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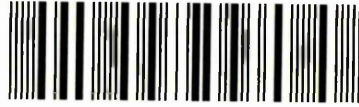
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What social model? Disabled students' experience of work-related learning and placements

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the impact of the social model of disability on the inclusion of disabled students in higher education and employment contexts. It considers the experiences of disabled students on work-based placements as part of their undergraduate degree in a university setting. It analyses and evaluates the complex interactions that take place as students negotiate these settings. The research arose out of my engagement with disabled students who appeared less included in education and employment than their non-disabled peers, despite the impact of the social model on inclusion and employment policy. I used a case study model in which focus groups and interviews were conducted with sixteen disabled students, four academic tutors, one placement administrator and four placement supervisors over five years between 2006 and 2010. Students were interviewed on more than one occasion over the three years of their study in order to include longitudinal data.

Findings suggested that although the social model was evident in the philosophy behind current policies it was not always understood and applied in all contexts by all stakeholders and consequently students had to negotiate a range of diverse experiences when participating in the work-related curriculum in higher education. These experiences were compounded by practical tensions around standards, resources and training which resulted in them having fractured experiences of social model practice. The study discusses the extent to which disabled students, especially those with behaviour related impairment labels, are subject to discriminatory practice and exclusion in university and more particularly in employment settings and how this contributes to an employment disadvantage compared with their non-disabled peers. To this ends the study highlights the importance of strengthening the knowledge and application of the social model in higher education and employment settings.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: Introduction, Background and Rationale for Study

1.1 Introduction

This research takes the form of a case study. It is conducted in an education department which sits within one of three faculties in a new post-92 university in a large northern city in the United Kingdom. The study was conducted within the context of the impact of the social model of disability on inclusion policy and practice in higher education and employment settings. It analyses the extent to which disabled students are likely to gain employment in similar proportions to their non-disabled peers and explores some of the reasons for this. Based on material gathered from a range of focus groups and interviews the thesis argues that there are some possible solutions to this employment disadvantage 'problem' which are not currently widely debated or discussed (Roulstone, 2000).

The work is located around a focus on disabled students' experiences of inclusion in the employability aspects of an undergraduate course, specifically the work-based placements and the associated work-related learning elements of the course. It explores how the social model of disability impacts on disabled students' experiences of inclusion in both the university and work placement settings. It highlights the complex interplay between university and employment contexts and between the stakeholders in those settings. It also explores the ways in which disabled students experience and negotiate inclusion in diverse contexts with different stakeholders.

Hopefully, the work extends understanding of the complexities of implementing social model ideas and practices in higher education and employment and considers some of the reasons why disabled students experienced exclusionary practice, particularly in employment contexts. It also proposes some ways in which this exclusionary practice can be reduced through a stronger application of the social model. So, I trust that the work makes a new contribution to knowledge about the employment disadvantage experienced by disabled students and ways that it can be reduced.

In this Introduction I outline the 'problem' that I identified for this research and the background and rationale for my research. The chapter begins with an outline of the key debates about the social model of disability and the main issues or 'problem' I identified as arising around the implementation of the social model in relation to the employment of disabled people in general and, more specifically, the disabled students I selected for my study. Finally, the rationale for the thesis is outlined with reference to the university, the degree course and me as researcher.

1.2 Background to the research

The main debates explored in this thesis are located within models of disability. The social model of disability challenges traditional medical/individual model assumptions about the contribution of impairment effects to disability. The social model of disability refutes any causal link between individual impairment and the consequent disability and proposes that disability is the consequence of disabling barriers in society, which result in discriminatory and exclusive practice in education and employment contexts (Barnes, 1996; Oliver, 1996a; 1996b; 2004; Johnstone, 2001). There have been many positive developments in inclusive education and employment which impacted positively on the disabled students in my study. A key contributory factor in these developments is the impact of the social model of disability on thinking that informs education and employment legislation and policy and the consequent focus on removal of barriers to inclusion for disabled people in higher education and employment contexts. It is a direct consequence of such developments in social model thinking on inclusion that the disabled students in my study gained access to a university education and expected to gain employment as a consequence of successfully completing their degrees. A lack of education and training 'exacerbates the employment disadvantage associated with disability' so educational achievement that includes employability is a major factor for disabled students preparing to enter the workplace (Berthoud, 2008:140). So the social model of disability has made many positive inroads into discriminatory practice which

has contributed to reducing exclusion in higher education and employment for disabled students.

However, this study reveals many issues still arising around inclusion in both higher education and employment contexts, which resulted in disabled students experiencing discrimination and exclusion and some have argued that these issues arise because the social model is not an adequate framework for thinking about inclusive practice. These include feminists (Crow, 1996; Morris, 1991; 1996; Thomas, 2004a; 2004b; 2007) who have argued that the social model is not a useful model for inclusion and it needs to be renewed or replaced with another model of disability. They have proposed a renewed model of disability which focuses on impairment effects as they argue that the social model's failure to address impairment effects makes it ineffective on a personal level. Other poststructuralist researchers and writers in disability studies (Shakespeare and Watson, 2001; Shakespeare, 2006) have argued that the social model is ineffective as it is an outdated and inappropriate model which has outlived its usefulness and needs to be completely replaced.

The study confirms that there are issues related to the implementation of the social model. Despite the impact of the social model of disability on much legislation and university policy, many of the disabled students who possessed the prerequisite knowledge, skills and qualifications and gained their Education Studies degree did not gain employment in similar proportions to their non-disabled counterparts on the course. This is a reflection of the national picture of employment disadvantage for disabled students, as figures show that nationally 48.8 percent of disabled people are employed compared to 77.5 percent of non-disabled people (DWP, 2012). In 2005 the Department of Health (DOH) published the first national survey of individuals with a learning disability and the survey showed that of disabled people who are of working age less than one in five has a job. Unemployment rates are three times higher for disabled people than their non-disabled counterparts and their experiences of periods of unemployment are likely to be longer (Burchardt, 2000; Jolly, 2000; Barnes and Mercer, 2005). Data (DHLE, 2011) from the course which is the focus of this study confirms that students graduating

from the Education and Disability Studies degree are less likely than students following other Education Studies courses to gain employment. According to Abberley (1996; 1997, cited in Barnes and Mercer 2005:532), 'The absence of people with impairments from the industrial labour market dictates their wider social exclusion' and disabled students often find it very difficult to get appropriate employment so that they often 'hurtle into a void'. Research (Baldwin, 1985; Martin et al, 1989; Baldwin and Carlisle, 1994; Hirst and Baldwin 1994; Gordon and Heslop 1998; Hendey, 1998; Morris 1999a; Morris 1999b; Gordon et al 2000; Burchardt, 2000; Jolly, 2000; Barnes and Mercer, 2005) suggests that disabled people are less likely to achieve employment and economic independence than non-disabled peers. They are half as likely to be in paid work.

Hence, the dilemma is clear; even though the social model has had an enormous positive impact on inclusive legislation and university policy, disabled students on the Education Studies courses remained deeply disadvantaged in the labour market, less likely than their peers to be employed and much less likely to be in good jobs with high earnings. This reflects a national trend and the long term exclusionary consequences are that:

> Lack of paid employment has obvious implications for the unemployed individual, not only poverty, but social isolation and a lack of political status (Jolly, 2000: 795).

Therefore the problem identified for this study poses challenges for university policy, for disabled students on the course and for academic tutors and other stakeholders involved in work-related aspects of the course. The thesis explores some of the reasons why the social model is not impacting sufficiently on policy and practice to effect successful inclusion in both university and work-based contexts. The focus is on the appropriateness of the social model for successfully influencing inclusion in both contexts, whether it is an inappropriate model which needs to be renewed to take more account of impairment effects, or whether it needs to be abandoned completely and a new model developed.

The thesis extends understanding of the complexities of applying social model thinking and practices in higher education and employment settings and considers some of the causes of disabled students' experiences of discriminatory and exclusionary practice, predominantly in employment contexts. It also suggests means by which this exclusionary practice can be lessened through a stronger application of the social model of disability. So, I trust that the work makes a new and unique contribution to knowledge about the employment disadvantage experienced by the disabled students on the course and some ways in which it can be reduced.

It has been important to take account of previous research around work-related education and its contribution to employability for disabled and non-disabled students (Knight and Yorke, 2003; Brennan and Little, 2006). Similarly, it has been vital to consider research around models of disability, inclusive higher education, employment and identity for disabled people. However, little research has been focused on the work-related curriculum and work-based placement experiences of disabled students. This study focuses specifically on this issue in relation to work-based education placements for disabled students following one undergraduate Education Studies degree which had work-related learning as a core aspect of the curriculum.

It is important to note that I recognise that the problem articulated above, employment disadvantage for disabled students, has many causes which are not the main focus of my research and that many of these causes may apply to disabled and non-disabled students. One of the causes of the problem may be related to the employment market which, for example, in the current economic recession is facing a severe downturn. The market for specific types of jobs is also variable in relation to geography, so that in these situations both the disabled and non-disabled students on the course may experience employment disadvantage because of the current market or local situation. A second contributory factor to employment disadvantage may be political, related to the attitude and approach of the Government to equality and diversity. Thirdly, the problem of employment disadvantage for disabled students may be located within society's attitude to and response to disabled people. A fourth contributory factor to employment

disadvantage for disabled students may be educational disadvantage, including access to inclusive education and equal educational opportunities at primary, secondary, further and higher education stages. Other educational factors in higher education may be related to rising tuition fees, the pressure on universities to achieve standards in the National Student Survey (NSS), marketisation and privatisation. Berthoud (2008) identifies demographic characteristics like gender, family structure, age and ethnic group, local demand, labour market characteristics, educational background and severity and type of impairment as factors contributing to the problem. Hence, there are many social, political, legal, educational and employment factors that contribute to the problem of employment disadvantage for disabled students which were not explicitly addressed in this thesis.

Thus, the employment disadvantage experienced by disabled students selected for this study may have included many contributing factors and not all of these factors were part of the focus of this research. My study is limited to addressing how models of disability impact on policy and practice related to the work-related curriculum of one degree programme. It proposes some reasons why disabled students are disadvantaged in the employment market and suggests some solutions to the employment disadvantage problem which recommend a strengthening of the application of the social model of disability. The parameters of the study are set out in detail in chapter 2.

1.3 Rationale

The issue of inclusion and employment for disabled students has become a significant and relevant issue because of a widening participation agenda in higher education. This has been accompanied by changes in relation to the curriculum in higher education as employers have increasingly demanded that higher education institutions focus more specifically on employability and skills in their degree programmes. As such, many degree programmes in higher education, including those at the university in my study, have moved away from an exclusively academically focused curriculum to one that

includes a specific focus on work-related learning and work placements that enhance employability for students.

> Higher education institutions...are expected not only to promote deep understandings of complex subject matter, but also...to work with students from a diversity of backgrounds [and]...to support the development in students of a broad range of skills relevant to employment (Knight and Yorke, 2003:10).

Alongside these changes the rise of the Disability Rights Movement and the advent of the social model of disability have focused attention on society's responsibility to remove disabling barriers to inclusion for disabled people in all aspects of life, including higher education and employment. The social inclusion agenda has emerged with a focus on building a cohesive society and ensuring that a broader range of people can contribute to that society through engaging with work (Dyson, 2001). The university in this study has engaged with this social inclusion agenda for disabled students, using 'learning contracts' to support the inclusion of disabled students. These 'learning contracts' are individual education plans for disabled students who have been assessed and given a 'disabled' label. They place responsibilities on staff and students. For the university, one of the key functions of the learning contract system is to discharge its legal responsibilities towards disabled students in respect of the Equality Act (2010). Approximately 3% of students in the faculty in which the study is conducted have learning contracts. These learning contracts are sent from the Disability Support Team to the Planning and Information Team who forward them to staff who work with the disabled students, mainly module and course leaders and the placement administrators. The responsibility for working with individual students to fulfil the contract lies with module leaders and the responsibility for ensuring recommendations in the contract are met lies with the Planning and Information team. The documents are confidential and can only be shared if the disabled student agrees to this, so often disabled students do not share their learning contract with placement settings. Sections in the learning contracts address learning teaching and assessment issues, for example, providing teaching materials in advance of taught sessions. In relation to assessment disabled

students can be granted extra time for their submissions or alternative assessments. For placements disabled students are sometimes given less travelling distance to settings than non-disabled students or the opportunity to select the most suitable type of setting. Section two of the contract itemises the Disabled Student Support team responsibility, for example in providing note-takers or mentors. Section 3 outlines the disabled student's responsibilities, for example discussing disclosure at placement with the placement coordinator. Section 4 deals with library and information, for example extended loans and section 5 states the specific impairment label and outlines the nature and history of assessments and medical reports. Section 6 gives the faculty contact for disabled students.

The original catalyst for this study was my interest in national developments in inclusive education and employment and the impact on disabled students entering higher education, which became personally significant when I began teaching and leading on the Education Studies degree at a local higher education institution. The course with its built in focus on employability and work placements and the disabled students following the course provided an appropriate arena for my study.

The higher education institution in which my study took place had a specific focus on widening participation and prided itself on being an equal opportunities institution. Consequently a higher proportion of disabled students are enrolled than in many other, especially traditional, higher education institutions. In 2003 an Employability Framework was developed to increase the employability of students and establish employability as a strategic objective of the university's vision and ethos (Brown and Drew, 2005). The University Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy (2006-10), which addressed employability while I was conducting my research, stated that 'Employability is a university core value' (Northern University, 2006b:4). The university Core Values document (Northern University, 2006a) added that the university advocates 'Supportiveness, forward thinking and employability'. All degrees had to be written with sections addressing the ways in which employability was embedded into the degree

programme. The new Education for Employability Strategy (Northern University, 2010-12:1) stated that the faculty was:

> Committed to supporting students in their preparation for the world of work, giving the students we work with an edge when they enter the graduate market...In an increasingly competitive job market...graduate employability will be a core dimension of our academic offer.

Thus one of the key objectives of the university Employability Strategy was to ensure that all students engaged in work-related and work-based learning as part of their programme of study.

The Education Studies degree at the university and on which I teach offers four routes, including BA (Hons) Education Studies; BA (Hons) English and Education Studies; BA (Hons) Education and Disability Studies and BA (Hons) Education Studies with Psychology and Counselling. The students tended to enroll with modest A level points, normally 220, and so the courses fitted in with a widening participation agenda. There were disabled students enrolled on all these degree programmes, but significantly more on the Education and Disability Studies course and fifteen of the sixteen students involved in this study followed the Education and Disability Studies course. The courses were written with work-related learning and work-based placements as a core and significant aspect of the programme at each level of study and a clear focus on embedded employability. The course ethos and values represented a strong social model approach to disability.

In summary, the institution in which I work and the courses on which I teach have an inclusive, social model approach to education and there is a clear focus on embedding employability in courses. This local context provided an appropriate case for my research to explore how effective the social model framework is for enhancing inclusion and reducing employment disadvantage for disabled students. I have been involved in teaching disabled students in secondary and higher education contexts over many years. My concern to ensure inclusion in a range of education contexts has meant that I have developed significant experience with disabled students during my career. I had a

substantial responsibility in writing and leading the above courses and so was particularly interested in the effectiveness of the provision and was aware of the need to reflect on this provision in order to ensure appropriate developments. I was also aware that much has been written about employability and work-related learning but little research has been done in relation to work-related learning and work-based placements for disabled students. So I undertook this study because, even though the requirement to meet the needs of disabled students was established in law, it was a great personal challenge to ensure these needs were met on the university and employment aspects of the course.

> Most of the injustices towards disabled people have emerged from, and are still located in, an educational system that talks of change but does little to resolve its own practices (Johnstone, 2001:34).

Some commentators argue that many practices in higher education arise from a medical perspective or model of disability (Holloway, 2001) that determines the experiences of disabled students. I have a strong personal commitment to the social model of disability, but as we shall see, other stakeholders hold different views and these perspectives on disability are significant for inclusion and employment of disabled students. The national, local and personal relevance of the selected study enabled me to explore possible ways to address the employment disadvantage problem and so make a contribution to knowledge in this field. So this study explores the issues discussed above, allowing a voice to disabled students and opportunities for them to raise awareness of some practical and political issues that contributed to their continued oppression in higher education and employment, and articulate some ways forward for more effective practice. It has enabled me to explore the appropriateness of the social model of disability for inclusion of disabled students in both higher education and work contexts. The following chapter outlines the scope and structure of my study in detail and establishes the parameters of the case.

CHAPTER 2: Structure and Scope of Study

I began the research for this study in May 2006 and completed it in September 2011. I adopted an explanatory case study approach to the research to test existing theories around models of disability with reference to inclusion and employability for disabled students and generate my own theory using a grounded theory approach. A sociological case study which emphasizes constructs in society, including disability, inclusion and employment was my chosen approach. The key reasons for my selection of this approach are outlined in detail in chapter 5 but the structure and scope of the case study are articulated in this chapter.

In this chapter the boundaries or scope of the case are articulated, beginning with the research aim and objectives. This is followed by a summary of the main debates forefronted in the thesis and the themes and research questions used to explore the main debates. The role and characteristics of the 'key players' in the study, including the researcher and the selected participants, are outlined and the way in which research instruments were employed with the participants explained. I also establish the temporal and geographical boundaries in relation to when and where the study took place and describe some of the organisational and institutional arrangements that impacted on the case. Finally, an explanation of the key terminology included is provided. Where appropriate, tables and diagrams are used to summarise the main structure and boundaries of the study and provide information on the interviewees and these are located in the Appendix.

2.1 Research aim and objectives

The study aimed to explore the impact of models of disability on inclusion policy and practice related to disabled students in higher education with specific reference to inclusive work-related learning. The main objectives of the research were firstly to critically explore how inclusion policies reflect models of disability in higher education and employment contexts. The work specifically analyses the links and discrepancies in

inclusion policy and practice with specific reference to the inclusion of disabled students in work-related learning and the associated work-based placements. It provides a critical evaluation of the contribution that approaches to work-related learning and work-based placements make to employability for disabled students, and suggests some solutions to the employment disadvantage problem which have not yet been debated. Finally the work evaluates the appropriateness of the social model of disability as a framework for inclusive policy and practice.

2.2 The main debates and themes fore-fronted in the thesis

The main debates in this thesis are centred on the appropriateness of the social model of disability as a framework for implementing inclusion in higher education and employment settings. Some researchers and writers in disability studies have challenged the validity of the model and suggested that it needs renewing to include a more specific focus on impairment effects (Morris, 1991; 1996; Crow, 1996; Thomas 2004a; 2004b; 2007). Others have suggested it should be abandoned altogether and replaced with a new model because it is now outdated and inappropriate (Shakespeare and Watson, 2001; Shakespeare, 2006). So it was appropriate for me to locate my study within the context of this theoretical debate, particularly as the ethos of the course selected for my case was based on a strong social model philosophy. The main debates arising around the social model and its impact on inclusive practice are explained in detail in chapter 4 but the key debates fore-fronting this thesis relate to specific questions about the social model's validity as an appropriate framework for inclusion policy and practice in higher education and employment contexts. Debates that explore whether the social model needs to be renewed to include an impairment perspective, abandoned on the basis that it is no longer useful, or strengthened and implemented more effectively in policy and practice are the primary focus. In order to examine these debates around models of disability I used three key themes as a means of relating my data to and making sense of the critical issues around models of disability.

2.2(i) The inclusion of disabled students in higher education

I selected the first theme of the inclusion of disabled students in higher education because this is a recent phenomenon. I found that inclusion in higher education is a contested and complex issue, firstly because defining inclusive education is problematic, often vague and superficial (Armstrong et al, 2010). Because disabled students encountered a range of stakeholders in diverse contexts, they were likely to encounter further multiple confusions around the definition and application of inclusive practice on the course. The practical, curricular and pedagogical applications of inclusive practice were significant in that policy and stakeholder attitudes to these enlightened me as to how models of disability were being applied in practice. Many tensions arise around inclusive practice, some of which are related to competing rights, and as the disabled students were going on work-based placements in educational settings they were inevitably confronted with the competing rights of the children/young people in their placement setting (Wilson, 1999; 2000; Smith, 1998 in Armstrong et al, 2010).

The tensions around standards versus inclusion are significant in higher education contexts so I explored how the tensions and challenges in inclusive education impacted on social model thinking and practice. Some research has found university staff resistant to social justice and wary of making reasonable adjustments on the grounds of maintaining academic standards (Riddell et al, 2005; Pumfrey et al 2008). Others note that even though institutional policies are built on a social model of disability many staff and students still operate within medical model assumptions (Borland and James, 1999). For Shevlin et al (2004) lecturer suspicion and lack of knowledge is a major issue. These issues were significant in my exploration of the application of social model practice on the course amongst different stakeholders in diverse contexts.

Finally I used this theme to explore whether there are any ways in which the course can become more inclusive for disabled students as some writers in the field of inclusion feel that there are many loopholes in legislation and policy and that much of the discriminatory and exclusionary practice is related to deeply embedded structural

barriers (Konur, 2000; Tinklin et al, 2001; Riddell et al, 2003; Houghton, 2005; Armstrong et al, 2010).

In order to examine these issues research questions were devised in which stakeholders' perceptions of inclusion were explored in relation to how they defined and understood the term and how such definitions and understandings of inclusion reflected social model philosophy. Questions related to the tensions and barriers that emerge when implementing inclusive practice in higher education contexts further explored how barriers were perceived and enabled a more in-depth exploration of the application of the social model in practice. By exploring how stakeholders viewed the way forward for more effective implementation of inclusive practice, further enlightenment on whether or not the social model is an adequate framework for inclusion was provided. As the main, but not the sole focus of these questions was around higher educational contexts and students following the work-related curriculum experienced both higher education and work-based contexts during their course, further questions emerged on the second theme of disability and employment.

2.2(ii) Disability and employment

I used disability and employment as a theme to explore the application of models of disability because the employment of disabled people in professional and paid employment is a mainly recent phenomenon and a positive consequence of social model philosophy driving employment legislation and policy. However, the numbers of disabled students gaining full-time employment in comparison to non-disabled people is very low (Burchardt, 2000; Jolly, 2000; Barnes and Mercer, 2005). Those adopting a social model perspective link this exclusion of disabled people from the labour market directly to disabling barriers in education, including attitudes and structures (Barnes and Mercer, 2005). If it is true that medical model assumptions are the basis of many discriminatory and exclusionary employment experiences for disabled people (Barnes, 1992; 2000; 2005; Foster, 2007) then this theme was an appropriate mechanism for exploring models of disability. Some poststructuralists have also challenged the social status and value of

paid work and advocate a post-work approach so this issue linked with models of disability which challenge the social model (Abberley, 1999; 2002; Beck, 2000; Levitas, 2001; Wilton, 2004; Barnes and Mercer, 2005; Galvin, 2006).

The focus of the university and the course was on the enhancement of student employability and the work-based placement aspect of the course was where the development of employability skills was most evident. There is a tension around the work-related curriculum so that some argue that it contributes to employability for disabled students (Brennan and Little, 2006) but others (Knight and Yorke, 2003) question this assumption. I explored curricular and pedagogical tensions as some research has claimed that the work-related curriculum poses a challenge to traditional academic structures around the curriculum, assessment and pedagogy (Brennan and Little, 1996).

