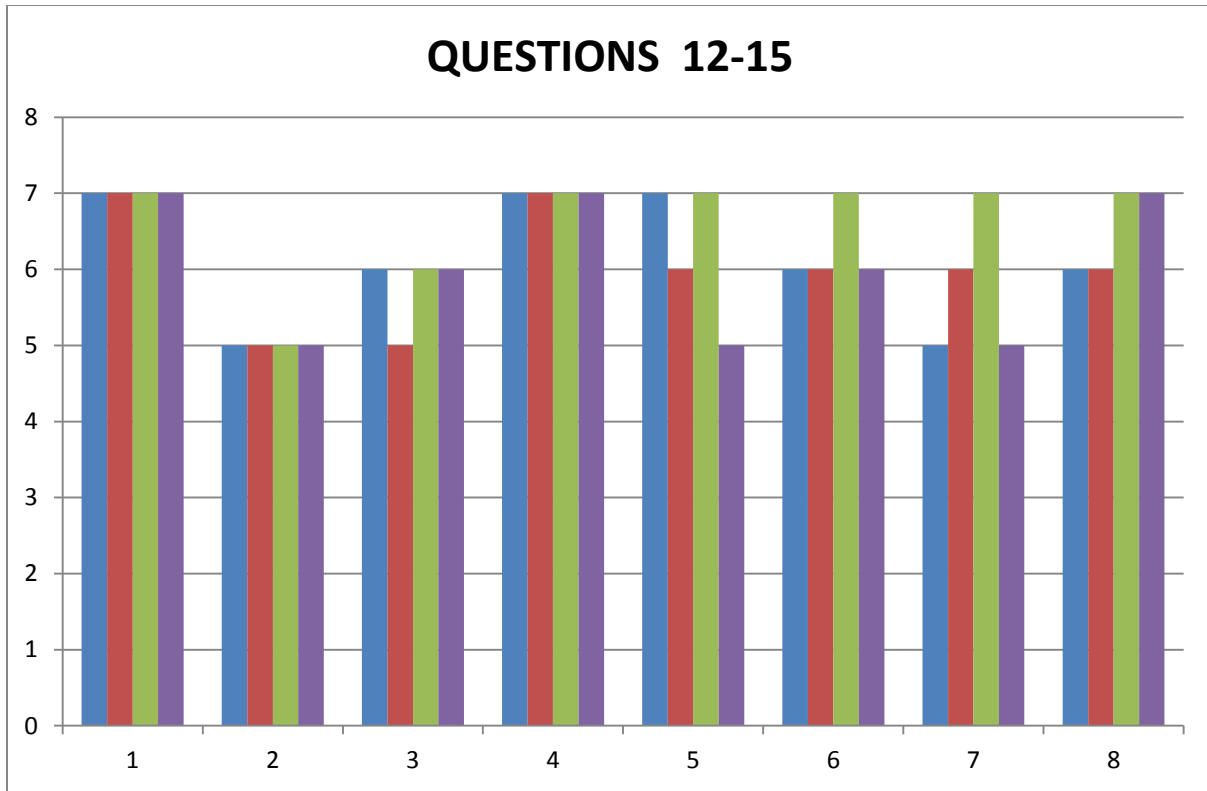