As the term 'employability', like inclusion, is a contested term (Brown et al, 2002; Harvey, 2004) it was important to establish stakeholder understandings of the term. An exploration of stakeholder perceptions of the barriers to employment for disabled students gave me further opportunities to explore social model understanding amongst the diverse stakeholders. In order to examine these issues around disability and employment for disabled students research questions were devised which explored how employability is defined and understood. These explorations enabled further understanding of the ways in which such definitions and understandings of employability reflect social model philosophy. Questions related to the barriers and tensions that emerge when implementing inclusive practice in employment contexts enabled more extensive exploration of how social model philosophy is understood and applied in work settings. Finally, questions related to how inclusion in employment contexts can be more effectively ensured in the future indicated the extent to which the social model was an appropriate framework for reducing and eliminating exclusion in work contexts. I initially set out with the two themes of inclusion in higher education and disability and employment because higher education and work contexts were the arenas in which disabled students experienced inclusion while completing the work-related aspects of

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their course. However, the theme of disabled identity emerged as a key theme for research questions exploring the validity of the social model of disability and provided a useful link between disabled students' experiences in these two settings.

2.2 (iii) Disabled identity

The disabled identity theme became significant because students in initial focus groups identified many negative experiences in their past related to medical model assumptions around their 'functional limitations' which impacted on their self - identity and how others perceived their identity. According to Barnes and Mercer (2005) one of the key areas of employment disadvantage for disabled people is society's attitude to disabled people and exclusion on the basis of medical model thinking around 'functional limitation'. However, negative identities can be transformed into positive identities (Bradley, 1996; Foucault, 1997a; Jenkins, 2004; Galvin, 2006). In social model thinking inclusion of disabled people in education and employment through barrier removal can be used as a means of transforming negative medical model experiences of discrimination and exclusion to more positive identities.

The fact that the disabled student participants in the research had a range of impairment labels made this issue relevant as I explored whether some impairment effects are more significant than others in relation to stigmatisation and exclusion. Berthoud (2008:132) thinks it would be surprising if all 'types and severities of impairments were subject to the same barriers'. He challenges the social model and argues that some impairments carry more disadvantage than others and that these are more significant than any variations in employment disadvantage between disabled and non-disabled people.

I used the identity theme to establish how labelling and categorisation of disabled students relate to models of disability, particularly the feminist challenge to the strong social model. I explored whether labelling individuals as different can lead to discriminatory and exclusionary treatment of those individuals and whether such discrimination is institutionalised in policies and practices (Thompson, 2001). Some feminist researchers and writers in disability studies are concerned that a strong social

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model focus on inclusion may lead to a failure to recognise impairment or disability exists (Morris, 1991; 1996; Crow, 1996; Thomas, 1999; 2004a, 2004b; 2007). Peters (2000) views difference as something to affirm and celebrate and this is in direct opposition to the medical model assumptions of a relationship between impairment and loss. I explore these issues around identity because some strong social model writers have iterated concerns about such a celebration and affirmation as they fear it may be used to justify the status quo (Swain and French, 2008). The identity theme is also relevant in exploring collective disabled identity because any focus on impairment makes it more difficult to establish collective identities for social change. I found the theme particularly useful in illuminating different applications and experiences of the social model in different contexts and so filling a gap and linking knowledge about student experiences at university and work-based contexts.

The questions I posed around disabled identity focused on how disabled identity reflects models of disability and how disabled identity is established. These questions enabled an exploration of the relationship between disabled identity and models of disability. Questions about if and how identity can be transformed enlightened the argument about the social model making a positive contribution to disabled identity. Exploring how disabled identity impacted on inclusive practice in higher education and work contexts enabled further exploration of the relevance of impairment effects and whether or not the social model fails to adequately consider these effects. It also raised important issues about the diverse impact of different impairment effects. Questions which focused on the merits and challenges of disclosing disabled identity enabled an exploration of social model practice in different settings. Thus I explored how models of disability impact on inclusive education, employment and identity for disabled students (See Appendix 3a-c).

2.3 Structures and organisational arrangements

The university in which my case study took place study was formed out of a City Polytechnic in 1992 and the pseudonym 'Northern University' is used to refer to it throughout the study. The university is situated in the centre of a busy city in the north of

England and is a modern environment with excellent learning and teaching facilities. It is marketed as 'One of the largest providers of placement opportunities in England... almost 9 out of 10 of our graduates are in employment within six months of leaving university' (Northern University Corporate Plan, 2008:13).The university environment and the city itself are attractive to students so many students choose to come to Northern University and often choose to live in the city after they have completed their studies. I worked in the Department for Education Childhood and Inclusion (ECI) which is situated in the Faculty of Development and Society in the university. Within ECI there are five groups and the Education Studies Programme is located within the Education group. Within this group there are also part-time Foundation Degrees and a BA (Hons) top-up degree in Education and Learning Support.

The work-related curriculum consisted of three modules, one in each year of study. Work-based placements were associated with and linked to these modules and took place three times during the degree programme, once in each year/level of study. So the work-based placements were located within modules and students had three up-front lectures about their work-related learning and work-based placements before they embarked on each placement. These lectures were led by academic tutors and included a focus on legal, professional, practical and theoretical issues related to the placements, thus preparing students for their placement experience. While students were out on their placement they did not attend lectures but kept in contact with their academic tutor who provided tutorial support focused on personal development planning and employability.

First year students went on their work-based placements in semester two for a total of nineteen days. The focus was on observing learners and professionals in the workplace, including policies, practices, roles and structures. Second year students similarly went on placement in semester two for sixteen days and focused on teaching, learning and assessment approaches with diverse groups of learners. Third year students went on placement for sixteen days in semester one and five days in semester two. The focus of these days was preparation and planning for a research dissertation in semester one and five days gathering research data in semester two. Students completed

assessments in the form of workbooks and Professional Development Portfolios (PDP) in years one and two and a research plan, dissertation and (PDP) in year three. The focus of the PDP was personal development planning and employability.

When students from the selected course were sent on work-based placements several stakeholders were involved. Firstly, all students, including disabled students, on the courses in this inquiry took part in the placements as outlined above. Secondly, academic tutors taught the three preparatory placement lectures before students went on placement that is the 'learning for work'. These lectures were focused on practical aspects of health and safety in the workplace, how to observe and reflect and gain the most from placements, professionalism in the workplace and how to complete assessments. Academic tutors also supported students with individual tutorials throughout the course and specifically while students were on placement. They also marked placement assignments. Thirdly, the placement tutor (pseudonym Rose) was an academic who led developed and monitored placements for the courses in my inquiry; she was also an academic tutor and is included in the sample of academic tutors. She worked with other programme and course leaders in the department to enhance placements and ensure quality was maintained. Fourthly, the placement supervisors were non-university staff. They were the individuals appointed in the placement settings to look after students while they were on placement. They were normally senior staff members who prepared timetables, ensured access to appropriate documentation and individual staff, and monitored and reported to the student and university on the student's placement progress. Finally, the Head of Partnership was the university administrator responsible for the team organising the placements and liaising with the students and placement settings.

The above roles and responsibilities often overlapped so the distinctions were not always as distinct as outlined above; the main area of overlap was that all university tutors on the programme held the academic tutor role, regardless of other roles and responsibilities. One of the academic tutors held the placement tutor role. However, the descriptions do provide an explanation of the main roles of the stakeholders in the work-

related and work-based aspects of the courses in my inquiry. These roles also formed the group of 'key players' in my case study further explained later in this chapter.

My own role changed during the course of the research. When I began the research in 2006 I was the placement tutor for the programme and taught the first and second year placement modules. I also held the role of Course Leader for the Education and Disability studies course within the programme. However, it became apparent that my position as Course Leader may have posed a problem in that I held a position of power in relation to the disabled students, most of whom follow the Education and Disability Studies degree in the programme. Because of this situation, and other reasons that are not relevant to this study, I relinquished the Course Leader role soon after embarking on this study. However, I did continue to hold the placement and academic tutor roles for about two years into my research and it was the combination of these roles that aroused my original interest in the areas of disability, inclusivity and employability in higher education. I also taught the third year placement module in the programme and one Disability Studies module and an elective to the whole Education Studies cohort. I was an academic tutor to some of the student sample in the study and a Principal Lecturer in Education Studies.

My theoretical orientation leans towards a 'strong' social model of disability but before and during my research I was aware of many complications and issues when applying a strong social model in practice, both at university and in placement settings. I am committed to inclusive education and this is similar to the stance adopted by the university in the study. In line with a 'strong' social model of disability I interpret inclusion as meaning 'full' inclusion though my research highlighted many of the tensions and challenges of such an approach to inclusive higher education.

2.4 Disabled student population and sample of other participants

I ensured the quality of my research through the selection of an appropriate methodology and sampling strategy (Cohen et al, 2000). The research methodology, including my sampling strategy, is articulated in detail in the methodology chapter but I summarise the

key issues related to my sample below. I needed to ensure that the selected sample facilitated opportunities to gain knowledge that represented the total population in the study and this was a challenge because the disabled student population was inevitably small and the issue of the diversity within the disabled student group made this even more complicated. When selecting the sample I was also aware of the additional need to ensure that I maintained the principles of sampling in grounded theory and that I included the minimum number of disabled students which accurately represented the target population for my case study. In this case the main difficulty was the small size of the target population, particularly in the first year of the inquiry, so that there was a risk of a small group of disabled students. Even though the total disabled student population participated in my study, it was a small population.

The number of five disabled students selected from the 2005-2008 cohort (A) of the Education Studies group could not be increased as there were no other disabled students in the group. Further disabled student populations were added to the participants each year so three more were added from the 2006-2009 cohort (B) ; five from the 2007-2010 cohort (C); one from the 2008-2011 cohort (D) and two from the 2009-2012 cohort (E) (See Appendix 2). This meant a total population of sixteen disabled students, from five different Education Studies cohorts, were finally selected. However, the student populations were added over a period of time so that as categories emerged in my study I was able to make appropriate additions to the participating students from new populations each year. .

In the interests of triangulation and increasing the validity of my case study I extended my disabled student population to include a sample of four academic tutors on the Education Studies programme. This also enabled me to explore categories which emerged from the data that related to stakeholders other than the students. I have also included in the sample the Head of Partnership who was the administrator responsible for selecting, organising and administering placements in conjunction with the placement tutor. Finally, four placement supervisors who had supervised some of the disabled

students were included in the sample as they were able to provide data from the placement institution standpoint.

I believe my chosen sampling strategy suited the purpose of this study, the time-frame and other constraints of the research, the methods of gathering data and the methodology and I justify my approach in detail in chapter 5. The table (Appendix 1) summarises the disabled students who formed the population and the other research participants in my study. In order to avoid confusion between the disabled student population and the academic tutor/placement supervisor/partnership sample I will use the term research 'participants' throughout the thesis. In a social model context I would not normally use any labels for disabled student participants as labels focus on individual impairments and consequently sit within a medical model of disability. However, labels do appear in the thesis for two reasons. The first reason was that the university in my study used an assessment and labelling process to identify disabled students. Once students were assessed they were labelled according to their impairment. They then received a 'learning contract' which itemised their learning and support needs and how these were to be met. As such, the label attached to the learning contract was significant because I selected my disabled student participants using this university system of categorisation. Second, the 'labels' were identified and used by some stakeholders in my research and therefore some labels became more significant than others. This means that data that emerged from the study demonstrated that not all stakeholders adhered to a social model perspective and sometimes those who did adhere to it in theory did not do so in practice. So I used the labels only to illuminate the data. Names have been changed in order to maintain anonymity.

2. 5 Research tools and relationship with participants

A full justification for the research tools I employed in the study is provided in the research methods chapter. This section only outlines the timeframe for collection of data and the relationship between research tools and the selected participants and cohorts. The table (Appendix 2) summarises the student cohorts and other samples used in my

study and the research tools employed.

Because the aim of the study was to analyse the impact of models of disability on policy and practice related to disabled students in higher education I began by examining the policy documents including university and course level documentation. These included statements on the university website about university policy and values in relation to the key themes of disability, inclusion and employability. It also involved examining course documents including the definitive documents (2004; 2010), module descriptors and marketing materials. Once the policy context was clear I explored the relationship between practice and policy.

I began my data gathering by establishing focus groups which included all the students within the first cohort (A). I was then able to examine the focus group data and compose interview questions around key themes raised by the focus groups at different times in the study. I only conducted focus groups with cohorts A, B and C as this gave me sufficient data to construct appropriate semi-structured interview questions. I found that categories emerged from these focus group meetings which enabled me to adopt a grounded theory approach, though after the first two focus groups no new categories emerged from this research tool.

The semi-structured interview approach dominated my data gathering with students, tutors, placement supervisors and the Head of Partnership because I wished to direct questions and closely relate them to issues which were raised in the initial focus group meetings. In this way the interview questions emerged from the disabled students' initial thoughts and ideas and consequently their voice was the main determinant of the direction of the interview questions. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each disabled student, tutor, placement supervisor and the Head of Partnership in my sample.

I decided to conduct an observation of a placement preparatory session towards the end of my data gathering stage because I wanted to ensure that I had taken every opportunity to explore the themes and issues from every possible angle. As such I felt it

was appropriate to conduct an observation of the placement preparation lecture for second year students in January 2011. This further enhanced triangulation in my study.

In 2006 I completed ethical protocols with a group of 5 disabled students (cohort A) in their second year of study on the selected course. These five students took part in a focus group and this was followed by semi-structured interviews which I conducted after their work-based placement. I further interviewed them after their second work-based placement in 2007. Similar ethical protocols were followed with first year cohorts of disabled students beginning their study in 2006 (3 students, cohort B), 2007 (5 students, cohort C), 2008 (1 student, cohort D) and 2009 (2 students, cohort E). This gave me a total of 16 disabled student participants from five different cohorts and I was able to conduct focus group meetings with the first three cohorts (A, B and C) and semi-structured interviews on two occasions i.e. after work-related placements in the first and second year of study with three cohorts (A-C). I also conducted single semi-structured interviews with cohort D and E. This approach firstly enabled me to extend my population to a reasonable size as there are inevitably a small number of disabled students in each year group. Secondly, this approach enabled me to adopt a longitudinal approach to my study and gather data from the student participants at different times in their degree. This meant that I gathered data mainly at key times before the students went on placement in year one and subsequently after they had attended placements. It also enabled me to maintain a grounded theory approach so that I could shape questions to any new emerging themes.

I conducted semi-structured interviews with the academic tutor participants, interviewing these tutors once in July - September 2010. The placement supervisor participants included a total of four supervisors, and I interviewed all the supervisors once in September - October 2010.The Head of Partnership was interviewed once in July 2010. All interviews were semi-structured and interview schedules are located in the appendices (5-10). I also conducted an observation of a placement preparation lecture in January 2011 and the module tutors leading the observed lectures were two of my

academic tutor participants.

In summary, I conducted focus groups with students from the first three cohorts (A, B and C) and semi-structured interviews with students in cohorts A-C after two of their placements and cohorts D-E only once during their course. I conducted semi-structured interviews with four placement supervisors, four academic tutors and the Head of Partnership and observed a placement preparation lecture involving cohort E. The table in Appendix 2 summarises the research participants, cohorts and the type of data gathered. Appendix 3 a-c summarises the key themes, questions and methods of data collection used in the study.

2.6 Terminology and working definitions

In defining the term *disabled student* for this project I adopted a similar stance to the university selected for the study. As outlined in chapter 4 there are various understandings or models of disability but my thesis adopted a social model interpretation of 'disabled' which concurs with the university in the study. The Disability Equality Scheme (2006-9:3) for the university in the study states that the university takes a social model perspective and accepts that 'disability is socially created' and as such the university has a responsibility to remove any barriers to disabled students' inclusion. This is reiterated on the university's current website which states 'The university adopts the social model of disability and accepts that disability is socially created'. (http://www.nu.ac.uk/services/sls/support/disability/policy.html). [Appendix 13].

Within this study I explored ways in which barriers to inclusion at all levels for disabled students on the course could be identified and removed. I identified disabled students as those having been assessed and allocated a learning contract by the institution in the study, but recognise that the very notion of a learning contract is based on labelling and as such sits within a medical model of disability. I understand the term 'disabled student' as a student disabled by society, not by their specific impairment or label but my research demonstrated that there were many different understandings of the term in

policies and practices at university and placement institutions. The stakeholders in the study also demonstrated a range of understandings of the term 'disabled' and often these understandings were complex and contradictory.

In relation to the term *inclusive education* the university's Equality and Diversity Statement (2005) stated that the university 'is committed to becoming an inclusive and diverse institution which welcomes everyone who is interested in learning' (http://www.nu.ac.uk/university/diversity/) [Appendix 14].The Disability Equality Annual Report (2009:9) states that 'The University...adopts an inclusive approach'. This inclusive approach is further explained in the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (2006b:4) as '...a feature of all aspects of the student experience...we will provide students with the guidance, support, resources and learning opportunities...to enable them to successfully complete their study'.

However, I recognise that such a vague definition of inclusion can cause more problems than it solves. The term 'inclusive education' has been interpreted in many ways. Perceptions and understandings of the term and its practical application are varied so that it can actually end up meaning very little in practice (Armstrong et al, 2010). My research demonstrated that stakeholders have different perceptions of inclusive education and that often their stated position on inclusive education is not necessarily evidenced in their practice. Hence, there are many contradictions and complexities associated with the concept of inclusive education that emerged in my research

I adopt three of Ainscow's (2005) elements of inclusive education in this study:

- *Inclusive education as a process* was applied in one undergraduate work related placement programme in one higher education institution.
- *Inclusive education as a concern for identification of and removal of barriers.* This was related specifically to barriers experienced by disabled students following the above placement programme. I interpret barriers as social and environmental barriers which prevent the successful inclusion of disabled students taking place. However, I recognise that some writers perceive an interaction between personal,

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individual barriers to inclusion and social barriers (Mittler, 2000). As such they view some impairment effects as obstacles to full inclusion.

- *Inclusive education as a particular emphasis on groups of learners that are at risk of marginlisation, exclusion or underachievement.* The specific group identified for this study are disabled students with learning contracts.

I would add to this list the role of inclusive education in challenging and restructuring education systems and as a policy/practice issue within the current educational structures. I focused particularly on the inclusive education of disabled students, not all of whom have SEN (special educational needs). I relate curricular and pedagogical inclusion to employability outcomes, though I do not see employability as necessarily equating with getting a job, rather in developing the necessary skills needed for personal development, skills that may or not lead to employment.

My selected participants included disabled students, tutors, placement supervisors and the Head of Partnership so I was aware that a diverse range of understandings of disability and inclusion would be evident in my inquiry. I have stated my understanding of the terms for this inquiry but allowed participants the freedom to use the language and understandings they were comfortable with throughout the study. Hence, any use of language and terms in the data gathered that are contrary to the above definitions reflect the understanding and/or interpretations of the individual in the sample and do not represent my understanding of language and terms.

Defining *work-related learning* the university in the study states that 'We will ensure that all students actively engage with well structured, supported and accredited work-related and work-based learning as part of their programmes of study' (Education for Employability Strategy, 2010-12:1). [Appendix 15]. The term work-related learning is something recently used, Brennan and Little (1996) cite Seagraves et al, 1996 who use the three notions of 'learning at work'; 'learning for work' and 'learning through work'. Learning at work was not relevant for this study as the students were not employed at the placement settings they only attended for short placements. 'Learning for work' refers to

any work done at university or in any place that is about the workplace such as the lectures and assessments associated with the placement modules to prepare students before they go out on placement. I called this aspect of the course work-related learning. Learning through work is the experience of learning through doing and this is the main and substantial focus of work- based placements. These are useful but not necessarily definitive distinctions but I am using them in order to clarify use of the term work-related education (at university) and work-based placements (at placement institutions) in the study.

Defining *employability* is difficult as many different definitions have been proffered and these are examined in detail in chapter 3. The university in my study developed an Employability Framework in 2003 and an Education for Employability Strategy in 2010, so increasing the employability of students was a strategic objective of the university (Brown and Drew, 2005:1). The website defined employability as 'Enabling students to acquire the knowledge, personal and professional skills and the attitudes that will support their future development' [Appendix 16].
(https://staff.nu.ac.uk/sls/structure/asqe/academic_review/ac_pol_frwks_regs/employa)

In 2005, the University was named a national Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning in Embedding, Enhancing and Integrating Employability. The university in the study focused less on traditional definitions of employability which relate to gaining a job and more to skills associated with lifelong learning, i.e. '...intelligent, flexible, self-aware lifelong learners with communication, interactive and team-working skills, who add value to and transform organisations' (Brown and Drew, 2005:1-2). The main concept in the university's employability strategy was 'transformation' and this transformation included both the acquisition of knowledge and skills and being able to transfer that knowledge and skill to other contexts.

The Education Studies programme that I selected for my study did not prepare students for one specific profession and as such the disabled students in this study were involved

in a range of educational work-based placement settings so that their employability was enhanced without a specific focus on one profession. Even though I adopted the university's definition of employability, part of the original contribution of this study was to analyse different stakeholders' interpretations of the term so several interpretations of the term emerged in my study.

To conclude, the social model of disability has had a major impact on inclusion policy at national and university and course level and so provided an appropriate context for this study. The nature of the course selected for the study in which disabled students complete placement modules which provide work placement opportunities gave me an appropriate context to explore disabled students' experiences of social model inclusive practice in both the university and employment settings in which the course took place. The disabled students were the only stakeholders who had to negotiate both university and work settings and I was able to explore the complexities around this negotiating process and identify where tensions and issues arose in practice and where they were different in diverse contexts and with different stakeholders. The available population of five cohorts of disabled students and their participation over the three years of study on the degree enabled a longitudinal approach, whereby some students could be interviewed three times over their three years of study.

The table in Appendix 4 outlines the chronology of my study and identifies key dates and what happened when.

The case outlined above gave me an appropriate context for exploring debates around the social model of disability and their impact on policy and practice in a higher education and employment context. The following chapter explores and analyses the key discussions that emerge from literatures related to the research questions and themes outlined above.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

My aim in this study was to explore the impact of models of disability on inclusion policy and practice related to disabled students in higher education with specific reference to work-related learning. As such the debates around the social model of disability forefront this thesis and are articulated in chapter 4. However, In order to respond to the debates around the social model I focused on three themes which enabled me to establish my research questions, firstly, the inclusion of disabled students in higher education, secondly, disability and employment, and thirdly disabled identity. I have used these themes as a means of making sense of the critical debates around the social model, hence this literature review is written in three sections which reflect these themes. The final section explores literatures which suggest ways forward for more effective inclusive practice and relates possibilities for improvement within debates about the usefulness of the social model. As such, the literatures reviewed in this chapter provide a means of relating my data to the models of disability because I use these literatures as a framework against which I compare my data and validate the theoretical perspective I adopt in chapter 9 (Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

3.1 The impact of the social model on the inclusion of disabled students in higher education

I explained in chapter 2 that I used the inclusion theme because 'inclusion' is such a contested term in relation to its definition and practical application and even though much legislation and policy around inclusion has been positively affected by the social model, disabled students are not represented in employment in similar numbers as their non-disabled peers. I begin this literature review by exploring different understandings and applications of the term 'inclusion' and how these relate to models of disability. This is followed by an examination of how barriers to inclusion are perceived and an evaluation of the ways in which impairment effects are regarded as relevant in inclusive education. Reading the literatures around inclusion I became aware of a great deal of

literature that has been written about the inclusion of disabled students in higher education but discovered that little has been written about their inclusion in work-related learning and work-based placements. This was a gap I was able to address in my thesis.

3.1(i) Definitions of inclusion and their relationship with the social model

Inclusion is a complex term which is defined, understood and applied in different ways. Definitions are based on different assumptions which may reflect views about rights, morals and values in society and these views can be located within different perceptions of disability. The danger is that if 'Inclusion is not a summative, measureable entity, nor is it one that can be clearly defined' (Hodkinson, 2010:62) then it can become a 'meaningless catchword' or a 'pie in the sky fad' which gives only a 'patina of legitimacy' (Kauffman, 1999:246 in Connor and Ferri, 2007:66). If inclusion cannot be clearly defined and understood then it follows that this has implications for how it is implemented in practice. If varied definitions relate to different perspectives of disability then this confusion is compounded.

Definitions of inclusion have been profoundly affected by arguments related to human rights and equality of opportunity which advocate that exclusion is morally unacceptable (Dyson 1990; Forest, Pearpoint and O'Brien 1996; Ainscow 1997; Thomas 1997; Lipsky and Gartner 1998; Hornby, 2002). As such it is argued that this right to be included should be upheld regardless of any research evidence supporting its effectiveness. One of the key forces in the rights argument for inclusive education was the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) which made strong and clear statements about the rights of students in relation to inclusive education (Lindsay, 2003).The Salamanca Statement related specifically to children but Dyson and Gallannaugh (2007) argue that inclusion has been successful because successive New Labour governments have driven the inclusion agenda forward since the Salamanca Statement. However, these government agendas have used human rights arguments to argue for 'mainstream inclusion' which implies increased mainstream provision within a continuum of other segregated provision (DfE, 1994; DfEE, 1997; 1998; DfES 2001; 2005; 2006). Meanwhile, others like The

Centre for Studies in Inclusive Education, (http://www.csie.org.uk/inclusion/education-disability.shtml) have advocated a similar 'rights based' approach for many years and it is on this basis that they have argued that inclusive education means 'full inclusion' of all without any exceptions. Consequently, within the rights based arguments to inclusion tensions emerge as to whether inclusion means 'full inclusion' without exception or 'mainstream inclusion' with a small number of exceptions.

This focus on human rights in inclusive education was accompanied by the rise of the Disability Rights Movement and its association with the social model of disability. One of the main achievements of the social model of disability is that it established the beginnings of a political approach to transform society through the struggle for civil rights for disabled people (Shakespeare, 2006). It is this location of the human rights argument for inclusion in the social model which moved the focus of educational problems disabled people were experiencing away from their own pathology to a focus on society's responsibility to remove the barriers to their inclusion. As such the definitions of inclusion based on arguments related to human rights clearly reflect social model thinking.

However, the Salamanca Statement has been criticized because it is based on arguments for rights and 'moral imperatives for action that do not directly relate to the right that is proclaimed' (Lindsay, 2003:4). Similarly, Farrell, (2001:7) contends that such arguments for inclusive education which are based solely on a rights based argument are 'logically and conceptually naïve'. He cites Wilson (1999; 2000) who raises the issue of the rights of other students who are educated with disabled students to a good education. Hence very often the rights of the disabled students are only a priority when they do not interfere with the rights of the non-disabled majority. As such, the rights basis for understanding inclusive education based on social model thinking has been challenged in relation to the implications of conflicting with the rights of other non-disabled students. Pumfrey (2008: 33) notes that the Government's policies in relation to disabled students centre around two 'pressing educational concerns'. Reconciling the two concerns of students in general, that is institutional concerns for 'The greatest good

for the greatest number' and the centrality of the needs of the individual like a disabled student in particular is a major challenge for higher education institutions.

Related to the rights argument is the perception of inclusive education as a consequence of a changing philosophy about society and individuals within society. The 1980s saw an emphasis on individualism that resulted in selfishness but as that philosophy dissipated a new philosophy emerged in which equality should be encouraged and promoted so that:

> The aggressively meritocratic, individualistic and competitive thought associated with that tradition (egoism) clearly provides ample rhetorical justification for segregation. By contrast in the new philosophy, which sees all members of society as stakeholders it is natural to see schools as places where all are welcomed – and duty is felt to all (Clark et al 1998:8).

> Moral arguments and empirical evidence came together to result, towards the end of the twentieth century, in a consensus which sees inclusion as an appropriate philosophy and a relevant framework for restructuring education....it has been able to succeed because it chimes with the liberal philosophy of a liberal political system and a pluralistic culture – one that celebrates diversity and promotes fraternity and equality of opportunity. Inclusion must be at the heart of any society that cherishes these values (Clark et al, 1998: 4-5).

As a result this new philosophy about society led to an approach to inclusion which focused on the acceptance and valuing of disabled people (Farrell, 2001). Ainscow et al (2006) articulate 'a number of inclusive values including 'equity', 'participation', 'community', 'compassion', 'respect for diversity', 'sustainability' and 'entitlement'' (cited in Armstrong et al, 2010:33). In such a view of equality inclusive education is a right not a need, so should not be based on assessment and resource allocation. This focus away from individualism has made a major contribution to new ways of thinking about disability that have been clearly reflected in a move away from the individual/medical perspectives of disability which emphasise deficit and difference to a social perspective in which society takes responsibility for ensuring barriers are removed to ensure all are valued and can participate in education equally.

Nevertheless, criticisms of this new philosophy have emerged because it sounds good but does not realistically tackle issues and tensions emerging around inclusion. Armstrong et al (2010:29) fear a 'rhetoric of convenience' in this type of philosophy which 'embraces the 'feel- good' aspects of inclusive education without seriously confronting the key issues related to the 'purposes and values of educational practice'. In higher education some of these values relate to traditional academic curricula and pedagogical approaches so that it is crucial to be aware that while striving for inclusion we are always working within the restrictions of the system and the resources available in that system. Some understandings of inclusion are based on outcomes rather than processes. For Farrell, (2000) the most important aspect of inclusive education is ensuring appropriate educational outcomes regardless of setting. He has focused on 'social inclusion', that is preparation for effective citizenship and useful employment (Blunkett,1999a). Research by Dyson (2001) discusses the emergence of the 'social inclusion' agenda. He sees this agenda as following a 'new discourse' that focuses on progression to work and training.

> Rather, social inclusion is about building a cohesive society...(which) means equipping potentially marginalized groups with the capacity to become active citizens and, crucially, with the skills they will need to survive in an increasingly competitive and skills-hungry job market (Dyson, 2001:27).

Consequently, the argument is that social inclusion focuses much more on outcomes rather than where and how education takes place. The key issue is whether disabled people are marginalized, alienated or excluded from employment, rather than education as such. In such a view of inclusive education the focus is on acquiring the necessary skills to survive in the labour market and being able to engage with democracy. Blunkett wanted all students to have 'the ability to capitalise on the labour market opportunities' which he perceived as 'the keys to success and to having a tangible stake in society' (Blunkett, 1999b). For him employability is about being able to 'contribute economically and play a full part as active citizens' (Blunkett, 2000 in Judge, 2003: 163). Similarly, Armstrong (2003:247) argues that New Labour's concept of inclusion focuses on 'work

(as paid employment) as a condition for inclusion', and as a means to independence and positive self - identity. In many ways such a perspective on inclusion links inclusion in education to inclusion in employment and as such sits within social model philosophy as understood from a 'materialist' perspective (Thomas, 2004a). Some social model thinkers (Finkelstein, 1980; 2001a; Oliver, 1990; Gleeson, 1999) argue that 'disability' is produced through 'the socialisation of impairment' so that how impairment is understood changes in diverse places at different times. This view of social inclusion, which reflects a social theory of disability, identified as a 'political economy of disability' by Thomas (2004a) has been challenged by researchers and writers in disability studies and this is explored further in chapter 4.

Some have argued that such definitions are related to a 'functionalist motivation' (Hodkinson, 2010:63). Masschelein and Simons (2005:127) express grave concerns that moves towards inclusive education in the UK reflect the particular relationship between society, arguing that the link between inclusion and entrepreneurship does not reflect equality in society but '...a society in which everyone has the qualities to meet her needs in an entrepreneurial way'. Others who take a poststructuralist standpoint highlight the way that attributing such value to employment can be disabling for those for whom paid work may never be a possibility (Galvin, 2006). As such the social model focus on removing barriers to education and employment for disabled people is unrealistic for those who may not be able to engage in them.

Ainscow et al (2006) try to solve the definitional issues by focusing on two types of definitions of inclusion, narrow and broad definitions. The narrow definition would apply to specific groups of students like the group of disabled students identified in this inquiry. Broad definitions do not necessarily focus on specific groups but on a broader theme of diversity and how education institutions respond to diversity for all students. However, concerns have been voiced about such an approach resulting in further 'fragmentation' of the narrow and broad definitions taking place in reference to specific groups so that inclusion becomes a process of 'managing' many different individuals and groups who are perceived as 'problems' (Armstrong et al, 2010:30). Such an approach perpetuates

the medical model in an educational context focusing on 'a pathology of difference' and young disabled people as somehow deficient (Clough and Corbett, 2000:11). Consequently much disagreement still exists around the interpretation of the term inclusion amongst different writers in the field (Farrell, 2001; Hornby; 2002; Cole, 2005; Ainscow et al 2006; Hodkinson, 2010) so that:

> 'Inclusion', like proverbial motherhood and apple pie, would seem to be a 'good thing', but like them, it is a somewhat nebulous term, open to a variety of meanings and interpretations within a multitude of contexts' (Cole, 2005:287).

For some researchers (Leo and Barton, 2006) inclusion is a political struggle, they highlight the fact that the structural constraints of educational institutions limit real opportunities for a move towards inclusive education so that inclusion is not a fixed outcome but an ongoing struggle. Ainscow similarly sees it as a continuous process, rather than a simple change of state:

> ...the agenda of inclusive education has to be concerned with overcoming barriers to participation that may be experienced...In contrast, I see inclusion as a never-ending process, rather than a simple change of state, and as dependent on continuous pedagogical and organisational development ... (Ainscow, 1999:218).

Allan (2008) speaks of 'subverting', 'subtracting' and 'inverting' as forms of political action towards inclusive education so that inclusion is a struggle for participation not something done to disabled people. In such an understanding there is no 'guilt' attached to failure over inclusive outcomes as it is 'a continuous contested process' (Armstrong et al, 2010:34). This view reflects a social model perspective of disability in which society must take responsibility for removing barriers, including systemic and structural barriers to inclusive education. It focuses on the need for strengthening social model practices and the continued need for ongoing collective political struggle.

3.1(ii) The impact of the social model on inclusion legislation and policy

One of the major contributions of the Disability Rights Movement and the social model of disability has been the impact that disabled people themselves have fore-fronted in legislation and policy that promotes their inclusion in all aspects of society, especially education and employment. Legislation and policies that have emerged around inclusive education have forced educationalists to be aware of and implement inclusion to a certain extent. Houghton (2005) argues there are three areas of legislation that may impact on disabled graduates. Firstly, educational legislation as this influences students' ability to gain the necessary qualifications for and gain entry into higher education institutions. It also includes the current educational legislation that impacts specifically on disabled students in higher education. Secondly, employment legislation that tackles discriminatory practices and provides equality of opportunity in the workplace and this legislation will be examined in the following section of this chapter. Finally, legislation related to health, social services, transport, housing and other factors that impact on the disabled student lifestyle and consequently either helps or hinders disabled students in getting through university and gaining and sustaining employment. This legislation is beyond the direct remit of this study.

The current legislation and policy framework for inclusive legislation evolved from debates around civil rights in the 1960s. In 1978 The Warnock Report (DfE,1978) recommended that the existent categories of special educational need were abolished and that the focus of need should go beyond 'within-child' factors to focus on social factors impacting on achievement. Recommendations were incorporated into the 1981 Education Act and the 1993 Education Act. This legislation focused on inclusive education and seemed to represent a move from the medical/individual perspective to a more social perspective. So at first sight such legislation offered opportunities for disabled students to be educated in a mainstream environment with a social model focus on meeting 'need' rather than individual 'problem'. This meant disabled students were afforded opportunities to follow an academic curriculum and acquire the necessary qualifications to enter higher education. However, the legislation adhered to a

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mainstream inclusion rather than full inclusion so did not account for about two percent of the population who were still deemed appropriate for segregated schooling on the basis of their impairment and individual deficit and so many disabled children fell into this category and remained excluded from mainstream education. Other issues arose related to the way that a special needs discourse continued to be applied in the context of this legislation and perpetuated assessment, labelling and exclusionary practices associated with medical model thinking.

In 1998 The Human Rights Act (HRA) stated that 'No person shall be denied the right to education' (Article 2, First Protocol, HMSO, 1998, cited in Dunn, 2003:5). This article was extremely significant in relation to the rights of disabled students in UK higher education institutions and appeared to reflect a full inclusion approach within the context of social model thinking. However, Konur (2000:1048) cites Friel and Hay (1999:343) who argue that the reservations in Section 15 state 'the principle affirmed in the second sentence of Article 2 is accepted only so far as it is compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and training, and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure'. This is clearly offering a 'get-out clause' so that the 'implications of the Act for legal education and training have been almost entirely overlooked' (Leight and Lustgarten, 1999:543 cited in Konur 2000:1048).

The most significant legislation affecting disabled students in schools and higher education over recent years was the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA). SENDA (2001) is an amendment to part four of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) which was passed in 1995 aiming to eradicate the discrimination against many disabled people. This legislation impacted on the disabled students in my study when I was collecting data between 2006-2010 so was the most significant legislation in my study. The Equality Act (2010) came into force after I had completed gathering data so I concentrate on the legislation that participants in my study operated within. SENDA contributed positively to the inclusion of disabled students because it drove forward the disability rights perspective by acknowledging that disability is a social construction and as such contributes to the oppression of disabled people and discriminatory practices.

The Act also focused on the removal of discriminatory barriers in society that prevent disable people participating in education, including higher education. As such it can be argued the SENDA was a real step forward in linking inclusive education to disability rights discourse and social model philosophy.

However, even though the DDA protected disabled people in many areas when the Act was first published, education was excluded. Consequently, Part IV (Education) (DDA 4) came into force in September 2002. The purpose of this amendment was to outlaw discrimination against disabled people in educational establishments. The two main issues dealt with by the DDA 4 were that education institutions should make 'reasonable adjustments' to ensure disabled students 'are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with students who are not disabled' (HMSO, 2001, 28, 1(a), 1(b). The key issue here is that schools and universities were proactive rather than reactive to student needs. The implication was that general preparations for disabled students were made in advance rather than as a reaction to individuals when they join a course so that adjustments were 'anticipatory'. These adjustments should be part of good practice so that teaching/lecturing staff were therefore required to make any reasonable adjustments to their teaching and learning strategies and the resources that they used so that disabled students were fully included. This meant that to ensure inclusion of disabled students programmes needed to be considered for inclusivity at the writing stage, rather than using 'add-ons' to adjust curriculum, assessment and pedagogy in a reactive manner when disabled students arrived on courses.

However, this legislation appeared to reflect social model thinking but it had massive implications for the training of university staff in relation to understanding disability issues, knowledge of appropriate teaching and learning strategies so a key barrier to its full implementation was lecturer knowledge and understanding of disability issues. SENDA also included some exemptions so that adjustments were not considered reasonable if they would undermine or lessen academic standards; place the institution in financial difficulty; contravene health and safety legislation or substantially adversely affect other students (Dunn, 2003:4). Armstrong (2003:246) sees this as 'rationality'

being used as an excuse for arguing that resources and quality have to privilege some over others. Her research found that:

> The reason underlying the refusal to accept a group of disabled students on the part of some participants is clear: disabled students will lower standards, they will not be able to keep up, they will be a burden on teachers who will be distracted from the proper task of teaching non-disabled students.

Some writers regarded the legislation as 'rippled with vague, slippery and elusive exceptions making it so full of holes that it is more like a colander than a binding code', (Konur, 2000:1060 cited in Houghton, 2005). Riddell et al (2003) comment on the legislation containing many 'get out' clauses that allow universities to avoid making reasonable adjustments and leave the anticipation of need open to interpretation.

Other criticisms of the DDA relate to the medical model dominance in the Act, which defined a disabled person as someone who has 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. This clearly located the 'problem' with the impairment rather than social barriers and pressure to incorporate a more social model definition in the 2010 Equality Act has gone unheeded, so the same definition has been used (Rieser, 2012). There was also the issue that some barriers are inherent within the higher education system or relate to individual experience of education. Tinklin et al (2001:6) thought it limited and with lots of 'get out 'clauses so that institutions would respond with a risk assessment exercise rather than a radical change of provision'. They agree that progress has been made with regard to provision for disabled students but comment that while provision is seen as the province of the Disability Officer rather than the responsibility of all staff it will remain an add-on' welfare/support issue and the only way to really move forward is to ensure inclusive learning, teaching policies and practices are embedded within departments.

In 2005 the DDA was further amended by widening the definition of who may be a disabled person, bringing general qualification bodies under the Act and introducing a

duty to promote disability equality on the public sector, The Disability Equality Duty (DED). The DED was a positive response to some of the above criticisms in relation to educational legislation for disabled students in higher education and was introduced in 2006.The DED was an amendment to the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) and built on the SENDA (2001). Madriaga (2008:399) argued that:

> SENDA made it unlawful to discriminate against disabled students in the application, admission and enrolment process, as well as the provision of student services. While the 2001 amendment relied on individual disabled people to complain about discrimination, the 2006 amendment shifts the emphasis to institutions.

Such a change in focus was positive in that it more closely aligned with a social model definition of disability in which the institution takes responsibility for disability related issues, rather than placing the onus on the individual disabled student. The DED also required institutions to include disabled people in planning and implementing the 'Positive Duty' within the institution and prohibiting discrimination. Madriaga (2008) commented optimistically on the DED that it contributed positively in moving disability issues forward by attempting to redress some of the ills of disability discrimination and recognising and valuing disabled people. However, work by Riddell et al (2005) found that many university staff are resistant to social justice particularly when they face performance evaluations against widening participation objectives that they felt infringed on their academic freedom.

Alongside legislation policies, regulatory frameworks and external drivers in higher education have contributed to the move towards more effective inclusion of disabled students including The Tomlinson Report (1996); The Dearing Report (1997) and The Kennedy Report (1998). Standards in higher education are currently overseen by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA, 1999; 2007) who produced a Code of Practice for disabled students in higher education (QAA,1999) that aimed to 'assist institutions in ensuring that disabled students have access to learning experience comparable to that of their peers' (QAA, 1999). HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England)

have encouraged many initiatives, e.g. encouraging participation in higher education (1993-1996); providing high quality provision (1996-1999) and improving provision for disabled students in higher education (1999-2005). They have introduced the National Disability Team (NDT) to help higher education institutions with policy development and implementation (Houghton, 2005).

In conclusion I disagree with some who argue that the higher education system in the UK is becoming more inclusive, relating significant progress to the numbers of disabled students entering higher education and the establishment of the necessary support and entitlements for disabled students (Pumfrey, 2008). Much legislation and policy is strongly committed to the principle of inclusion (Croll and Moses, 2003) but the system still takes a 'twin-track ' (Barton, 2003) approach in which medical model and social model thinking are evident. The legislation is full of exemptions that enable stakeholders to ignore or subvert it. Much policy which talks of inclusion in social model terms does not result in social model inclusive practice because systems and organisational level change is not happening at the same pace as legislation and policy change (Hodkinson, 2010).The fact that the current government agenda clearly states that they will 'Prevent the closure of special schools , and remove the bias towards inclusion' (Cabinet office, 2010) is evidence that education will become less inclusive.

3.1 (iii) Barriers and tensions emerging when implementing inclusive practice

If philosophical thought outpaces practice then there must be barriers and tensions within the system that prevent effective inclusive practice. However, different perceptions of disability reflect diverse perspectives on what constitutes these barriers. This is discussed in detail in chapter 4 but basically those adopting a medical model perspective consider that most significant barriers are located within disabled students' deficits and limitations (Bury, 2000). However those adopting a social model approach would make no causal link between individual impairment and inclusion, rather barriers would be located entirely within society and the environment (Oliver, 1990). Some post-social model researchers (Crow, 1996; Morris, 1996; Shakespeare, 2006; Thomas, 2004a;

2004b; 2007) consider impairment effects as significant aspects of disability and similarly Mittler (2000) comments on 'compensatory interaction' between impairment effects and social barriers to inclusion. Other poststructuralists (Shakespeare, 2006 and Shakespeare and Watson, 2001) argue that some structural barriers in society, for example, values attributed to some aspects of higher education need to be challenged and that a barrier free utopia is unrealistic because some impairments do limit full participation in society. As such barriers are perceived in different ways according to one's view of disability.

Disabled students in higher education face a range of barriers. Some of these barriers are located within a medical model discourse which focuses on differences (Clough and Corbett, 2000) and a perception of these students as in some way defective. The 'problem' is the impairment, so little attempt is made to relate barriers to policy, curriculum, pedagogy or attitudes.

> The disciplines of psychology and education, influenced by medical perspectives, use the language of 'identification', 'deficit', 'rehabilitation' and 'cure', locating the problem within the individual (Runswick-Cole, 2008:176).

Borland and James (1999) also note that even though institutional policies are built on a social perspective of disability the fact that many staff and students still operate within the context of medical model assumptions means that what happens on an everyday level actually contradicts the institutional policy. Crouch (1998) found that many of the staff at her institution equated disability with wheelchair use and consequently the knowledge related to other impairments was very restricted. Tinklin and Hall (1999) and Holloway (2001) argue that staff who had specific interests in impairment and disability were more likely to have positive attitudes but this positive attitude was more related to their personal interest than any institutional policies or training (Borland and James, 1999). Houghton (2005) found that placing student support under the welfare umbrella reinforces a medical approach even though policies are advocating a social model

approach. Houghton (2005) advocates a need to ensure that institutional barriers relating to student life are tackled rather than focusing on 'individual inadequacy'.

Some argue (Priestly 2003) that higher education institutions have always focused on removing barriers by focusing on impairment and special educational need, rather than ensuring civil rights. Holloway (2001) agrees that if we do not provide full equality of opportunity for disabled students then we are denying them their human rights. It is significant that Borland and James (1999) are concerned that moral and ideological values inform practical issues and result in tensions at a practical level.

The social model, in contrast to the medical model, views barriers to inclusion as a consequence of social processes so that the focus of concentration has moved to 'social disadvantage rather than individual deficit' (Clough and Corbett, 2000:15). The social model focuses on factors outside the student's impairment effects which may be causing the difficulties. These may be staff attitudes, environmental issues like inappropriate curricular and pedagogical approaches or political and economic factors related to policy and resources. The focus is on a discriminatory and oppressive higher education system in which barriers should be removed, difference seen as normal and attitudes and practices that maintain exclusion removed. It is only in this way that disabled students can progress in higher education and eventually gain employment (Houghton, 2005). Some researchers believe that the social model has had an enormous impact on removing barriers to inclusion (Lindsay, 2003).