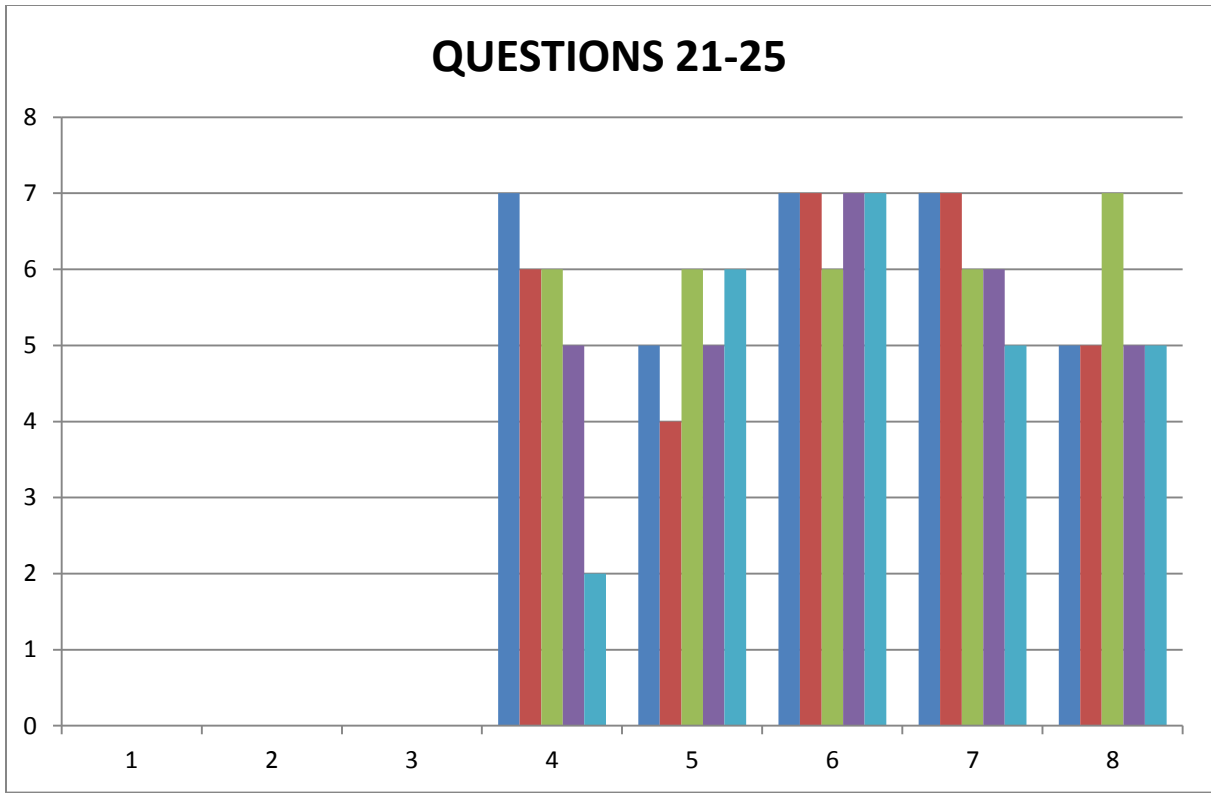
TASK 1 RESULTS