However many social barriers still exist and one social barrier to inclusion at university relates to departmental policies. Holloway's (2001) study revealed that disabled students face ongoing stress having to make the system work through notification and negotiation. Her findings illustrate that many negative experiences for both disabled and non-disabled students were related to a lack of effective systems at departmental level. One of Holloway's (2001:610) respondents commented:

> It's all very well having policies but if you don't carry them out then there's not much point in having them.

Shevlin et al (2004:21) relate a similar issue concerning levels of awareness of disability issues amongst staff so that '...overcoming lecturer suspicion, indifference and lack of awareness' is a key problem. 'Public and professional awareness of and attitudes towards disability was the generative core of participants' difficulties in accessing courses effectively' (Shevlin et al, 2004:23). Corbett (2001, in Hodkinson, 2010:65) argues that so far training has been 'inadequate'. Therefore, increased knowledge and understanding of perspectives on disability is a barrier that needs to be overcome.

Some have argued that there is a lack of support from teaching staff who can be cynical and unhelpful. Fuller et al (2004) cite research from MacLean and Gannon, (1997) who found that legislative change is not sufficient for achieving positive support for disabled students. Leyser et al (2000) found that many university staff felt a lack of training, knowledge of resources, skills for making reasonable adjustments and unfamiliarity with disability laws led to feelings of limitation in supporting disabled students. Houghton 2005 cites Thomas et al (2002) who focus on teaching and learning issues, particularly the fact that academics are often resistant to resolving issues by taking part in disability awareness training. This may well be related to staff demands and lack of resources available to them.

Shevlin et al (2004) identify a barrier around assumptions of 'normality' amongst staff working with disabled students. Ashby (2010:346) similarly argues that despite social model thinking and inclusive policies:

> Ableist assumptions of performance can limit access to needed support and meaningful engagement with academic content so that individuals who fall outside the range of dominant norms of bodily appearance or normative performance face exclusion and oppression.

Ashby fears that such ableism carries 'cultural capital' and 'social power'. She argues that not many people do actually conform to the mythical state of 'normalcy' and as such face stigma (Goffman, 1963) and exclusion.

Linked to this lack of knowledge is the view that disabled students threaten academic standards (Universities UK, 2002; Armstrong, 2003), that they make excessive demands on the institution and require more support than their non-disabled peers. According to Houghton (2005) these are myths which are often deep rooted and difficult to challenge because they are not often vocalised. Massie (2004:2) asserts that structural barriers within attitudes and systems are deep rooted and difficult to remove. These fears about academic standards are often related to a market driven education system in which standards are dominant. In such a situation standards and inclusion do not combine easily (Kauffman and Hallahan, 1995; 2000; Garner and Gaines, 2000; Wilson, 2000), rather, they are deeply at odds with one another (Hall et al, 2004). Jung (2002) feels that this puts disabled students in difficult situations where they are vulnerable because they raise questions about educational equality and fair play.

A key social barrier to inclusion for disabled students is their lack of voice in planning and evaluation of their course. Wright (2006) believes that disabled students have lost their voice. Shevlin et al (2004:27) comment that institutional commitment is confined to offering resources like 'add-ons' rather than including people with disabilities as visible and powerful members of society within the institution itself. Jones (2005) and Hodkinson (2010) agree on the need to spend more time seeking the opinion of disabled students and less time being 'wasted' on further legislation because:

> A prerequisite for successful inclusion is the maintenance of a dialogue between those involved and those who experience this process (Hodkinson, 2010:63).

Others have argued that student opportunities for monitoring and evaluation are a very important aspect of the evaluation process so that meaningful feedback can lead to improvements in practice. However, limited opportunities are afforded, for example, to be a student representative on a committee. Holloway (2001) and Ashcroft et al. (1996) found that it is absolutely crucial to involve disabled students in the monitoring and evaluation process and this process will not only ensure relevant changes and responses at departmental level, but also give disabled students a voice. Borland and

James (1999) comment on the need for feedback systems that relate particularly to the needs of disabled students so that effective practice can be shared and bad practice eradicated. Also, this would help solve issues related to having policies that do not work out in practice.

Finally, Shevlin et al (2004) identify categories of obstacles or barriers to participation, including physical barriers. These barriers are also raised by Hurst (1996); Borland and James (1999) and Holloway (2001). Shevlin et al (2004) and Holloway (2001) state that accessing course information is dependent upon having sufficient money for support needs, provision by the university and for some assistance from external agencies. The extra stress of financial burdens and the process of applying for the DSA with the attendant paperwork and phone calls is stressful. In Holloway's study all of the disabled students involved incurred extra financial costs as a consequence of their disability. However, Beilke and Yssel (1999) found that achieving physical adjustments is easier than attitudinal changes amongst staff.

However, some feminist researchers and writers in disability studies have opposed a strong social model focus solely on environmental barriers and failure to adequately address personal issues. They argue that impairment effects are significant for inclusion (Morris, 1991; Crow, 1996;1996; Shakespeare, 2006; Thomas 2004a; Thomas, 2004b; Thomas, 2007). Berthoud (2008) states that some impairment effects are very significant barriers and that the impact of impairment effects associated with certain labels can be more significant than the difference between disabled and non-disabled students' experiences. Goffman (1963) identifies some disabled people as more stigmatised than others and work by Cefai and Cooper (2010) asserts that disabled students with behaviour related impairments are more likely to be excluded and stigmatised than disabled students with any other impairment label. However, Feiler and Gibson (1999) comment on the increasing number of labels and systems that rely on such labels for assessing and supporting disabled students deflecting from inclusive education and perpetuating medical model practice by focusing on individual deficit.

In summary, inclusive education is an elusive concept which has no clear and accepted definition. It is interpreted and applied differently by different people in different contexts. Legislation and policy appears to advance a social model and human rights based approach to inclusion, but unfortunately such legislation and policy contains contradictions and 'get out clauses' so that anyone wishing to subvert it will meet few obstacles. It is therefore not surprising that a range of barriers to inclusive education remain unchallenged at university and in work contexts. Even though social barriers are identified as the main obstacles it is clear that many university staff still operate within medical model thinking and associate barriers to inclusion within specific impairment characteristics. Some writers in disability studies, who refute the medical perspective on disability, still challenge the social model failure to deal with impairment effectively. Inclusion happens within the constraints of the current higher education systems and structures and so needs to be addressed at different levels of the system (Cole, 2005). Inclusive higher education is the main vehicle used to gain entry to employment but for many disabled students this outcome is not always achieved.

> Success at degree level can be critical in terms of lifelong impact on earning capacity and location in the labour market yet disabled students tend to encounter more barriers to learning at university and to achieve poorer outcomes in terms of final degree classification, despite having comparable qualifications to other students entering the same university (Fuller et al, 2004: 456).

If putting inclusive education policy into practice in higher education contexts is problematic the situation in employment contexts is even more challenging. Students in my study had to negotiate higher education and employment contexts, therefore the next section of the literature review explores the way that social model thinking impacts on employment.

3.2 The impact of the social model on inclusion in employment contexts

Disabled students face barriers in making the transition between higher education and employment so that the increased pressure on graduate jobs makes entering the employment market difficult for disabled students (Houghton, 2005).

The second theme I used to make sense of the impact of the social model on inclusion in employment contexts was that of disability and employment. I used this theme as a means of exploring some of the reasons for disabled students being more excluded from paid employment than their peers. Such a focus enabled me to link discriminatory and inclusive employment practice to models of disability, including poststructural models which challenge the value attributed to paid employment. It also gave me the opportunity to link possible ways forward within the debates about the usefulness of the social model. Even though there is a plethora of literature around employability and employment for disabled people I focused specifically on work-based placement experiences in order to make a unique contribution to the employment debate. I begin with an exploration of how terms related to employability are understood.

3.2 (i) Definitions and understandings of employability

Traditional definitions of employability concentrate on the acquisition of attributes that make graduates more likely to succeed in gaining their chosen employment. An example of this is reflected in Hillage and Pollard (1998) who defined employability as the ability to gain and retain fulfilling work. However, more recent definitions reflect the need for abilities that ensure graduates are lifelong learners so that Harvey (2003) commented on the fact that the emphasis should be less on 'employ' and more on 'ability'. Harvey (2004) cites Brown et al (2002:9) who object to the Hillage and Pollard definition and state that employability should be defined as 'the relative chances of finding and maintaining different kinds of employment'. The Higher Education Academy (HEA) (2006:7) distinguishes between 'immediate employability', that is having the attributes and skills that give 'work readiness' and the ability to acquire a first job, and 'sustainable employability', which relates to remaining employable throughout life.

Felstead et al (2009:7) add that the 'changing nature of some of the fixed contours of work' has impacted negatively on the employability of disabled people.

> Personal qualities and attributes are increasingly crucial for successful performance at work. Visibly 'fitting in' and 'getting on' ... is a prerequisite for recruitment and advancement (Felstead et al, 2009:7).

These interpretations of employability reflect medical models of disability and are very much based on individual characteristics and abilities or the lack of them in relation to employability. Such notions are clear barriers to employment for disabled students and informed the central message of the social model perspective of disability.

Knight and Yorke (2003:3-4) cite several interpretations of the term 'employability' in the literature which they summarise as three main approaches. Firstly, employability that is a result of gaining a job, as a consequence of achieving a degree. Unfortunately disabled students are less likely to be employable on the basis of gaining a degree than their non-disabled peers (Houghton, 2005). Secondly, employability that is a consequence of the higher education experience, including curricular and extra-curricular experiences. Thirdly, employability in terms of personal achievements and potential. Knight and Yorke (2003) argue that employability should not be confused with the acquisition of a job, though HEFCE (2002) used the number of graduates gaining a job as the UK indicator of employability. In 1998 the DfEE commissioned a review to establish a definition and framework for employability. The review was carried out by the Institute for Employment Studies and their findings were that employability is about having the capability to gain initial employment, maintain employment and obtain new employment if required (Hillage and Polllard, 1998). However the word 'capable' suggests that if you are 'incapable' of these things you are not employable and this has serious consequences for disabled people deemed incapable on the grounds of their impairment. It promotes and enforces medical model and deficit approaches to disability.

Employability is embedded in the policies and practices of the university in the study. During the course of my study (2006-10) the university defined employability for

undergraduates as 'Enabling students to acquire knowledge, personal and professional skills...encouraging the attitudes that will support their future development' (NU Employment Framework, Appendix 16). A new Education for Employability Strategy (2010-12) has now been introduced in which employability is defined as:

> A set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy (Yorke, 2006, cited in Northern University, 2010:1).

In relation to definitions of employability the university approach in the 2006 Employability Framework focused less on the traditional definitions that relate to gaining a job and more to definitions that emphasise the skills associated with lifelong learning, that is '...intelligent, flexible, self-aware lifelong learners with communication, interactive and team working skills, who add value to and transform organisations' (Brown and Drew, 2005:1-2). However, the 2010 Education for Employability Strategy is clearly more focused on gaining a job and making a contribution to the economy. This approach concurs with the social inclusion agenda articulated by Blunkett, (1999a; 1999b; 2000) and Dyson, (2001). It is exactly this sort of approach which some writers are concerned about because it advocates that inclusion in employment is linked to entrepreneurship in an unhelpful way so that the focus is on meeting the needs of society, the economy and free enterprise rather than inclusion or equality (Masschelein and Simons 2005). Where such an interpretation of inclusion in employment is evident disabled students are required to have the skills and attributes required to meet the needs of the economy if they are to become employable. This 'functionalist' approach to employability in the university's employability strategy opens the door to a return to medical model philosophy where 'functional limitation' limits employment opportunities for disabled students. For many disabled students this means that some jobs will never be within

their grasp, rather they are excluded from them from the outset (Borland and James, 1999).

Some researchers and writers in disability studies are unhappy about this 'functionalist' approach to work and the value attributed to paid work in society which they view as a structural barrier which is deeply engrained in society and therefore difficult to change. Barnes (1992) and Oliver (1996a; 1996b) argue that the removal of barriers to employment for disabled people will enhance their inclusion in employment. Indeed, one of the achievements of the social model and disability rights activity is the equality legislation which, though flawed, has improved the work opportunities for disabled people significantly. However some poststructuralist researchers and writers in disability studies have challenged the notion of inclusion in employment on the basis of barrier removal and contend that some impairments do restrict employment opportunities (Crow, 1996; Morris, 1996; Shakespeare, 2006). Some others have questioned the value attached to paid work in our society (Abberley, 1996; 1999; 2000; Hendey and Pascal, 2001; Galvin, 2006). It is on this basis that some researchers and writers in disability studies challenge the validity of the social model's focus on barrier removal as an appropriate model for the inclusion in employment of disabled people.

However, others like Johnstone (2001:35) argue that having paid employment brings many advantages including economic independence, empowerment, status, opportunities for social networks, the development of skills, a sense of achievement and dignity and benefits the economy. Many writers have challenged this notion of paid work in relation to independence because for many disabled people there is no prospect of performing even basic work tasks (Vehmas, 2006).

> An idealized notion of independent adulthood is a normative construction which is 'not only disabling, but highly gendered and ethnocentric' (Priestly 2000: 426).

This confirms the view that work is a primary site of identity loss for disabled people who are unable to access it so that the 'winners' get paid employment but the 'losers' become

'dependent' and 'poor' (Galvin, 2006:500). It also becomes a 'very seductive' idea which is more about preserving disabling barriers to employment than removing them (Galvin, 2006:504-5).

Some have argued that the only way forward is to redefine work and also re-think the social value and status of paid work (Meadows, 1996, Gorz, 1999; Levitas 2001 cited in Barnes and Mercer, 2005). Beck (2000: 126-131) advocates a post-work approach that 'complements paid work rather than replaces it'. Such a radical approach to reconceptualising notions of paid labour means more than removing barriers in society but challenging and eliminating one of the main cultural values in western society which has enabled inequalities to thrive (Barnes and Mercer, 2005). Wilton (2004) argues similarly that the current value attributed to paid employment must be challenged, particularly because of the diversity of disabled people, some of whom will never be able to engage in paid employment.

> Just because the main mechanism of our oppression is our exclusion from social production, we should be wary of drawing the conclusion that overcoming the oppression should involve our wholesale inclusion in it (Abberley, 1999:12).

However, in 2005 David Blunkett (then Secretary of State for Work and Pensions) published the booklet *Principles of Welfare Reform* that outlined his view on how the benefit system should change. The core principles were set out stating, amongst other things, that paid work must be seen as better than having benefits; paid work helps to eradicate poverty and exclusion, and that the community will also be better off if we have ways to teach people skills, to help them get back to work and to support them when they are working (Wright, 2006 p. 48). Clearly these principles continue to attribute value to paid work and make no attempt to challenge such notions because they are attributed to a 'social inclusion' philosophy. They continue to perpetuate a medical model philosophy in which those who have 'functional limitations' are losers and their exclusion from employment legitimised (Gough, 1979).

3.2 (ii) The impact of the social model on employment legislation and policy

Definitions and understandings of employability often reflect aspects of legislation and policy. Until the 1960s the perception of disabled people's contribution to employment was mainly located within medical model thinking. 'Functional limitations' in relation to work were blamed on impairments and were used to legitimise disabled peoples' exclusion from the workforce. They reinforced a perception of disabled people as unable to contribute to the economy in the same way as non-disabled people (Barnes and Mercer, 2005). The consequence of this 'functional limitation' medical view of disabled people and work meant that many disabled people found themselves unemployed or in menial jobs below their capabilities (Walker, 1982; Oliver, 1986; Barnes, 1992; Thomas, 1992). This approach to disabled people and work led to a rehabilitative approach and dependency on families and benefits (Barnes and Mercer, 2005). During the 1980s disabled people began to challenge such perceptions and the barriers and inequalities they experienced in relation to employment. Since the 1980s disabling barriers to employment have become a political and civil rights issue and disabled people identified as a minority oppressed group. In 1992 Colin Barnes wrote a very significant article in which he argued that disabled people experience a much poorer quality of life than non-disabled people and that the main cause of this experience is institutional discrimination. Barnes focused specifically on disabling society and the barriers that disabled people experience rather than personal functional limitation. He argued that traditional explanations of disadvantage are no longer acceptable and have been challenged by the social model of disability which acknowledges that:

> The employment problems encountered by people with impairments are due to a complex system of hostile environments and disabling barriers referred to as institutional discrimination...Disability, therefore, represents a diverse system of social constraints imposed on people with impairments by a highly discriminatory society (Barnes, 1992:1).

This 'materialist' (Thomas, 2004a) theoretical trend within the social model was advanced by the social model writers (Finkelstein, 1980; 2001a; Oliver, 1990; Gleeson, 1999) who also advocated the best way forward as anti-discrimination legislation. This included examining attitudes and their impact on policies. So the 1980s and 1990s saw a move away from medical model impact on employment legislation and policy for disabled people.

In 1995 the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) was introduced and this was an enormous step forward in relation to recognising and removing barriers at work for disabled people and one of the consequences of disability activism that led to legislation based on a social model of disability. It also gave disabled people the right to challenge any discriminatory practice (Foster, 2007). Section Six of the Act requires employers to make 'reasonable adjustments' in the workplace that ensure a disabled worker is not put at a 'substantial disadvantage'. However in 2004 the DDA was amended so that discrimination was defined as 'less favourable treatment for a reason relating to a disability without justification' and 'failure to make reasonable adjustments' (Disability Rights Commission (DRC, 2005, cited in Foster, 2007:70). The introduction of the Disability Equality Duty (2006) places a statutory duty on public sector organisations to promote disability equality. However, it is evident that these policies have not led to disabled students gaining employment in the same numbers as non-disabled students and that disabled people continue to be marginalised in relation to work (Barnes and Mercer, 2005; Houghton, 2005; Foster, 2007).

> Thus, nearly 10 years since the implementation of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) (H.M. Government, 1995) which placed obligations on employers to make 'reasonable adjustments' , we are still asking why it is that disabled people continue to experience discrimination in employment (Foster, 2007:68).

Critiques of the DDA have similarly focused on the way in which disability is defined so that the focus is on the individual impairment, i.e. the ability to carry out day-to-day activities, rather than social barriers to employment (Chadwick, 1996; Goss et al, 2000; cited in Foster 2007:70). Hoque and Noon (2004) criticise current legislation, arguing that in practice many inequalities persist, despite equal opportunities legislation, and that sometimes organisations are able to use such policies as a facade behind which discriminatory practices thrive (Hoque and Noon, 2004).Others argue that the DDA is based on a medical model of disability in that individuals are defined according to their personal limitations and enforced to adapt to the needs of employers, rather than focusing on the removal of discriminatory social barriers (Johnstone, 2001), and thus it falls short of changing individual attitudes.

> The DDA, while aiming to protect employees with disabilities in the workplace, also forces them to beg for conditions that enable them to continue in their employment. The politics of disability in the workplace are therefore primarily shaped by employer willingness to accommodate disabled people rather than their right to be there (Foster, 2007:82).

3.2 (iii) Barriers to employment for disabled people

If disabled people are less likely to be employed than their non-disabled peers, regardless of equality legislation and policy then there must be tensions and barriers within employment practice that contribute to this employment disadvantage. Barnes (1992) identified several social barriers to employment for disabled people, including attitudes, medical screening, education, age, experience, appearance, inaccessible working environments, transport, geographical mobility, shift working, the welfare system and Government policy on the employment of disabled people. The structural barriers related to the value accorded to paid work in society were articulated above and I believe this is the main structural barrier for disabled people. Other social barriers that have already been articulated above are the different ways in which legislation and policy is known and applied in practice and the diverse understandings of employability.

One of the main barriers to employment for disabled people is the process of medical screening that is now widely used prior to employment so that employers can assess fitness for certain job roles. Because disabled people have traditionally been perceived as having an illness this approach can be particularly significant for them, as employers may equate disability with illness and consequently with high absenteeism so that:

> Consistently, research documenting disabled people's work experiences shows that medically based assumptions are used as a basis for discrimination, both to deny disabled workers access to jobs...and as a reason for dismissal (Barnes 1992:15, citing work by Fry, 1986; Graham et al., 1990; IFF Research, 1990; Martin et al., 1989; Prescott Clarke, 1990).

Similarly the benefits system assesses and labels disabled individuals in a similar manner to the labelling and assessment for learning contracts in higher education, in that both focus on tasks the individual cannot perform. It is a similar approach but is used in employment contexts to make decisions about a disabled person's ability to work. Some have argued that this system has traps for individuals seeking independence (Kestenbaum, 1997, 1998, 1999). Others argue that it is demeaning for disabled people to undergo assessments and labelling. Accordingly assessment and labelling and medical screening and benefits make disabled people vulnerable to poverty and social exclusion and a benefit system that is disabling rather than enabling (Morris, 2000; Hendey and Pascall, 2001).

Barnes (1992) and Thompson (1997) believe that attitudes to impairment are a major barrier to inclusion in employment because disabled people are often held in low regard and if easy, undemanding tasks are not available it is assumed that there is no suitable employment for these individuals. Johnstone (2001) thought such attitudes led to limited opportunities for work and promotion. The result is structural unemployment and under-employment for many disabled people. Barnes (1992) cites government research by Morrell (1990) who found that employers tended to justify discriminatory attitudes because the job was unsuitable for a disabled person or that the place of work was

unsuitable or inaccessible. Unfortunately other research shows that often non-disabled workers hold similar attitudes to their employees with behaviours ranging from unintentional discrimination to open hostility and intimidation (Chinery, 1990; Morris, 1990 cited in Barnes, 1992).

One of the key factors contributing to employment disadvantage for many disabled students is the focus on and value attributed to physical beauty and appearance in UK society and the manner in which these values are associated with employability. For many disabled people who do not have a 'conventional' body shape they find it more difficult to present the acceptably employable image. Morris, (1989) comments that such difficulties may be exacerbated for disabled women, for whom there is even more pressure to conform to the acceptably employable image.

> The ubiquitous power of pervasive images of acceptable physical appearance seems indisputable. Clearly, immunity from these influences has not been extended to employers who make hiring decisions. In fact, many personal manuals stress the importance of presenting favourable appearance; and visibly disabled persons are often encouraged to attempt to minimise the prominence of their disabilities on employment applications and interviews (Hahn, 1997:82).

Some writers have extended the issue of acceptable appearance to include what they call emotional labour which Hochschild (1983:7) defines as 'the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display'. Warhurst and Nickson (2007:104) cite Oaff (2003) and argue that:

> Aesthetic labour has become translated in the popular press as employment based on 'looking good' and/or 'sounding right' , and 'lookism' is even being suggested as the latest form of workplace discrimination.

Research by Nickson et al (2005) found that employers were interested in attitude and appearance in relation to employability. Hence the focus on employability that includes attitudinal skills has now been extended to include aesthetic skills. This is because those

who are physically attractive are likely to be attractive to employers and customers and consequently increase custom. 'Valorising embodiment, aesthetic labour is therefore not beyond contract but a key feature of it for employers' and that 'soft skills, compassing the social and aesthetic are more important selection criteria than technical skills for employers (Warhurst and Nickson (2007:107). Clearly, this has implications for disabled people seeking employment, who may be excluded and discriminated against on the grounds of their appearance and social skills.

Education is identified by Barnes (1992) as a possible barrier to employment for disabled people. Debates and controversies surrounding the nature and purpose of education in society, and more specifically about the relationship between education and the economy have emerged since 1976 when Callaghan (Labour Prime Minister 1976-79) made a speech at Ruskin College Oxford. Subsequently a 'Great Debate' about education emerged, which focused on the growth of central government control of or influence on education. Callaghan focused particularly on the link between education and economic prosperity, so that:

> Even at the time, the 1976 speech was seen as a defining moment...For the first time in the history of mass education in Britain, the state set out a clear priority for the economic purpose of education, thereby establishing an explicit connection between education and economic nationalism (Esland, 1996: 47, cited in Phillips and Furlong, 2001:4).

Because traditional universities educated a small, elite proportion of the country's population prior to the 1980s in order to make a significant impact on the economy it was necessary to widen participation in higher education so that many disabled students who had been excluded from higher education were enabled to enter universities and so gain the necessary qualifications in order to gain paid employment. However, it was not just the numbers of students in higher education that increased, but the curriculum needed to change in order to fulfil the needs of the economy and the employment destinations of graduates had to be widened. Hence employment-related skills had to be incorporated

into all degree programmes so that it became an economic necessity to develop appropriate and effective work-related learning and work-based placements. However, the employability and related financial benefits of gaining a degree were only one aspect of widening participation for students. It was also viewed as combating social exclusion in that a wider range of the population were enabled to climb the occupational ladder and so experience social mobility so that:

> Governments have come to define higher education as a vehicle for achieving both economic competitiveness and a measure of greater social equity (Phillips and Furlong, 2001: 82).

The university in this study in its Education for Employability Strategy (2010-12:1) states that it is:

> Committed to supporting students in their preparation for the world of work, giving the students we work with an edge when they enter the graduate market or when they are seeking career progression at post-graduate level...this e4e strategy will have implications for our current curriculum.

Some of the objectives of this new strategy involve well-structured work-related and work-based learning and the embedding of high level transferable skills in the curriculum. University policy argues that employability can only be achieved if the support for employability is embedded throughout courses and cannot be achieved through add-on modules that focus on some aspects of employability. According to Brown and Drew (2005:4-5), who commented on the development of the strategy, the Employability Framework (2006-10) was based on constructivism and the work of Biggs (2003) who suggests that courses that have elements clearly aligned with one another are more effective in enhancing student understanding. It is related to Kolb's (1984) work on experiential learning; Elliot's (1991) work on the nature of skilled behaviour; Schon's (1987) work on reflective practice and Lave and Venger's (1991) work on the 'situated' nature of learning. The concepts underpinning employability are 'transformation' that

includes both the acquisition of knowledge and attributes and the transfer of this to other contexts and Brown and Drew (2005: 5) maintain that:

> The essential features of our Framework, aligned and integrated, address both transformation and transfer: the development of skills required to acquire and apply knowledge; their use in contexts mirroring external settings; the development of 'transfer' (reflection on using knowledge and skills between contexts; reflection on own performance and action planning; career management skills); the ability to autonomously adapt to situations.

However, criticisms of work-based curricula have emerged in several quarters. The number of entrants to the employment market has significantly increased so that according to Brown, (1995) 'non-traditional' entrants to university, and those following new and unconventional programmes are disadvantaged in the employment market. This is particularly significant for disabled students and is one of the reasons for conducting this research. Another issue highlighted by Barber (1994:359) is 'How much diversity is consistent with equality?' (Cited in Phillips and Furlong, 2001:248). So issues related to academic standards are raised in relation to the work-based curriculum and further compounded by disabled students requiring 'reasonable adjustments to the curriculum' (Jung, 2002; Hall et al, 2004; Massie, 2004;Shevlin et al, 2004; Houghton, 2005).

Work-based learning challenges the university curriculum to be appropriate in relation to transferable, key and study skills. Brennan and Little (1996:8) cite Scott (1995) who notes that challenges to the 'normative power of the traditional honours degree system' include challenges related to academic beliefs about structured sequential learning; intellectual postulation concerning the organisation and nature of knowledge and social ideas about the focus on initiating learners into specific disciplinary/academic cultures. Work-based learning forces us to reconsider such assumptions and broaden the extent of recognition and accreditation for knowledge, skills and understanding.

Consequently, for individuals to become employable there is a need for the traditional academic curriculum to change in order to meet the need of the employer and the

prospective employee so notions of 'employability' challenge the curriculum to be appropriate and this has led to the inclusion of transferable, key and study skills in degree programmes. However, such changes are not unquestioningly accepted by all academics as some, although seeing the advantages of work-based learning, are concerned about the academic quality of such learning and often see it as the 'practical' aspect as opposed to 'academic'. Such notions about the division between and, indeed, academic value of work-based and university based learning, are currently being challenged in debates about work-based learning and debates around the creation of a 'learning society' and the place that universities and other learning contexts have in creating that learning society (Brennan and Little, 1996). Knight and Yorke (2003) disagree and posit that work-related learning may develop employability skills but there is no guarantee that it enhances employability. Thus, the focus on employability through work-based and work-related curricula is challenged in relation to its lack of academic rigour and also on the grounds that it does not necessarily contribute to employability. As such the higher education curriculum, though focused on employability, can be a barrier to inclusion in employment for disabled students.

To summarise, in many respects employment opportunities for disabled people have been enhanced because positive changes in legislation and policy have mainly focused on the removal of disabling barriers to education and employment rather than functional limitations of individuals. Alongside these legislative changes there has been a widening participation agenda that has allowed non-traditional university students to gain places on undergraduate programmes that develop student employability through work-based learning. However, overall, disabled people are still marginalised and discriminated against in relation to paid work, especially professional well-paid work, and this is related to a focus on social inclusion and the 'functional limitation' of individuals who are perceived as unable to contribute to the economy. However those adopting a social model perspective have linked the exclusion of disabled people from the labour market directly to disabling barriers related to the social organisation of the labour market. These barriers pervade a wide range of areas, including work-related and work-based

education, attitudes, the focus on aesthetic and emotional labour; structures and mobility issues. The removal of employment barriers alone will not solve the issue but can only have a limited impact if other broader societal barriers like the value attributed to traditional higher education curricula and paid work are not removed (Barnes and Mercer, 2005).

Many of the issues discussed above demonstrate that society's attitude to disabled people's ability to contribute to society through work reflects and has an impact on shaping disabled identity, that is, how they are perceived if they cannot or are assumed to be unable to contribute to the economy in the same way as their non-disabled counterparts. The following section examines the association of disabled identity with inclusion in education and particularly employment contexts and the ways in which the disabled identity debate informs discussions around the impact of models of disability in higher education and employment contexts.

3.3 Disability, Identity and the social model of disability

> Identity is our understanding of who we are and of who other people are, and, reciprocally, other people's understandings of themselves and of others (which includes us). The outcome of agreement and disagreement, at least in principle always negotiable, identity is not fixed (Jenkins, 2004:5).

Identity includes the way in which we see ourselves, how we see ourselves in relation to others and how others view us.

> How we see ourselves and how we feel we are judged by others is a very powerful point of influence and confluence, which is powerful because it is owned in terms of personal qualities like self esteem so we view it as an aspect of personal choice rather than an artefact of power (Galvin, 2006:449).

For Galvin, identity formation involves individuals or groups in a continuous process of formation, maintenance and transformation of identities and it involves some shared identity with some people to the exclusion of others.

Identity is at the interface between the personal, that is the thoughts, feelings, personal histories, and the social, that is the societies in which we live and the social, cultural and economic factors which shape experience and make it possible for people to take up some identities and render others inaccessible or impossible (Woodward, 2000 in Swain and French, 2008:67).

Bradley (1996:25-26) identifies three levels of identity, firstly 'passive identities' which emanate from lived experiences and which people may or may not be aware of. Secondly, 'active identities' which, are often used as a basis for challenging discriminatory practice. Thirdly, 'politicised identities' which emerge when a constant association with an identity is present, and becomes a focus for political action. As such she argues that identity is a 'social construct' and a 'lived experience'. Patterns of discriminatory practice and inequality change as society changes and social identities become 'fragmented' and 'multiple' with the emergence of a plurality of social groupings. Therefore, identity is a very powerful phenomenon which causes some individuals to be included and others excluded in all aspects of society, including education and work contexts. Our own perceptions of our identity can be different to other people's perceptions of our identity and when non-disabled people 'speak' for disabled people the possibility of negative and destructive identities is increased.

Most of the people we have dealings with, including our most intimate relationships, are not like us. It is therefore very difficult for us to recognise and challenge the values and judgements that are applied to us and our lives. Our ideas about disability and about ourselves are generally formed by those who are not disabled (Morris, 1991:37).

Therefore disabled identity is complex as it includes how non-disabled people ascribe identities to disabled people as well as how disabled people understand themselves. It is made even more complicated because identity is often based on historical attitudes and life experiences in different contexts with different people in different timeframes.

I used the identity theme because it was useful for examining attitudes to impairment and disability in a range of higher education and employment contexts and timeframes.

As such, it was a useful tool for exploring the attitudes of different stakeholders to disabled identity and locating these attitudes within models of disability. Identity was a particularly important category for exploring the feminist challenge to the social model because impairment effects are a crucial aspect of post social model thinking. In exploring this theme I analysed how disabled identity impacts on university and work-based contexts and how disabled students experience diverse impacts on their identity as they negotiate these environments and how this sheds light on confusions around the social model. Hence, the identity theme helped 'bridge the gap' in my understanding of the interaction between inclusion in higher education and work-based contexts for disabled students, so I hope it enabled me to make a unique contribution to understanding how models of disability are reflected in disabled identity in these different contexts.

3.3 (i) The impact of the medical/individual model on disabled identity in education and work contexts

One of the inevitable consequences of the individual/medical model is labelling and identification of disabled people according to their impairment. Some have argued that such identification and labelling of disabled people may be useful in some contexts, but is more likely to lead to negative consequences because:

> Being different can incur admiration and praise but more often it leads to prejudice, discrimination and oppression (Swain, French and Cameron, 2003:65).

So being identified and labelled by others in society does result in consequences, difference can cause division in society and it has the potential for discrimination and oppression of those perceived as different (Jenkins, 2004). As such, Thompson (2001:140) argues that being labelled as different may result in discriminatory and unequal treatment of those labelled as different. Johnstone (2001) believes that the labels have arisen from society's perception of those who deviate from the 'norm' and

who are consequently unacceptable in society. The labels attached to disabled people often result in them being excluded from society on the basis that their ability to contribute to society and employment is limited. Such perceptions are located within an individual/medical model of disability in which specific impairments are the cause of exclusion and inability to contribute to society. In such a model of disability the label is used to 'determine individual pathology' (Johnstone, 2001:7) and subsequently explain conditions and possible cures or treatments.

> Disability is the product of definitions and practices that seek to exclude individuals who might be seen to deviate from the socially constructed norms of the 'able-bodied'. In short, 'disability' is what a 'disablist society' decides so to call...It is not the inherent nature of disability that matters, but the labelling process, which categorises people by virtue of their position in relation to the dominant structures and values of the society (Bury, 1996: 25 in Johnstone, 2001:9).

The above view of disability and impairment leads to institutionalised discrimination of disabled people in policies and practices which results in exclusion in all aspects of life including education and employment (Thompson, 20001). It also results in disabled people being perceived and identified by others as dangerous or tragic or less than normal because they are not conforming to societal norms (Swain, French and Cameron, 2003). Some disabled people have internalised these views of others about their 'functional limitations' and some adopt very negative perceptions and identities of themselves because 'Disabled and non-disabled people have both been schooled in the same ableist discourse' (Linton, 1998; 152 in Swain French and Cameron, 2003:68). It is difficult for disabled people to overcome these experiences and identities or to persuade non-disabled people to change their perceptions of them. Nevertheless, if labelling and stigma associated with not fitting in with society's construct of 'normal' are applied in higher education and work-based settings which are often driven by competitiveness and markets then disabled people may have to work really hard trying to overcome negative labelling and stigmatisation, trying to be perceived as normal rather than abnormal and

constantly dealing with all the negative consequences associated with an 'abnormal' identity (Johnstone, 2001).

It is for this reason that Galvin (2006:500) argues that employment is one of the main spheres of negative identity for disabled people because in work situations disability is pitted against the norm. He cites Marks, 1999:80 who believes that work after the industrial revolution was organised in such a way that it excluded some people, including disabled people:

> Disabled people thereafter became the term used to describe those who could not perform in accordance with the demands of the modern labour force (Galvin, 2006:501).

Jolly (2000:796) argues that work in modern times has developed the notions of those 'able to work' and those 'unable to work'. Disabled people were identified as in the 'unable to work' category and so became a threat to the social order and needing 'normalisation' so that they can engage with work and consequently develop 'the qualities of self-sufficiency, health, wealth and consumerism that define the ideal citizen'. Foucault (1980) argues that the level of respect and self esteem accorded to an individual is related to the ability to work and look attractive so disabled people are increasingly being encouraged to acquire the qualities of active citizens so that they will not be 'disabled' but emancipated and empowered to work. This approach is clearly reflected in the interpretation of inclusion as 'social inclusion' and the employability policies of the university as presented in section 1 of this chapter.

Related to the notion of labelling is the concept of stigmatisation. Goffman (1968:23 in Thomas, 2007:23) explored the relationship between 'normal' and stigmatised people so that Goffman argued that there is a profound and serious impact on personal identity for those people who are culturally discredited as not 'normal' and 'disabled people occupy pride of place' (Thomas, 2007:23). Hence, stigma is an extreme type of labelling which can be associated with victimisation, stereotyping and prejudice. Goffman argued that stigmatised individuals may use strategies to avoid or manage the negative social

encounters by controlling information and disclosure because the risk of identifying themselves as different from the norm is significant. He thought this may be done by 'passing', that is disguise and secrecy or by covering' (admitting to the stigmatised attribute or characteristic but working to minimise its existence) (Thomas, 2007:23). For those with more 'hidden' impairments 'passing' is more possible than for those with more obvious impairments. This can be particularly significant for some disabled people with 'less accepted' impairment labels associated with behaviour which is 'abnormal' including those with mental health issues and socially related impairments. Stigmatisation is more common amongst these groups of disabled people because individual medical model discourses present disabled people as something to fear (Llewelyn and Hogan, 2000).

> Usually these (with behaviour related impairments) are the least listened to, liked and empowered group of students...and the most likely to be at the receiving end of punitive and exclusionary practices (Cefai and Cooper, 2010:184)

Visser and Dubsky (2009) also concur that disabled people with behaviour related impairments are less accepted and perceived as more problematic than other disabled people. However, Thomas (2007) does not think that specific concerns around mental health issues are surprising because it is only recently that issue of 'the mind' have been explored by researchers and writers in disability studies who have concentrated on social barriers and physical impairments.

Clearly the impairment label carries different connotations for identity in different situations. Shevlin et al (2004) raise the issue of disabled students in higher education settings not wanting to disclose impairments because of fears of unfavourable treatment by tutors. Tinklin and Hall, 1999 thought many students still fear disclosing information about their impairment will disadvantage them.

However, French (1994) argues that the pressure to be 'normal' and not disclose often leads to an ignoring of the needs and rights of disabled people. Morris (1993) argues that this assumption that disabled people want to be 'normal' rather than who they are is

an extreme and significant form of oppression. Morris feels that ignoring difference is wrong but she wants to be different and equal.

> I do not want to try to emulate what a non-disabled woman looks like in order to assert positive things about myself. I want to be able to celebrate my difference, not hide from it (Morris 1991:184).

3.3 (ii) The impact of the social model on disabled identity in education and work contexts

Negative and destructive identities are not fixed because identities change in diverse situations and timeframes. Identity is a social construction so can be challenged and transformed (Foucault, 1997b in Galvin, 2006).

> One's identity – one's identities, indeed, for who we are is always singular and plural is never a final or settled matter. Not even death freezes the picture: identity or reputation can be reassessed (Jenkins, 2004:5).

Shakespeare and Watson (2001) argue that the social model had a massive impact on transforming disabled people's identity because it liberated disabled people to be angry rather than sorry for themselves. When disabled people realised it is society not themselves that needed to change this enabled the identification of a political strategy to promote inclusion of disabled people. Disability was seen to be the result of discrimination so campaigners fought for anti-discrimination law and civil rights legislation and as a result of such campaigns legislation like the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA, 2005) and The Equality Act (2010) focuses on the removal of societal barriers in order to ensure inclusion of disabled individuals in education and work. Hence the focus was removed from individual impairment related labels, and the stigma attached to many of those labels and refocused on society's exclusionary and oppressive practices towards disabled people. Crow (1996:2) similarly argues that the social model has had a profound influence in the development of disabled people's 'individual self-worth' and 'collective identity', driving forward the equal rights agenda and significantly influencing policy. Shakespeare (2006:30) agrees that the social model has been the main

foundation of the collective identity and organization of disabled people and Oliver believes this has 'resulted in unparalleled success in changing the discourse of disability' (Oliver, in Barnes 1996:1). As such they believe that the social model had a positive impact on disabled identity by shifting the focus away from individual impairments, labels and stigma onto a collective movement against barriers in an oppressive and exclusionary society. Galvin (2006) agrees that much legislation and policy reform aims to restore disabled people to the normal role as active citizens so that they can be independent and working. This appears to offer a positive self-identity to disabled people which could lead to the disappearance of disability as defined by the social model. However, some feminist and post-structural researchers and writers in disability studies have challenged the social model's focus on societal barriers to the exclusion of impairment effects. They see this as an attempt to eliminate disabled identity and make everyone fit the 'norm'. Hence, some writers and researchers believe that the social model is a flawed tool for inclusion.

3.3 (iii) Challenges to the social model perspective on disabled identity

Regardless of many negative associations with impairment, feminist critiques (Crow 1996; Morris 1996; Vernon 1997; Thomas, 2004a; 2004b; 2007) have emphasised the need for impairment as part of disabled identity to be recognised in both education and work settings. They see the social model as taking too narrow a definition of culture and denying the cultural identity of some disabled groups, particularly those with multiple identities. As such for some students, for example, deaf students, (Ladd, 1988) a rigid adherence to inclusive education and employment may deny the uniqueness of being deaf. This may apply to any other impairment label. The 'dream community' can, therefore, become a nightmare for those 'bona fide members of the community' who embrace more complicated identities, particularly if this is combined to a wish to challenge certain assumptions or traditions (Humphries, 1999:182 in Lawson, 2001:216). If we take this argument further then:

The concept of inclusive education as a system would inherently dilute, deny or dissipate cultural identity. It is therefore not unrealistic to pose the question: 'Will a person with an impairment feel able to share their experience with an able-bodied person in an all inclusive system?' Even the utopian idyll that beckons from beyond the gates of inclusion cannot cope to remove all the consequences of an impairment (Lawson, 2001:217).

In affirming identity the personal becomes political and vice versa because there are social constraints and limits to the control a person has over his/her identity (Swain and French, 2008). 'In making "personal troubles" into "public issues" disabled people affirm the validity and importance of their own identity' (Shakespeare, 2006:501). In this way disabled identity can be perceived as functioning as a 'counterpoint to the norm' (Thompson 1997:8).

However, those adopting a social model perspective fear that such an emphasis on difference can cause division in society and it has the potential for discrimination and oppression of those perceived as different and a return to medical perspectives (Thompson, 2001:140). Johnstone (2001:6) argues that the labels have arisen from society's perception of those who deviate from the 'norm' and who are consequently unacceptable in society and so it would be dangerous to go back down such a route which places disabled people in the vulnerable position of being identified as different.

Nevertheless, some feminist writers have focused on the significance of impairment in disabled identity because they argue that some impairments have more significant impacts than others for inclusion practice. Berthoud (2008) argues that obvious differences in employment opportunities exist according to severity of impairment and even though little research that distinguishes between different impairment effects has been done it would seem logical to assume that individuals with more severe impairments are more likely to be disadvantaged in education and employment than those with less severe impairments. This concurs with Cefai and Cooper (2010) and Visser and Dubsky (2009) who are concerned that disabled people with behaviour related impairments are more likely to be excluded than disabled people with other impairment labels. Berthoud (2008) concludes that even after taking into account other

variables disabled people are still less likely to be employed than other oppressed groups and that there is a large variation of employment opportunities according to the type and severity of impairment. However, if we take Berthoud's (2008) perspective the social model comes into question because if the severity of impairment impacts on employment opportunities then 'functional limitation' is an issue alongside employment barriers and cannot be ignored. It also assumes that impairment effects are more salient than social barriers in causing exclusion.

Other poststructural critiques of disabled identity by Shakespeare and Watson (2001) argue that many disabled people do not want to see themselves as disabled in terms of medical or social models. Labelling yourself as disabled may not be what some individuals desire, alternatively they may prefer a mainstream identity. They wish to be ordinary not different. Shakespeare and Watson (2001) argue that being part of a group labelled as 'disabled' can be very confining for people who do not desire to be in the group and just want a 'normal' identity. However, Barnes (2003:20) argues that whether people with impairments choose to identify themselves as disabled or not is not really relevant, what does matter is the way society perceives and treats disabled people.

For Shakespeare and Watson (2001) the issue of identity is complicated by the fact that disabled people have multiple identities and being female or Indian may be more salient than being disabled. Identities change over time so that the most significant aspect of identity may change several times during a life time, depending on the setting and the attitudes of people in that setting. However, Oliver (1996b) states that the social model has not ignored multiple identities but has just started exploring them and Barnes argues that challenging oppression is not just about challenging it in relation to disability, it is about challenging oppression in all forms because:

> Impairment is not something that is peculiar to a small section of the population, it is fundamental to the human experience' but disability is not like all other forms of oppression it is a human creation and it is not possible to confront one sort of oppression without confronting them all (Barnes, 2003:21)

In relation to inclusion in education and work Galvin perceives the social model and feminist approaches as individually focused and normative. As such they 'are more inclined to perpetuate the disabling of identity than to challenge it' because 'on the whole they remain trapped within this normative ideal that relies on the oppressive notion of disability for its existence'.

> Each technology (work and sexuality) is embedded in the neoliberal rationale which posits that all people, if only they try hard enough, can make the adjustments to their thoughts and behaviours necessary for them to emulate the norm. Indeed disabled people are being held up as emblematic of this ideal. These very seductive technologies are hard to resist, for who could argue that it would not be beneficial for disabled people to be accorded the dignity and freedom that stems from work, desirability and pleasure? Unfortunately...the objectives inherent in neoliberal self-actualisation are more about preserving the conditions which disable people with impairments than overcoming them (Galvin, 2006: 504-5).