1. MIKE

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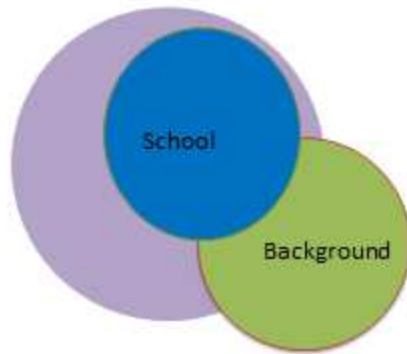
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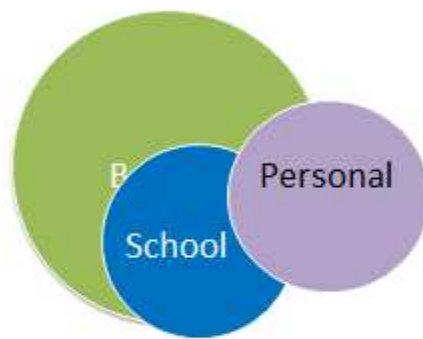
3. TINA

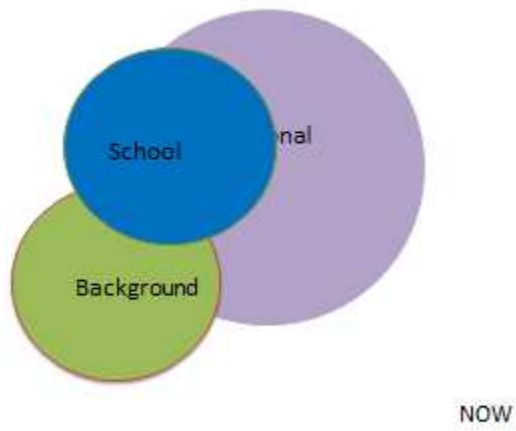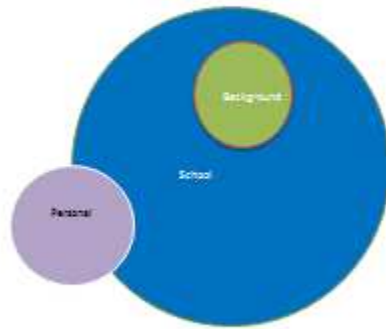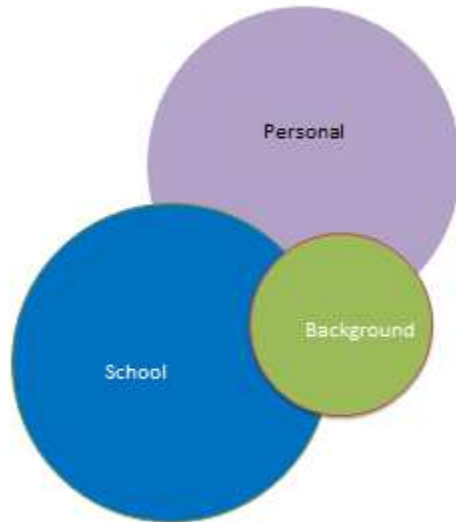4. DIANE

THEN

4. DIANE

NOW

Personal

Background

School

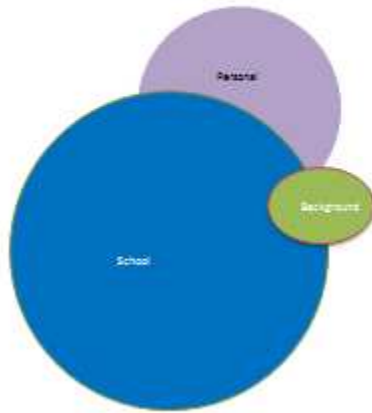5. ALISON

School

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Background

NOW
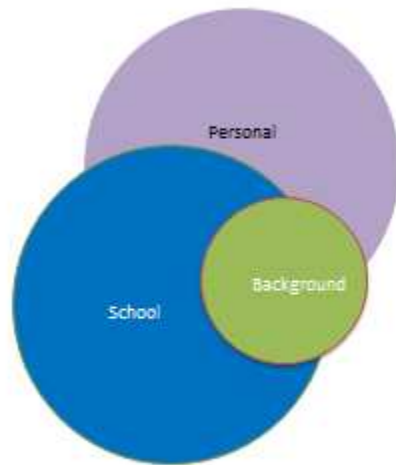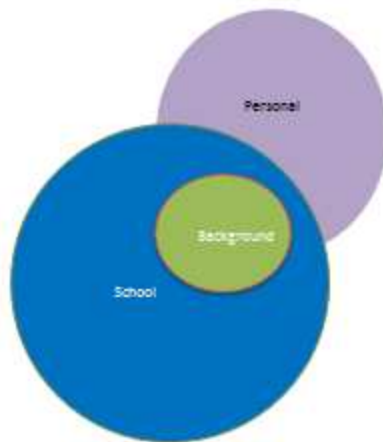
5. ALISON

THEN

6. SUSAN

7. LAURA

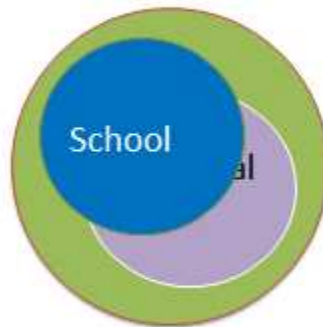8. CHRISTINE   THEN

School

al

8. CHRISTINE