Johnstone (2001) has expressed similar concerns that disabled people in competitive education or work settings face a gruelling task trying to transform negative labelling and stigmatisation, trying to transform their negative identities and constantly dealing with all the destructive consequences related to an 'abnormal' identity (Johnstone, 2001). O'Malley (1996:202) concurs that the unemployed are seen as responsible for improving their skills and self-esteem and marketability and if unsuccessful and they continue 'to rely on the state to deal with the harmful effects of known, calculable and individually manageable risks' they can then be seen as 'feckless and 'culpable'. They may even be viewed as 'non compliant' 'unmotivated' or 'resistant' or even worse think that 'income support is an unconditional right' (Galvin 2006:507).Disability rights has focused on removing barriers to employment without first thinking about questioning the assumptions on which the necessity to work are based or acknowledging that for some people work is not an option. Hence it is necessary to subvert the norms that perpetuate the view that it is necessary to work (Abberley, 1999; 2000; Galvin ,2006).

At first glance, the suggestion that the cornerstone to becoming empowered and developing a healthy sense of self-esteem rests on regaining access to employment...seems self-evident and very much in keeping with emancipatory ideals. But once we accept that 'work'...have been organised as key organising concepts to divide disability from normality since the outset of modernity, it is possible to view them in a more critical and illuminating way. It is certainly true that paid employment, financial independence, a healthy self image...can help build a positive, less disabled identity. Unfortunately, however, although neoliberal ideology may well reframe disability in different terms and, thus, seem to be aiming for its disappearance, it maintains a firm connection with individualising, normative values which require a dichotomous 'Other' upon which to build the concept of the ideal self and, thus, relies on the maintenance of the disabled identity (Galvin, 2006:509).

Lawson (2001:203) sums up the complexity of identification and disclosure of impairment in the context of inclusion in education contexts. He recognises that labelling of disabled students has sometimes led to a disabled people acquiring a 'second-class' identity. Lawson argues that segregated education is both 'villain' and 'saviour' in relation to disabled student's identity. He argues that to define yourself as disabled means declaring your membership of a social group but it also means the recognition of and objectification of the group which results in oppression of the group through social structures, attitudes and institutional practices. The social model is central to disabled people's demand for inclusive education and works well as a collective political force against oppressive educational and employment practices and removal of social attitudinal and structural barriers to inclusive education. However, the social model does not adequately represent differences as well as commonalities so that some disabled people want to establish their specific identity. The social model is an essential standpoint if economic equality and emancipation is the goal of disabled people. In such an argument the quest for full inclusive education may be weakened if the move for a specific disability identity is developed and as such the drive for emancipation weakened. However, the social model adopts a monocultural stance which cannot respond to different cultures and ideologies (Lawson, 2001:212). It is clear that disabled identity is highly influenced by education,

whether it is inclusive or exclusive. The issue is not straightforward; disabled identity is associated with a lesser social status than the norm which even though disabled people are challenging is being perpetuated by and reinforced by educational institutions and practices.

Marks (1999:162 in Lawson, 2001:215) speaks of the social model:

> Developed as it was by disabled academics and activists, argues that whatever differences or complexities exist in the way people experience disability, the most appropriate research topic is not an individual person's account, but rather their external social environment. The aim is not to understand how people feel, but rather to provide fully inclusive physical environments, institutions, policies and practices. Individual accounts are seen as a diversion from the main political struggle of ending collective oppression.

The argument is posited that individual identities draw the focus away from the strength of a coherent collective disabled identity, which can challenge oppression and discriminatory practices.

In summary disabled identity is complex and disabled people have multiple identities which are often not the same in diverse contexts at varied times with different people. As such disabled identity is affected not only by self-perception, but by the attitudes of others towards disability and how disabled people make sense of those attitudes. 'Ableism' results in a struggle for 'normalcy' and so the risk of refocusing on medical model 'functional limitation' views of disability prevail. Clearly different perceptions of the appropriateness of the social model for inclusion impact on how different writers perceive the best way forward for eliminating exclusionary practice.

3.4 The social model and ways forward for inclusive education and employment

The above issues and challenges related to inclusive practice in higher education and work contexts indicate that inclusion currently offers a 'chimerical ideal' which is 'as yet a distant horizon with some distance to travel before it can be met' (Lawson, 2001:205).

Although there is agreement that inclusion is not effective in higher education or employment contexts because disabled students do not gain employment in the same numbers as their non-disabled peers, there is no such agreement on how to move forward and eliminate exclusion. The ways forward articulated in the literature are based on different perceptions of the social model as an appropriate framework for inclusive education and employment practice. Current practice reflects a range of views as it evidences aspects of all models of disability in a 'twin-track' approach (Barton, 2003).

So for those who believe in the social model as an appropriate framework for inclusion the way forward involves a focus on strengthening the application of the social model in policies and practices at university and employment contexts. This includes continued disability rights activity to improve legislation and policy. It also focuses on the removal of the social barriers which need to be addressed if disabled students are to be more effectively included in higher education and employment contexts. Thus, for those adhering to social model philosophy, knowledge, understanding and implementation of social model thinking and inclusion policies needs to be addressed and the appropriate resources provided in order to enhance disability awareness training amongst staff (Borland and James 1999). Also, the social model is based on the premise that disabled people speak for themselves, rather than being spoken for by non-disabled people so this is a key aspect of inclusionary practice that needs addressing more effectively (Johnstone, 2001). Social model writers advocate more inclusive curricula and pedagogy at university and work placements (Yorke and Knight, 2003; Style, 2000; Giroux, 2003; Bernacchio et al, 2007; Goodley, 2011) and a challenge to 'ableist' assumptions (Bolt, 2004). Any focus on impairment effects is perceived as located within medical model thinking and an inappropriate framework for inclusion.

However, others feel that it is impossible to apply the social model effectively to inclusion in work and education because it ignores impairment and therefore a significant aspect of disabled people's lives (Morris, 1991, 1996: Crow, 1996, Shakespeare, 2006; Thomas 2004a; 2004b; 2007). Without disclosure and recognition of impairments it is impossible to provide appropriate support for disabled people on a personal level. They do not wish

to return to medical and deficit model practices, but believe that affirmation and celebration of disabled identity provides an argument that contradicts and responds to society's idea of 'normal' (Peters, 2000). For them the social model is unrealistic because it cannot remove all the barriers disabled people face in education and work contexts because some of these barriers are located in their impairment effects (Thomas, 2007). For some impairments these effects maybe more significant than for others and as such require different support and action (Berthoud, 2008). So feminists believe the way forward for more inclusive practice in education and work contexts is recognition of the limits of social model and a renewed social model with a positive and celebratory focus on impairment effects and appropriate action for support.

Finally, for other poststructural researchers and writers in disability studies the social model cannot work effectively in eliminating barriers to exclusion in work and education contexts because it is an inappropriate model (Shakespeare and Watson, 2001; Shakespeare, 2006). They argue that the social model needs to be replaced as it cannot address exclusion effectively. They see disability as complex and that trying to separate impairment effects from disabling barriers is a simplification of reality which is unhelpful. For them some barriers cannot be removed and it would be more effective to challenge some of the values and assumptions which society is based on which produce discriminatory practice. As such they consider it more appropriate to challenge the social inclusion agenda and its focus on contribution to the economy through work as they would dispute the value attributed to paid work and redefine it altogether (Abberley, 1999: 2000; Beck, 2000; Galvin, 2006; Shakespeare, 2006). Similarly the value attributed to traditional academic curricula and the focus on academic standards needs to be challenged as an oppressive notion because some disabled people may never be able to be included in either education or work.

In conclusion, this chapter has demonstrated that diverse interpretations of inclusion, employability and disabled identity lead to different perspectives on barriers to inclusion in higher education and work. Even though legislation and policies appear to adopt social model philosophy it has been argued that they operate a dual approach in which

all models of disability are evident. Policies are carried out in diverse contexts by different people and so the range of views on disability is further magnified. While recognising the enormous steps forward in the reduction of exclusionary practice in both education and work settings it is clear that the journey has only just begun and much work remains left to do if exclusionary practice is to be eliminated from disabled students' experiences of higher education and employment. However, even though there appears to be a profound desire to include disabled people in both education and work contexts more effectively there is no agreement about how inclusion can be successfully achieved. The most effective way of ensuring effective inclusionary practice in higher education and employment contexts is perceived differently by writers with diverse views on the social model of disability and varies between those wishing to strengthen it, revise it or abandon it altogether.

The next chapter presents the theoretical position adopted in this thesis in relation to the debates around the appropriateness of the social model as a framework for effective inclusion of disabled students in higher education and employment contexts.

CHAPTER 4: Do we need a new model of disability?

In considering the usefulness of the social model of disability as a framework for inclusive practice in higher education and employment contexts, it is evident from literature, legislation and policy reviewed in the previous chapter that many significant positive advances in reducing exclusionary policy and practice have been made as a direct consequence of social model thinking (Barnes, 1996; Oliver, 1996a; 1996b; Crow, 1996; Johnstone, 2001; Shakespeare and Watson, 2001; Shakespeare, 2006). However, despite the many positive aspects of policy and practice that have emerged from social model philosophy it is apparent in literature and the findings of this thesis that many disabled people remain at a disadvantage in both higher education and employment contexts as compared to their non-disabled peers (Burchardt, 2000; Jolly, 2000; Barnes and Mercer, 2005). In an attempt to explain why inclusion has had significant but limited success, questions have arisen around the validity of the social model as an appropriate means of understanding disability because of its emphasis on social factors which cause exclusion without due consideration of the exclusionary effects of impairment. Those who hold such a position propose a range of solutions, some recommending a renewed social model which takes impairment effects into consideration (Morris, 1991; 1996; Crow, 1996; Williams, 1999; Bury, 2000; Thomas, 2004a; 2007; Shakespeare, 2006). Other poststructuralist writers have contended that the social model has outlived its usefulness and needs to be abandoned altogether (Shakespeare and Watson, 2001; Shakespeare, 2006). As such a range of theoretical propositions has been proffered in an attempt to better understand the complexities of disability and impairment. One thing that unifies all writers and activists in disability studies is a commitment to eliminating exclusionary practice and, as such, the debates and perspectives explored in this chapter all emanate from a desire to ensure the most effective inclusionary outcomes for disabled people.

In this chapter I use the social model as a framework to guide my exploration of the complex issues related to the inclusion of disabled students in higher education and

employment settings. The theoretical debates around the practical and conceptual utility of the social model of disability are explained and used as a context for exploring the inclusion of disabled students in this study. The chapter begins with an examination of the origins and development of the concept of the social model of disability. It explores a range of critiques and challenges to the social model from medical sociologists, feminists and poststructuralists. This is followed by an exploration of the achievements that can be ascribed to the social model.

4.1 The emergence of the social model

The beginnings of a social understanding of disability emerged in the 1960s and 70s from some disabled people who had experienced controlled and limited lives in institutions and who realised that new and fundamental ideas about disability were needed. They looked to Marxism for inspiration (Campbell and Oliver, 1996). One of the key instigators of these new ideas was Paul Hunt, who recognised the need to confront the power of medical understanding of disability with a new social understanding of the term. In the 1970s Finkelstein and Hunt attempted to reflect theoretically on the way in which disabled people were regarded and dealt with and, as materialists, theorised disability as located within the ways that activities, especially economic activities, are organised in society. They perceived the main cause of the exclusion of disabled people as rooted in socio-economic developments related to capitalism. From these developments perceptions of the normal and impaired body arose in which normalcy equated with power and impairment with disadvantage (Thomas, 2007). The arenas of education and employment were specifically regarded as contexts from which disabled people were excluded. They considered society's response to impairment was the cause of the problem of disability and so disabled people needed to challenge such notions through taking control of their own lives and political action. For Hunt and Finkelstein the key way forward was a conceptual breaking of the link between impairment and disability so that 'It is society that disables us and disabled people are an oppressed social group' (Finkelstein, 2001b:2). It was rejection of this stark view of disability as either tragedy or

oppression that led to the beginnings of social model thinking expressed in the UPIAS (Union of the Physically Impaired against Segregation) Fundamental principles Document (1976). This document defined disability as:

> In our view it is society which disables physically impaired people. Disability is something imposed on top of our impairments by the way we are unnecessarily isolated and excluded from full participation in society. Disabled people are therefore an oppressed group in society (UPIAS, 1976:14).

This materialist perspective was taken up by Michael Oliver (1990) who saw disability as rooted in socio-economic changes and their associated medical thinking which viewed impairment as individual tragedy and consequently excluded disabled people from capitalist production. As such disabled people began to take on board a social model philosophy in which they perceived themselves as oppressed in a society obsessed with ideas about 'normalcy' (Llewellyn and Hogan, 2000). The social model was largely equated with this materialist perspective of disability and the UPIAS definition of disability.

In summary the social model categorised disabled people as an oppressed social group, it created a distinction between impairments that people had and the oppression which they experienced and it defined disability as the social oppression not the type of impairment (Shakespeare and Watson, 2001).The difference between the social and medical models of disability 'revolves around the shift in explanatory power'. The social model acknowledged the interaction of structural and attitudinal issues in society that gave rise to disability; recognised the views of disabled people; distinguished the political practices that oppressed disabled people and denied them their civil rights and put control into the hands of disabled people (Johnstone, 2001:20). However, Finkelstein claims that the social model was never intended to be a theory of disability and laments that so much has been made of the social model (Finkelstein, 2001a). For Thomas (2004b), there is evidence of a materialist theoretical direction in the writings of Finkelstein (1980; 2001a) and Oliver (1990) and this is picked up and developed by

Gleeson (1999:37) who posited that 'disability' is produced through 'the socialisation of impairment' which changes in diverse places at different times.

> Together, proletarianisation and urbanisation created oppressive socio-spatial conditions for physically impaired people. As a consequence disablement is now 'deeply inscribed in the discursive, institutional and material dimensions of cities' (Gleeson, 1999:11 in Thomas, 2007:55).

However, this type of social theory of disability, identified as a 'political economy of disability' by Thomas is yet to be fully developed because it has not been adequately thought through in relation to both its historical and current application. It has made no connection with other issues like gender and age and their impact on disability (Thomas, 2007:63). Further issues have been raised about the full outworking of the social model, which imply that eliminating disability would mean full inclusion in employment for disabled people, a utopian and unrealistic ideal for some disabled people (Abberley, 1996). This kind of thinking is reflected in the social inclusion agenda explored in chapter 3 and challenged on the basis that participation in paid work has become an essential aspect of social inclusion but an elusive ideal for many disabled people. As such Abberley, though taking a clear stand with the UPIAS (1976) separation of impairment and disability, was concerned about unrealistic ideals that may emanate from it and as such called for a theorisation of impairment.

> I wish to argue that we must talk more about impairment at the level of theory if we are to make sense of disability, since impairment is the material substratum upon which the oppressive social structures of disablement are erected (Abberley, 1996:63).

The social model, which arose out of the separation of the causal link between impairment and disability, became the focal point for discussions around disability in the UK and whether writers agree with it or dispute it they engage in rigorously debating it. The materialist perspective has become synonymous with the social model and as such those who contest the social model simultaneously dispute the materialist perspective (Thomas, 2004a). The social model separation of the causal link between impairment

and disability did not mean that impairment effects had no impact on disabled people's lives, but that these impairment effects were personal and private matters which did not constitute disability (Finkelstein, 2001b; Thomas, 2004a). However, many writers in Disability Studies have taken issue with this conceptual separation and its implication that impairment effects are not relevant in disability discourse. They include writers coming from medical, feminist and poststructuralist perspectives on disability.

4.2 Critiques of the social model

In the UK writers supporting the medical model critique the social model on the basis that it does not adequately engage with impairment effects. For Bury (2000) and Williams (1999) disability is undeniably and predominantly caused by impairment.

> The denial of any causal relationship between illness, changes in the body, and disability comes up against the daily realities experienced by the chronically sick and those who care for them, whether in community or in health care systems...the point needs to be stressed... that in any overview of disability in modern society, chronic illness remains its most significant cause... (Bury, 2000:179 in Thomas, 2004a:575).

Hence, for some writers a socio-medical model of disability defines disability more appropriately as restriction or inability to carry out daily tasks or to function on a daily basis in a normal manner. They do not deny that social factors are relevant and that some limitations are related to social and cultural causes (Bury, 2000). In this way they partially part company with the medical perspective association with individualisation (Frank, 1995) but also reject the social model break in the causal link between impairment and disability. For them disability is caused by a combination of both impairment and social restriction, but the predominant limiting factor is impairment. Williams (1999) proposes that critical realism contributes to this debate. For Williams there is a need to 'bring the body back in' (Williams and Bendelow, 1998 in Thomas, 2004a: 576). However, he sees a polarisation in the debate between those holding a medical model view, like Bury, who adopt an interactionist perspective, and those adopting a social model perspective who attempt to 'write the body out' (Williams,

1999:803). For Williams there is a need to 'bridge this divide' (Thomas, 2004a: 576) by adopting a critical realist perspective which will come some way between the social and medical perspectives so that:

> The nub of the problem here, and the issue to which any critique of a social model of chronic illness and disability must necessarily return, is the conflation of the ontological with the epistemological (Williams, 1999:805).

As such critical realists like Williams refuse to conflate the ontological and the epistemological, avoiding an erroneous belief that nothing real exists. On the contrary, critical realism offers ontological independence to the body and as such challenges both the social model and post-modernist and relativist perspectives on disability. Bury's interactionist perspective was evident in many aspects of this study. Much of the legislation adopts an interactionist approach, the SENDA (2001) particularly reflects this perspective.

Further critiques of the social model which relate to the absence of impairment in its conception of disability are voiced by writers coming from a feminist tradition which emerged in the 80s and 90s. These critiques were influenced by autobiographical accounts, stories and poems about disability which were written and published by disabled women and their supporters. Feminists in Disability Studies operate on two fronts, firstly bringing theory and research from mainstream feminism into disability theory but also critiquing mainstream feminism for its failure to adequately engage with disability and disablism in a serious manner (Thomas, 2007). Jenny Morris raised concerns about the inadequacy of the social model to explain the experiences of disabled people when she stated that:

> While environmental barriers and social attitudes are a crucial part of our experience of disability and do indeed disable us, to suggest that this is all there is to it is to deny the personal experience of physical and intellectual restrictions, of illness, of the fear of dying (Morris, 1991:10).

She saw disablism and its impact as gendered experiences (Morris, 1991; 1993; 1996). Research by Thomas (1999; 2001; 2004b) similarly confirmed the gendered nature and impact of disablism. Thus, Morris refused to countenance the social model distinction between 'the personal and the political' which she felt reflected the work of male social model writers and, as such, adopted the maxim that 'the personal is political' (Morris, 1992). Similar concerns have been raised by French (1993) who believes that many problems associated with impairment cannot be eradicated through societal change so that social model writers have presented disability in a simplistic manner.

For Crow (1996) the social model works well on a large scale in challenging discriminatory and oppressive practices but it does not adequately represent disabled people on a personal level because it does not represent the full range of disabled people's experiences. She argues that impairment is very real in disabled people's experiences so that '... pain, fatigue, depression and chronic illness are constant facts of life for most of us' (Crow, 1996:4). Hence, the feminist argument is that the social model has defined disability solely in relation to societal barriers and in so doing has totally ignored the fact that impairments do exist as disabling barriers. The consequence of social model thinking is that the everyday experiences of impairment have become a 'taboo' subject so reducing the ability of disabled people to express themselves and so 'undermining their 'power to cope'. She sees the social model as '...the ultimate irony: in tackling only one side of the situation we disable ourselves' (Crow, 1996:5). Some feminist writers have suggested that the social model would be more useful if it was revised as a way of 'encapsulating the total experience of both disability and impairment' (Crow, 1996:12). The argument is put forward that disability and impairment work together so that impairment is about how the body works and disability is about how society reacts to those bodies. Crow advocates a new model in which three aspects are recognised, including the objective concept of impairment as stipulated in the UPIAS document (1976), the individual interpretation of the subjective experience of impairment and the impact of the wider social context in disabling people with impairments (Crow,

1996:11-12). For Thomas (2004a) there is a need to renew the social relational aspect of disability, she has re-defined disability:

> Disability is a form of social oppression involving the social imposition of restrictions of activity on people with impairments and the socially engendered undermining of their psych-emotional wellbeing (Thomas, 1999:60).

In this definition disability is only evident when restrictions on activity are socially imposed so that it is possible to ascribe some non-socially imposed limitations to 'impairment effects' rather than to disability. Oliver (1996b:39) asserts that any such reinstatement of a causal link between impairment and disability is unacceptable. I agree. I maintain that any focus on impairment is likely to result in exclusionary practice

From a materialist feminist perspective Thomas (1999; 2004a; 2004b) has raised the concept of 'psycho-emotional' aspects of disablism. This concept revolves around intentional and unintentional 'hurtful' words and social actions of non-disabled people in their interactions with disabled people. Thomas argues that the impact of psycho-emotional disablism is very significant, including psychological and emotional damage which interacts with and compounds restrictions in environments like education and employment. Thomas emphasises that such a perspective on disability is not concurring with a medical perspective in which disability is an inevitable result of impairment, neither is it private troubles (Oliver, 1996b:48). For Thomas impairment effects may be present without any social oppression but they do not constitute disability. For some feminist writers a focus on impairment can be associated with affirmation and celebration of a positive, non-tragic view of disabled identity which counteracts the norm (Thompson, 1997; Peters, 2000; Swain and French, 2000; Johnstone, 2001; Swain et al, 2003; Shakespeare, 2006).

Further critiques of the social model have emerged from poststructuralist writers who take ideas from feminism, but also from Foucault (1965; 1973: 1997a). Their main argument is similar to the feminist critique in that they view the social model as flawed in

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that it ignores the experiences of impairment and in so doing ignores a significant aspect of the experiences of disabled people and the result is a denial of difference. They argue that removing societal barriers and oppression for disabled people does not remove all their problems, and that the problem of impairment still remains, so that a barrier-free utopia is unrealistic (Shakespeare, 2006).

> People are disabled by both societal barriers and by their bodies. This is straightforward and uncontroversial. The British social model approach, because it 'over-eggs the pudding' risks discrediting the entire dish (Shakespeare and Watson, 2001:17).

Clearly, this understanding of disability equates disability with limitation of activity, hence poststructuralists argue that restricted activity and limitation are caused by an interaction of both social and impairment factors. However, poststructuralist writers identify social oppression as located mainly within culture, language and discourse. In this view economic factors are relevant but relegated to lesser significance than cultural issues.

In relation to language they see the distinction between impairment and disability as problematic because it is no longer sustainable:

> For us, disability is the quintessential modern concept, because it is so complex, so variable, so contingent, so situated. It sits at the intersection of biology and society... Disability cannot be reduced to a singular identity: it is a multiplicity, a plurality (Shakespeare and Watson, 2001: 17).

For Shakespeare and Watson (2001) severing the causal link between impairment and disability reduces impairment to the biological but impairment is in reality profoundly social because the words we use to represent impairment are socially and culturally constructed. They view, like other poststructuralists, (Corker, 1998; Shakespeare and Watson, 2001; Corker and Shakespeare, 2002; Shakespeare, 2006) the separation of impairment and disability as a relic of 'outdated dualistic, binary thought' (Thomas, 2004a: 574). For Shakespeare (2006:37) emotional, physical and social barriers are linked in a 'complex dialectic' so that 'disability and impairment are a fluid continuum not

a polar dichotomy'. They argue that a more valid theory of disability must be understood by considering disability as the consequence of many biological, physical and social phenomena. As such all are disabled to different extents. Shakespeare (2006) considers that some barriers that emerge from these diverse phenomena are so rooted in society globally and nationally that their removal is virtually impossible. He cites the value attributed to literacy and numeracy as requirements for advancement as an example. The logical consequence of their argument is that the barrier-free environment is an unsustainable myth. Shakespeare and Watson (2001) further argue that many disabled people do not wish to identify with any perspective on disability because they may wish to be 'ordinary' rather than 'different' so that identity politics can be a prison as well as a haven for individuals who prefer not to 'wear the badge' of disability. This issue is further complicated by multiple identities so that disabled people have more than one salient identity.

To summarise, the social model emerged from Finkelstein and Hunt's separation of the conceptual link between impairment and disability. However, they never asserted that all limitation is caused by society but relegated impairment effects to the private and personal (Oliver, 2004). For them the key issue was disabled people making public the social exclusions that constitute disability. Hence, they restricted the meaning of disability to oppressive social reaction to impairment (Thomas, 2004a). However, the social model has been challenged because of its severance of the conceptual link between impairment and disability. For writers adopting a medical perspective this challenge is related to a belief that chronic illness has a direct and causative effect on limitation in daily life and so is an essential aspect of disability. For Bury and Williams these impairment effects co-exist with social restrictions but are more significant than them. For the poststructuralist writers the challenge to the social model is associated with its leaving the body out of the disability equation, though their ideas arise from postmodernism and poststructuralism while Bury and Williams' ideas are located in medical sociology (Thomas, 2004a). For Shakespeare and Watson social oppression

does exist so, like Finkelstein, they perceive disabled people as oppressed, though Bury and Williams do not acknowledge such oppression, rather they acknowledge social disadvantage. Poststructuralists view disability as a constructed category which needs to be deconstructed and theorised, though because of their deconstructivist approach it is difficult for them to appropriate a clear theoretical stance. The feminist writers also lament the omission of impairment effects from the social model, and desire a more positive affirmation of disabled identity. For Thomas (1999; 2004a; 2004b) a social relational definition of disability is the way forward in which it is acknowledged that some impairment effects do cause restriction of activity, but such non-socially imposed limitations do not equate with disability, rather constitute 'impairment effects' . However, I maintain that regardless of these challenges to the social model it is clear that it has had a profound and serious impact on oppressive and discriminatory policy and practice. The question is whether it has now fulfilled its potential and needs replacing or rejecting.

4.3 The social model and inclusion

Whatever views are held about the social model by writers in the disability field, they all recognise the significance of the model in achieving profound changes in legislation, policy and attitudes which have had considerable positive outcomes for reducing oppression and exclusion for disabled people in many aspects of their lives. So, even those writers who contest the social model recognise many positive achievements which they ascribe to the model as set out in the UPIAS (1976) document and directly related to Finkelstein's materialist perspective of disability. I propose that the social model has enabled a focus for the collective organisation of disabled people which has profoundly influenced the process of moving the disability agenda forward (Oliver, 1996b; Barnes, 1996) and as such is an appropriate and valid practical framework for inclusion in higher education and employment contexts for the following reasons.

Firstly, one of the key achievements is that social model philosophy has found its way into universities and so gained recognition in academia. The Open University employed

Finkelstein to work on their 'Handicapped Person in the Community' course and it was as a consequence of this that Disability Studies emerged as an academic subject in its own right (Campbell and Oliver, 1996:6-7).

Secondly, the social model has provided a valid philosophical basis for disability research which has discredited approaches to disability research which have been conducted from a medical perspective by non-disabled people and served to reinforce disadvantage and oppression (Oliver, 1992; Barnes, 1996; Stone and Priestly, 1996; Barnes, Oliver and Barton, 2002; Barnes and Mercer, 2004; Barnes, 2008). The social model has provided a philosophy that challenged this approach and encouraged an emancipatory approach to disability research in which disabled people are involved in the research process and given opportunities to challenge oppression.

Thirdly social model thinking has enabled disabled people to develop positive self-identities in which they are able to view any restrictions they experience as social restrictions and as such not in any way related to their personal limitations. Even past negative experiences can be transformed into positive feelings of self-worth where social model thinking is taken on board. Despite criticising the social model for its failure to engage with the effects of impairment (Crow, 1996) and having outlived its usefulness (Shakespeare and Watson, 2001:13), disability scholars still contend that it has done much to enhance the lives of disabled people. It has had a profound impact on the development of positive self-identity for many disabled people and provided a focus for collective identity and political struggle, so contributing to developments in equal rights. Crow writes:

> For years now the social model of disability has enabled me to confront, survive and even surmount countless situations of exclusion and discrimination. It has been my mainstay...It has established a vision of ourselves free from the constraints of disability (oppression) and provided a direction for our commitment to social change. It has played a central role in promoting disabled people's individual self-worth, collective identity and political organisation...the social model has saved lives...its sphere is

extending beyond movement to influence policy and practice in the mainstream. The contribution of the social model of disability, now and in the future, to achieving equal rights for disabled people is incalculable (Crow, 19996:2-3).

Fourthly, the social model has contributed to the liberation of disabled people as it focused on a political strategy to promote inclusion and a focus for anti-discrimination law and civil rights legislation (Shakespeare and Watson, 2001). Much of the legislation and policy explored in chapter 3 verifies the fact that the social model has made huge strides forward in eliminating some of the worst practices in education which were 'condition-related, categorical and deterministic to a very large degree' (Lindsay, 2003:5).

In summary, I maintain that the social model has made many positive contributions to eliminating discrimination in higher education and employment contexts. It has had a profound and positive impact on legislation, policy, research and disabled identity. Even those writers who critique the social model admit that any flaws within it are a small sacrifice in comparison to its enormous achievements.

> The social advances achieved by small groups are always of much greater significance than any loss in the clarity of the ideas along the way. The social model remains, and should continue to remain, in place as a powerful organising principle, a rallying cry, and a practical tool (Oliver, 2004) for the disabled people's movement (Thomas, 2004a:581).

4.4 Conclusion

It is unmistakable that the social model, as understood in the 'materialist' perspective and articulated in the UPIAS (1976) document, has had a profound and undeniably positive practical impact on the lives of disabled people and the manner in which non-disabled people perceive and respond to them. Hence, many writers propose that it is an adequate framework for challenging oppression that needs to be enforced and strengthened in legislation, policy and practice (Barnes, 1996; Oliver, 1996a; 1996b). It is clear that the social model is a valid practical framework for inclusion that has had a

profound and serious impact on exclusionary and discriminatory legislation, policy, research and attitudes. Despite the fact that some writers challenge the social model as understood in the UPIAS document (1976), they recognise that it has achieved much in relation to establishing Disability Studies as an academic discipline, giving a new direction to disability research, transforming negative identities and forming a basis for collective political action.

Nevertheless, the problem remains that unfortunately these changes have so far not gone far enough in eliminating exclusionary practice in higher education and employment contexts and that, despite these achievements associated with the social model, it is also apparent that disabled students continue to be at a disadvantage as compared to their non-disabled peers in both higher education and work-based context. As such it is appropriate to now explore whether the social model has fulfilled its potential and achieved as much as possible in its current form. If not, a new or revised model should be sought. It has been recognised in chapter 1 that many factors contribute to this employment disadvantage, not all of which are the focus of this thesis. Nevertheless, those who critique the social model for various reasons, whether from a medical, feminist or poststructuralist viewpoint consider it as an inadequate framework for inclusion which to be discarded or modified (Crow, 1996; Shakespeare and Watson, 2001; Shakespeare, 2006; Thomas, 2004a).The following chapter explains how I explored these issues in the thesis.

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CHAPTER 5: Research Methodology

In this chapter I analyse the selected approaches I adopted for my research, and the value and methodological paradigms informing those approaches. I include a specific emphasis on how disability research fits into these paradigms. The specific case study approach that I adopted is explained and justified with a focus on how I address the issues of reliability and validity. The methods I used, including how and why I selected my research participants and research tools are explained and my process for ensuring appropriate ethical protocols is articulated. Finally I explain and justify my selection of a grounded theory approach to data analysis and how the work reflects a shift in thinking from traditional grounded theory to more recent developments in theorizing grounded theory (Corbin and Strauss, 2008).

The original catalyst for this research was an interest in the social model of disability and its impact on national developments in inclusive education and employment. This became personally significant when I began teaching and leading on the Education Studies degree at a local higher education institution which has a specific focus on work-based learning and employability. The university's inclusion and employability policies are located within the social model of disability and the social inclusion agenda, which is about giving opportunities to marginalized groups the requisite skills to enter the job market (Dyson, 2001). However all the evidence points to disabled people being disadvantaged in employment as compared to their non-disabled peers and I wanted to explore how the social model is understood and applied in higher education and employment contexts on the course. I did this in order to understand some of the reasons for this employment disadvantage and to identify some solutions to this problem, as experienced by some of the disabled students on the course. So I explored these issues, allowing the research participants a voice to raise awareness of practical and political issues that contribute to continued exclusion in higher education, particularly in the area of work-based learning and work placements.

5.1 Selecting an approach to the research

I began my research by considering the most appropriate paradigm to adopt, an important decision because different value paradigms lead to different methodological paradigms. The selection of a research paradigm is related to beliefs about how reality is perceived, the interaction between the researcher and the events about which knowledge is sought and the methods adopted (Albrecht et al 2001). Researchers adopting a traditional view, positivists, believe in the notion of one reality that can be explored objectively and can be found, so they adopt the quantitative approach to research using methods that test theories and make distinctions between the context of discovery and the context of explanation (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1992). As such they recommend 'theory neutral' methods of data collection that reduce or eliminate the effects of the observer. This is done by developing a defined, consistent set of interview procedures. All this, it is argued, allows replication by others so that the reliability of findings can be tested.

However, the underlying values of the qualitative methodological paradigm are quite different and are based on a different view of the nature of social research which is sometimes called 'naturalism'. This paradigm assumes an alternative ontology, that is, that there is no single 'truth' waiting to be 'discovered' because reality is produced as part of a social construction. It also espouses a different epistemology in that there is an interactive connection between researchers and participants so that detachment is not always possible. Facts are products of social construction so any values around statements of 'fact' must be clarified (Mertens and Mc Laughlin 1995; Denzin and Lincoln 2000; Albrecht et al 2001). Hence, 'naturalism' advocates that the researcher makes every effort not to disrupt the natural state of the social world so that the main form of data should emanate from natural rather than artificial settings like experiments or formal interviews. Matza (1969) argued that the most important focus is faithfulness to the phenomena being studied, not any set of methodological principles. Naturalists also perceive social phenomena as distinct from natural phenomena so human behaviour is

affected by social meanings, like motives, attitudes and beliefs and the naturalist approach seeks to access the meanings affecting actions.

> Qualitative investigations are not explorations of concrete, intact frontiers; rather they are movements through social spaces that are designed and redesigned as we move through them. The research process is fuelled by the raw materials of the physical and social settings and the unique set of personalities, perspectives and aspirations of those investigating and inhabiting the fluid landscapes being explored (Tewksbury and Gagne, 2001:72).

The first issue that influenced my choice of paradigm was the purpose of the research as an appropriate approach to the research would need to reflect the aims and purposes of the research. The purpose of my study was to 'explore the impact of models of disability on inclusion policy and practice related to disabled students in higher education, with specific reference to inclusive work-related learning'. Clearly this did not produce generalisations beyond my specific case, which was disabled students following one undergraduate programme in one higher education institution. It was not generalisable to other higher education institutions or other groups of disabled students on different courses. The research also focused on increasing my understanding of the social and cultural processes which affect inclusion and employability on one undergraduate programme for disabled students on placement. The research focus was on interactions between disabled students and the other stakeholders involved in their inclusion at university and employment settings, including university tutors, the partnership team and placement supervisors. So in order to gain understanding and knowledge of the contexts in which inclusion and employability took place it was necessary to explore the interactions of a range of stakeholders in diverse contexts at different times. For this reason, and the fact that it is unlikely to be generalisable beyond the immediate university and work placement contexts, it was more appropriate to adopt a more naturalistic, qualitative approach to the study.

A further reason for adopting a qualitative approach was that my main purpose in doing the research was to reduce employment disadvantage through recommendations for

more effective inclusion and employment practice. Qualitative words would be more meaningful and convincing to a student, tutor or other stakeholder, than summarized numbers or tables. I wanted students, tutors, partnership staff and placement supervisors to read and understand my research so that effective policy changes could be implemented on the basis of my recommendations. I avoided surveying large numbers to produce large generalisations because I wanted to avoid failing to adequately examine the context of social action for our disabled students as there is no such thing as an average disabled student or an average placement experience. Therefore I decided that as disability is a complex and diverse notion then any attempt to place perceptions of disability into average or typical descriptions would be problematic. A quantitative approach would fail to take into account unusual results and Hitchcock and Hughes (1994:28) argue that this can lead to the 'tyranny of the majority', for example student perceptions of disability/employability would be biased towards the perceptions of the largest group, students with the dyslexia label, though it may be more accurately reflected in the minority deaf student perception. I concurred with Denzin, 1971(cited in Hammersley and Atkinson, 1992:8) who argues that 'the naturalist resists schemes or modes which over-simplify the complexity of every-day life'.

Miles and Huberman (1994) identify definite benefits in using qualitative methods. They see qualitative data as a source of well organized, rich descriptions and explanations in specific local contexts and I was exploring issues within a specific local university context and its associated work-based employment settings. With qualitative data I could see precisely which events led to which consequences and obtain detailed explanations and so I was able to make connections between issues in the diverse contexts of university and employment settings. I obtained rich data from a range of stakeholders which enabled me to see cause and consequence more clearly and the data enabled me to go beyond initial conceptions and to revise conceptual frameworks. It was this rich data from initial focus groups that raised the identity category that became so significant in establishing the impact of models of disability on disabled students in diverse settings. When translating policy into practice the selection of paradigm did matter as the way in

which the research results were evaluated was of critical importance. Also, as the students became participants in the research rather than objects of research, then the selection of a qualitative approach was most relevant as critical issues emerged (Albrecht et al, 2001:160).

Within the qualitative research paradigm some researchers distinguish between the 'interpretivist/constructivist' and 'critical theory/emancipatory' paradigms in which 'describing historical factors that create oppression' for marginalized groups is the main focus (Albrecht et al, 2001:149). The emancipatory paradigm seeks to develop emancipatory theory by exploring the reasons for exclusion and inequality which create oppression and connecting conclusions to political and social action (Mertens, 1998; Liamputtong, 2007). This emancipatory paradigm sits within critical theory, which challenges the interpretative paradigm as having failed to challenge discrimination and exclusion. In this approach the most important aspect of the research is the process of conducting the research rather than the outcome of the research, that is, listening to the voice of individuals and groups who have in the past had no voice in research (Liamputtong, 2007). Such an approach appeared to fit well with my researching an oppressed group of disabled students and aim of reducing exclusionary practice related to these students.

In considering an approach to this study I was aware that historically disabled people have had little input in research about their lives and had little power to effect changes. Oliver (1992; 1996b) believes that medical model thinking has impacted on research practices so that much positivist research has had little impact on changing policy, legislation or social issues for disabled people because disabled people have not contributed to or had a voice in research. Such medical model approaches to research have been challenged by disabled writers as they serve to compound and reinforce disabled people's disadvantage on an individual and collective basis (Oliver, 1992; 1996b; Barnes, 1996; Stone and Priestly, 1996; Barnes, Oliver and Barton, 2002; Barnes and Mercer, 2006; Barnes, 2008).

> For many disabled people research into their lives has become an activity that is undertaken by those who have power and is imposed upon those who do not. Research in such circumstances, reinforces a sense of further oppression and the violation of personal experience (Johnstone, 2001:114).

In order to challenge this disabling approach to research I considered an emancipatory approach to my research in which respondents were fully involved in every aspect of the research process (Barnes, 2008). The historical influence of medical individual interpretations of disability and the resulting marginalisation of disabled people and oppressive and discriminatory practices became a core category in my study. Therefore in approaching this study I ensured that I avoided any concept of inferiority being attributed to the disabled students because disabled people have, in the past, been objects of prejudice and discrimination in research (Hahn, 1993:47). This issue became particularly significant when it emerged in my study that many issues experienced by disabled students today are caused by the attitudes of people in their past and current educational and work experiences (Fine and Asch, 1988 in Albrecht et al, 2001). Thus, when I selected an approach to this study, the first and most significant factor I considered was the issue of disability in research. I believe that there is no objective concept of disability; it is a subjective, socially constructed concept. I adopt a social model position in this study in which I accept that disability is something that exists because of attitudes, structures, policies and practices (Albrecht et al., 2001:155). The adoption of a social model of disability has, according to Barnes (2008), stimulated the selection of an emancipatory paradigm in approaching research involving disabled people. Such an approach focuses explicitly on the collective experience of disabled people and so challenges any social oppression that they experience. Barnes (2008) views this emancipatory approach to any research on disability issues as crucial in reducing oppressive and discriminatory practices in society. As such my examination of disabled students' exclusion in the context of understandings and applications of models of disability fits well with a challenge to the positivist paradigm and a social interpretation of disability would appear to sit neatly within a naturalist, emancipatory value paradigm.

Therefore, conducting disability research from an emancipatory perspective involves embracing a social model view of disability as a form of social oppression (Barnes, Mercer and Shakespeare, 1999 in Barnes, 2008).

However, the social model has been challenged and this challenge extends to its influence on disability research. Some argue that disability research should 'widen its ontological gaze' to consider more than social aspects to include the feminist view that 'the personal is political' and so include impairment effects (Morris, 1992; Finkelstein, 1999; Thomas, 1999; 2007; Shakespeare, 2006; Barnes and Mercer, 2003; 2004; 2006). Because I adopted a social model perspective it appeared appropriate that I focus my research entirely on society and non-disabled stakeholders as the source of disability for the students in my study. This sits neatly within an emanicpatory/critical theory paradigm as the focus is on the oppression of a marginalized group of disabled students and any historical experiences that create oppression. Such an approach would include explanations of discrimination and exclusion experienced by disabled students in university and placement settings and employment opportunities and the linking any research results to political action at university and course level by suggesting improvements to practice that reduce the employment disadvantage experienced by disabled students. If I had adopted this emancipatory/critical theory approach then the focus would have completely shifted to environmental and human rights issues with no focus on impairment effects. It would also have afforded a full and active voice to disabled participants in the research.

However, the point of the research was to explore the effectiveness of the social model and whether it should be renewed to include an impairment focus or even abandoned and replaced with a new model. I found that disabled students and other participants did not necessarily avoid some focus on impairment specific effects (Thomas, 2007) so I considered Shakespeare's (2006) view that such a strong social model focus fails to adequately recognise individual impairment. This was not because I held to such a view but because I wished to explore why some participants were attributing aspects of

exclusion in university and work placements to impairment effects and the ways in which this affected inclusion and employability for disabled students. As such impairment effects do emerge in this study. I have also included non-disabled participants in the research, including academic tutors, the Head of Partnership and placement supervisors. Their perceptions of impairment related barriers to inclusion for disabled students do not sit within an emancipatory/critical theory paradigm. Also, the issue of empowerment is only addressed in a limited manner in the study. Disabled students had a voice in this research and participated in it but they were not all involved in the design and dissemination of the research. This was because of the longitudinal nature of the research, which meant that some students had left university before the research was completed and some began their participation in the research at different stages. Another factor was that tutors and supervisors are not disabled and I am not disabled so that the research is not fully empowering as identified in the emancipatory paradigm, because the students only took a partial role in shaping knowledge.

However, for disability research to be valid disabled students need to be empowered in the research process so I took every opportunity to ensure the disabled student voice was heard and this is evident in the design, methods and dissemination of my research. Barnes (2008) considers the main questions about disability research should relate to who controls what the research is about and how it is carried out, how far disabled people have been involved in the research process, the opportunities for disabled people to criticise the research and influence future directions and what happens to the product of the research. I had control of the research but gave disabled participants opportunities to shape initial questions in focus groups and semi-structured questions. The grounded theory approach I adopted to data analysis allowed issues and categories to emerge from disabled students throughout the study. I also took the research on more than one occasion to a university Disability Forum, where disabled students and academics were able to contribute to the shaping and dissemination of the research. I also took every precaution in eliminating the effects of any position of power I held as a non-disabled researcher and these are addressed in detail in the ethics section of this chapter.

Consequently the emancipatory paradigm was partially adopted because there were limitations to disabled student control of the research and I am a non-disabled researcher. Non-disabled participants were also involved in the research. In this respect a participatory approach was adopted which some believe is the most realistic option (Ward, 1997; Zarb, 1997) while others contend that it fails to give full control of the research process to disabled people (Oliver, 1997). However if the key focus of emancipatory research is exposing discriminatory practice and disabling barriers in order to empower disabled people then these outcomes should be the main consideration when making judgements about disability research (Oliver,1997; Finkelstein, 1999; Barnes, 2008). My research fulfilled these criteria in exposing discrimination and disabling barriers in higher education and employment contexts so that disabled students are more effectively included and the employment disadvantage they experience is reduced.

5.2 Selecting an approach: The case study

Yin (2009:4) states that

> The case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events - such as individual life cycles, small group behaviour, organisational and managerial processes.

My study examined the real life events related to work-based learning at university and work placements. The focus is on a small group of disabled students, staff and placement supervisors involved in the Education Studies degrees in one higher education organisation. Thus, it fits neatly within Yin's definition of a case study. According to Hitchcock and Hughes (1995: 317) the main feature of a case study is a focus on a specific incident so that,

> Case studies evolve around the in-depth study of a single event or a series of linked cases over a defined period of time.

This study involved an in-depth study of work-based learning and work placements over a period of seven years. The cases were linked in that individual disabled student participants were followed over the three years of their degree programme. The cases were also linked in that they all related to provision associated with the Education Studies degrees in one higher education institution. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995:317) states that a case study should normally include:

- A concern with the rich and vivid descriptions of events within the case

- A chronological narrative of events within the case

- An internal debate between the description of events and the analysis of events

- A focus upon particular individual actors or groups of actors and their perceptions

- A focus on particular events within the case

- The internal involvement of the researcher in the case

- A way of presenting the case which is able to capture the richness of the situation.

This study fulfils all of the above criteria for a case study in that firstly, it provides detailed, rich and thick descriptions and analysis of events relating to one small group of individuals following one aspect of one course in one higher education institution. Secondly, it provides a chronological narrative of the events within the case, specifically following students through their work-based learning and placement experiences over the three years of their study on the degree. Thirdly, it provides a debate around the described events and a critical analysis of those events. Fourthly, it focuses on the perceptions of a group of actors in the case, those actors include disabled students, selected academic tutors and placement supervisors and the Head of Partnership. Fifthly, there is a focus on particular events within the case, specifically the three work-based learning modules offered on the degree and the related work placements associated with these modules. Sixthly, I was internally involved in the case as a tutor on the work-based learning modules and an academic tutor for disabled students. For part of the time spent on this research I was course leader and placement tutor for the

Education Studies degrees. All of the above ensure that this research fulfils the requirements of a case study.

I adopted the view that you should acknowledge the strengths and challenges of the case study approach before beginning the study (Yin, 2009). One of the main advantages of using a case study approach was that it enabled me to explore a situation in depth, within clear boundaries and over a specific period of time thus enabling rich, in-depth subjective understandings of incidents, individuals and situations (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). Cohen et al (2000: 181) cite Nisbet and Watt (1984:2) who argue that 'A case study is a specific instance that is frequently designed to illustrate a more general principle'. The 'single instance' refers to the parameters of the research, in this case disabled students doing work-based learning on the Education Studies programme in one higher education institution. The focus is on reality, real students, real tutors, real placement supervisors and a real Head of Partnership in a real situation and this focus on the reality of a situation and the way in which practice links with theory makes the research more understandable to a wide range of interested parties who may not be familiar with academic language. In this way it is distinctly advantageous to adopt a more in-depth rich and detailed analysis of events that do not necessarily lend themselves to quantifiable numerical analysis.

Another advantage of adopting a case study approach is that case studies can establish cause and effect because the context is real, actual people are involved and the connections are apparent (Cohen et al 2000: 181). I analysed the causes of barriers to successful inclusive practice in higher education and employment contexts and the effect of such practice on employability for disabled students. I was aware that the specific university context and specific employment settings in which these events took place was a powerful determinant of cause and effect. These contexts and situations are ever-changing and very complex and a case study is more suited to such complexity and change so that 'case studies are distinguished less by the methodologies that they employ than by the subjects/objects of their inquiry' (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995:316).

For many reasons case study research has often been perceived as a less desirable approach than some others for several reasons, including the perception that it is less rigorous than other approaches and may lead to biased findings (Yin, 2009). A second issue raised concerning case studies is the fact that because they rely on single cases there is a difficulty in generalising the findings (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995; Yin 2009). Also questions arise over validity and reliability.

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) argue that generalisation is possible in relation to case study research but it is not defined in the same way as generalisation in more quantitative research. The generalisations that arise from more qualitative research

> Will depend very heavily upon the richness and thickness of the data collected and, equally, on the context from which the generalisations arise (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995:326).

I triangulated by using a range of techniques to collect data and different kinds of data enabled increased validity. This also enabled me to cross reference data and the different sources to identify any different perceptions of issues (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). Denzin (1970) argues for four types of triangulation, 'data triangulation' would include data collected over a period of time, from more than one person and in different locations. In this study I have used data collected over seven years from students, academic tutors, the Head of Partnership and placement supervisors and thus ensured data triangulation. 'Investigator triangulation' involves using more than one observer and this can involve member checks (Guba and Lincoln, 1981). Although I was the only researcher involved member checks were made by allowing some of the research participants to read and check any conclusions and evaluations from data collected. Also, the research was presented on two occasions while in progress to a Disability Forum where members were able to comment on the shape and development of the research. 'Theory triangulation' involves using more than one kind of approach in generating categories of analysis. I used a theoretical framework related to models of disability and generated initial questions from literatures on models of disability, including

policy literatures. In order to understand the higher education and work contexts in the case I included literatures on the inclusion of disabled students in higher education and disability and employment. However, using a grounded theory approach I further triangulated my theory as the disabled identity category emerged. 'Methodological triangulation' involves using more than one method to obtain information. I used a range of semi-structured questions in interviews (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995:34) and a combination of qualitative approaches, incorporating a range of research tools, including focus groups, semi-structured interviews and observation.

I have outlined my own position as researcher in chapter 2 as another means of triangulation is being aware of one's own bias and clarifying one's own assumptions as a researcher at the outset (Merriam, 1988: 169-70). I have made every effort to include the participants' voice in many aspects of this research as participant involvement in all phases of the research is mentioned by Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) as a key aspect of triangulation. I ensured a rigorous approach to my case study in which the voice of the disabled students was heard in my research (Hurst, 1996; Oliver, 1996b).

The following methods section outlines in detail how I conducted the research.

5.3 Selecting and using research instruments

The selection of appropriate research instruments is a crucial aspect of ensuring validity and reliability in research.

> The constitution of a research instrument is the most important aspect of any research endeavour as it determines the nature and quality of the information...the relevance and accuracy of your conclusions is entirely dependent upon it (Kumar, 2011:165).

I began the research by reviewing a range of previous research around models of disability, inclusion in higher education and employability for disabled students. It was as a consequence of this review that I developed more precise and insightful questions about the topic because the case study path should begin with ... 'a thorough literature

review and the careful thoughtful posing of research questions or objectives' Yin (2009: 3). By beginning with a literature review my case study benefited from prior development of theoretical propositions which guided my data collection and analysis. However, I was aware that it is important to ensure theory sensitivity in a grounded theory approach. My approach to grounded theory reflects the shift in thinking from traditional grounded theory, which required researchers to begin their inquiry with as few preconceived ideas as possible. In such a traditional approach it would not be deemed necessary to review any of the literature in the main area of the study (Glaser, 1992; Clark, 2005; Mills et al, 2006). Rather, I adopted Strauss and Corbin's (1998:45) view which considers that the literatures are useful stimulants for thinking about issues and relating to data. However, I was careful to avoid any preconceived ideas in my theory making so that the identity category emerged later in the research process directly from focus group data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The literature review provided me with an understanding of some of the key debates about the social model of disability and its impact on inclusion in higher education and employment for disabled people. This prior reading of the literatures was helpful in establishing the parameters of my study and developing 'sharper, more insightful questions' (Cooper, 1984 cited in Yin, 2009:14). However, it did not prevent me from carrying out an ongoing review of literature when new categories emerged from the data that had not been part of my initial prior reading of the literatures (Glaser, 2004).

My preliminary reading of the key literatures related to models of disability raised questions around models/perspectives of disability which I was able to use as a starting point for my research questions (Wilson, 2009). The main critical issues emerging from the literatures around models/ perspectives of disability related to the appropriateness of the social model philosophy as a framework for inclusive practice in higher education and employment settings. The question arose that if the social model is an appropriate framework, then why is it that so many disabled people continue to be disadvantaged in employment as compared to non-disabled people? Critically, does the social model need to be more strongly applied to policy and practice or would inclusion and employability

be enhanced for disabled people if the social model was renewed to include impairment effects or even abandoned and replaced with a new model of disability. In order to make sense of these critical debates around models of disability I initially used two key themes. The first two themes included (i) the inclusion of disabled students in higher education and (ii) disability and employment. These two themes addressed the two contexts in which the disabled students on the course would have to engage, the university context and the work-based placement or employment context. In order to establish some initial questions around these two themes I read literatures around inclusion in higher education and inclusive employment for disabled people. There are substantial literatures around these two areas but very little research has been done on work-based placements for disabled students. As such I used the literatures on inclusion in higher education and employment in order to explore the key positive developments and current tensions in these areas. However, during initial focus groups an issue emerged around disabled identity, particularly in the context of work and employment, so a third theme emerged and I then explored and reviewed literatures around disabled identity. As such I had three themes in my literature review which were used to explore the critical debates around models of disability and established research questions around each theme.

I also used some policy documents in my review of literatures because the aim of my study was to analyse the impact of models of disability on policy and practice, so I began my study by examining policy documents for evidence of social model thinking. I did this so that once the policy context was clear I could explore the relationship between practice and policy. In an evolved grounded theory approach 'nontechnical' literatures which provide useful information about the context in which research participants operate is useful (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Therefore I examined the university website for its inclusion statement and employability framework. I used the Student Academic Services (SAS) statement of disability in order to understand the university's interpretation of the term and I examined course documentation from Education Studies and Education and Disability Studies including the Definitive Document, placement

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module descriptors and disability module descriptors. These documents were analysed in relation to models of disability and contextualised within key relevant legislation, guidance and regulatory frameworks. As such these policy documents enabled me to establish whether university policy is grounded in social model philosophy.

In constructing my literature review I was aware that some grounded theorists have expressed concern around using literature before the research story emerges so that preconceived ideas in theory making can be avoided (Glaser and Straus 1967; Glaser, 1978; Strauss, 1987; Strauss and Corbin, 1990 and 1998). However, I adopted the view that a literature review, including non-technical literatures,   enabled me to understand some of the key theoretical debates and gave me some parameters around the critical debates I wished to explore (Lempert, 2007). The following section explains how I used a focus group approach after establishing some broad questions from the literature.

> A focus group is a carefully planned and moderated informal discussion where one's ideas bounce off another's creating a chain reaction of informative dialogue. Its purpose is to address a specific topic, in depth, in a comfortable environment to elicit a wide range of opinions, attitudes, feelings or perceptions from a group of people who share common experience relative to the dimension of the study. The product of a focus group is a unique form of qualitative information which brings understanding about how people react to an experience or product (Anderson, 1996:200).

I chose to use focus groups because it is a form of qualitative method which I used to gather rich, descriptive data from a small group of disabled students. I used the focus group to gain an understanding of the students' 'experiences, interests, attitudes, perspectives and assumptions' (Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003:90). I needed to know whether the university's focus on the social model of disability, inclusion and employability in its policies resulted in social model practice at university and work-based placements. The main aim of these initial focus group questions was to establish understandings of terms including inclusion and employability, the perceived significance of inclusion at university and work contexts, perceptions of barriers to inclusion in both contexts and positive contributions of both contexts to inclusion and employability.

Kumar (2011) argues that some broad topics can be developed by the researcher before the focus group meets so I asked students in their first focus group meeting to begin thinking about 'disability'; 'inclusion' and 'employability' (Appendix 5). They were given the opportunity to discuss these issues in an informal, relaxed environment and also to raise issues that maybe I would not have considered in drafting semi-structured interviews at the outset. I did not participate in the discussions at all and allowed the students to record their thoughts and views as according to Cohen et al (2000:288):

> The participants interact with each other rather than with the interviewer; such that the views of the participants can emerge...it is from the interaction of the group that the data emerge.

This process of students recording the discussion on large sheets ensured that the students' thoughts were accurately recorded (Kumar, 2011). I was then able to use this focus group data develop my theory and major themes for semi-structured interviews.

The focus group data gave me enough information on which to base my first semi-structured interviews with the students after their first work-based placements. These first focus group meetings with disabled students revealed an unexpected and emerging theme around disabled identity as some of the students spoke of employment and employability as important in terms of 'proving' themselves and giving them the 'credibility factor'. Other students equated employment and employability with self-worth. The main responses to questions around barriers to inclusion were around overcoming non-disabled people's perceptions of disabled people in the workplace. This often meant having to provide constant proof that they were employable. Therefore I realised that the issue of disabled identity would be significant in exploring my big questions. I now had three themes as a means of exploring the critical debates around the social model of disability (i) the inclusion of disabled students in higher education (ii) disability and employment and (iii) disabled identity.

There were many advantages to this aspect of my research as it meant that my themes emerged from the students' understandings of the initial themes rather than my own. As

such it gave them a voice as the people most affected by the issues. Such an approach empowered the students to be part of the research and a voice in social changes effected by it (Wilkinson, 2003). From the focus groups, particularly the first one with cohort A, I was able to define my research questions more clearly.

Semi-structured interviews are located within the interpretive tradition. As such they suited the qualitative approach that I adopted in my research and were a suitable research instrument to maximise opportunities for the disabled student voice to emerge in my data. I used a longitudinal approach for some cohorts (A-C) and interviewed them on more than one occasion during their course in order to ensure repeated opportunities to gain students' perspectives and to enhance the rapport between myself and the students. Such an approach enhanced confidence on my part as interviewer and the students as participants and subsequently enabled me to gather in-depth accurate information (Kumar, 2011). Detailed information on when interviews took place with specific groups is outlined in Appendix 2.

On the basis of three focus group meetings I constructed semi-structured interview questions for disabled students, academic tutors, the Head of Partnership and placement supervisors (Appendices 5-10). Student interviews took place after their first work-based placement. I also thought that disabled students' perspectives on these issues may change after experiencing a second work-based placement so decided to interview some of them on a second occasion, after their second placement had taken place (Appendix 7). I interviewed stakeholders other than the students in order to triangulate my data as the disabled students' responses to the questions were only one part of the picture. Their understandings of disability were mainly a reflection of what they had learned from their academic tutors and so I needed to explore the views of the academic tutors too. The course involved the students working with the Partnership Team to organise and monitor their work-based placements and with placement supervisors when on work placement. Hence, I ensured triangulation by including academic tutors, the Head of Partnership and placement supervisors in my sample. This fitted with Strauss and Corbin's (1998:129) view of grounded theory 'capturing the

dynamic flow of events and the complex nature of relationships'. It also enabled me to manage the research data emerging from the different contexts that the students encountered while on the course, including university and three different placement contexts. The focus of the semi-structured interview questions with disabled students was around the three key themes of (i) inclusion of disabled students in higher education: (ii) disability and employment and (iii) disabled identity as articulated in chapter 2.2 and Appendix 3 a-c.

One of the disadvantages of semi-structured interviews is that they can be prone to subjectivity and bias (Cohen et al, 2003) in interpreting responses. I avoided this by interviewing students on more than one occasion and interviewing five different cohorts of students. I also triangulated by later adding data from semi-structured interviews with other stakeholders, including four academic tutors, four placement supervisors and the Head of Partnership (Appendices 8-10). This also enabled me to gain in depth information concerning diverse views in different contexts affecting the students so this fitted with the grounded theory maxim of capturing the complex nature of relationships and experiences in different contexts, events and timeframes (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Another advantage of using the semi-structured approach to interviewing was that I had the freedom and flexibility to restructure and reformulate questions, particularly towards the identity theme which had emerged in initial focus group meetings. Another advantage of this method was that I explored sensitive areas around identity and used questions flexibly to probe and get in-depth responses. Some students used the interviews as opportunities to 'let off steam' and 'voice opinions' (Wilkinson, 2003:63), particularly in relation to the value attributed to paid work and abuse and discriminatory experiences they had encountered. However, I further added to my data by using observations that further enhanced triangulation and validity in my research.

Observation research is a useful addition to semi-structured interviews because

> It can allow researchers to understand much more about what goes on in complex real world situations than they can ever discover simply by asking questions of those who experience them...because in interviews...

respondents are reluctant to impart everything they know (Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003:117).

I wanted to triangulate data further in order to ensure I avoided researcher bias in interview data. I observed the students in a relevant social setting, the final work-placement lecture at university before the students embarked on their work placement. Observation of this lecture was an opportunity to gain rich data illuminating the university setting and included an academic tutor from my sample leading the session as well as disabled and non-disabled students being present in the lecture. The theme of the lecture was 'identity and diversity' so was focused on a broad theme of diversity, not just disability. So I collected data in the time, context and location in which it occurred rather than an interview situation where I was relying on participants' memories and recollections. Cohen et al (2000:305) refers to this as 'live' data from 'live' situations and cites Patton (1990:203-5) who sees observational data as 'in situ' rather than second-hand. My observation included the physical setting of an organisation, the human setting, that is the people involved (students and tutor), the interactional setting, that is the interactions taking place during the lecture and the programme setting, for example, resources, pedagogy, and curriculum. In this way I was able to enter and understand the situation.

An issue that emerged in data from interviews with the academic tutors was that they were trying to be inclusive while operating with exclusive curricular and pedagogical arrangements, so this observation was an opportunity to observe one aspect of the placement curriculum and pedagogy. The identity theme was also further explored as this was the subject of the lecture. Some issues around multiple identities emerged in the observation which I had not gained from any data in my focus groups and semi-structured interviews. Thus, I was able to add the category of multiple identities to further illuminate my exploration of the core theme of the social model of disability. I was also able to focus in depth on a category raised by some of the academic tutors which became the basis of a recommendation around curriculum and pedagogy.

I felt that having added an observation to my focus group and interview research I had ensured that I had explored as many avenues as possible around inclusion and employment for the disabled students on the work-related modules. It meant that if I had missed any issues in focus groups or interviews because students felt issues were irrelevant or 'embarrassing' to raise with a member of staff I was afforded another opportunity to gain rich data. I also considered the observation appropriate in case some important issues which may have appeared routine or irrelevant and so not emerged in any previous data collection could emerge. This observation turned out to be significant as students raised issues around multiple identities which are pertinent in relation to the challenges to the social model that it does not really represent disabled students with multiple identities.

All of the above research instruments depended upon the selection of research participants as:

> The quality of a piece of research not only stands or falls by the appropriateness of the methodology and instrumentation but also by the suitability of the sampling strategy that has been adopted (Cohen et al, 2000:92).

So the next section explains my approach to selecting research participants for my study.

5.4 Selecting research participants

In order to gain knowledge that is representative of the total population under study I made decisions related to several key issues including sample size, representativeness of the sample, parameters of the sample; access to the sample and the sampling strategy to be used (Cohen et al, 2000:92). I also used an appropriate sampling strategy that enhanced validity in my case study method, but also supported the grounded theory approach to my study. I have outlined my research participants and their relationship with research tools in chapter 2 and these are summarised in Appendices 1and 2. I now expand on some of the key issues that determined my choice of research participants.

One of the issues I faced in selecting a sample is that in a grounded theory approach the sample size should not be determined before the start of the study (Patton, 1990) as purposeful sampling can only take place when a phenomenon is known to exist, so sample size is determined by the data generated and the analysis of that data. Thus, extending the sample only stops when saturation is achieved and no more categories are emerging. So a decision on the size of my sample was complicated for several reasons. I was aware that in a case study a minimum number of cases should be selected that accurately represents the disabled student population targeted by the research. I was confronted by the problem that the target population was very small. In the first year of the inquiry there were only five disabled students (cohort A) on the course and as such I risked having a small group, though it was the total disabled student population. Borg and Gall (1979) suggest that it is possible to begin with the smallest number of cases in the smallest sub-group of the population and work up from that. Adopting this principle, I was able to overcome my problems because I was able to establish a small group of disabled students representing my case at the outset of the research and these were the total population of disabled students in the year group. Further disabled student populations were added each year so three more were added from cohort B, five from cohort C, one from D and two from cohort E. This gave me a total of sixteen disabled student participants which was totally representative of the population I wished to study.

The small population size suited the case study approach which I adopted because case studies are more likely to involve a small sample/population within the parameters of the specified case and in qualitative research it is more likely that the sample/population will be small (Cohen et al, 2000). The participants also included a sample of four academic tutors and all these tutors are involved with disabled students on placement as academic tutors, mark students' placement assessments, provide tutorial support while students are on placement and mark students' Professional Development Portfolios. Two of the tutors are more directly involved in placement organisation and monitoring activities. Included in the sample is the Head of Partnership who is the administrator responsible

for selecting, organising and administering placements in conjunction with academic tutors. Finally, a sample of four placement supervisors of disabled students were included as they were able to provide data from the placement institution standpoint. Thus, when it became clear that students' experiences of inclusion and discrimination were different in different contexts I was able to explore stakeholders' opinions in those contexts, including academic tutors, the Head of Partnership and placement supervisors. Hence I did start with a very small purposive population of disabled students to suit the needs of my case but the number of research participants grew as new categories emerged.

In order for the sample to be valid it needs to represent the whole population in question. I had to decide what is being represented, that is, disabled students following a particular degree programme that has work-based learning at its core. I had a limited number of disabled students as identified by learning contracts in each Education Studies cohort. All the disabled students in each cohort agreed to take part in the research so the participants were very representative of the 'case' as they represented the total disabled student population. There was the possibility that some disabled students were not in receipt of a learning contract because they have chosen not to declare their impairment so I could not represent any disabled students who had not declared their impairment.

The four tutors represented one third of the tutors on the course (twelve in total) who support disabled students on placement. Only one disabled tutor is involved in the course and she was represented in the tutor sample. Two administrators are involved in the selection, organisation and administration of placements so in interviewing one of them this was a fifty percent sample. By interviewing four placement supervisors I was restricting myself to a small sample, though all these placement supervisors had been involved in supervising at least one of the disabled students in the study so their contributions to the data added important detail and enabled me more accurately to see the flow of events in different contexts.

The nature of my research required a focus on a very specific group of disabled students, so a non-probability (purposive) population of disabled students was identified. For this reason the cases to be included were purposely selected because they represent a range of disabled students who have been identified through their learning contracts. It suited my needs to use this relatively small population , it does not pretend to represent the wider population, but it does represent the majority of disabled students following the course/programme specified in the case and attending specific work related placements associated with the course. Access to the disabled student population was negotiated on an annual basis as students enrolled on the course and interviews and focus groups took place.

Academic tutors in the sample were also purposively selected to represent the tutors who work with disabled students on the course as academic tutors. There are twelve tutors doing the academic tutor role and the four in the sample all fulfil this role. One tutor on the team is disabled so she is part of the sample in order to ensure that the disabled voice is heard. Two tutors have specific placement responsibilities in relation to the course and they have both been included in the four tutors selected because of their detailed specific knowledge and awareness of placements. The final tutor selected is Course Leader so again has been selected because of her detailed knowledge of the organisation of the course. Access was negotiated with tutors through daily contact with the researcher and interviews took place at the higher education institution where the research took place.

A purposive sample of placement supervisors included four placement supervisors who had supervised one of the disabled students on placement at their institution. Access was negotiated through information and data from the Partnership Support Team on specific disabled student placements. Phone calls and emails were used to arrange interviews which took place at the placement institutions.

The administrative team involved in the selection, organisation and administration of the placements for disabled students is again small and includes only two people so I purposively selected the Head of Partnership who is the team leader who had the

greatest knowledge and experience of dealing with disabled student placements and liaison with placement institutions. He is known to me and so access was negotiated through word of mouth and the interview took place at the higher education institution where the research was conducted.

In conclusion the selected sampling strategy suits the purpose of this research, the time-scales and constraints of the research, the methods of data collection and the methodology.

5.5 Ethics

> Ethics is a set of moral principles that aims to prevent researchers from harming those who they research (Dickson-Swift, 2005:2).

I was mindful that because the disabled students participating in my study were from an oppressed group and that I was not only non-disabled but also a tutor so in a position of power, I had to be particularly meticulous in ensuring I did not cause any harm to the disabled students or abuse my position of power in any way. Though some disabled people have argued that it is inappropriate for non-disabled people to research disabled people (Johnstone, 2001), I took on board the view that it is not necessary to be disabled to research issues that impact on disabled students and that 'the idea that having an impairment is vital to understanding impairment is dangerously essentialist' (Shakespeare, 2006:195). However, I was sensitive to the fact that the reason some disabled people have been unwilling to accept research done about them by non-disabled people is because often they have not had any voice in the research and have not had the power to make their voices heard in it (Oliver, 1992 and 1996b).

However, from the outset of my research my purpose and aim in conducting the study was to challenge oppression of disabled people in relation to their exclusion and disadvantage in employment opportunities. I concurred with Shakespeare (2006) that non-disabled people can be involved in challenging and solving problems and issues encountered by disabled people, and they do not necessarily oppress disabled people by conducting research. My only intention and purpose in my research was challenging

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any oppressive and exclusionary practices in my case so I do not think that my being non-disabled impacted negatively on my study.

I followed ethical protocols throughout the research process in order to minimise any risks of potential harm to participants, whilst focusing on doing some positive good in eliminating discriminatory practice and oppression in inclusionary practices at university and employment contexts. One of the key ethical principles in research is weighing up the risks and benefits of the participants being involved in the research. I viewed any 'risks' of a non-disabled researcher doing the research as far outweighed by the benefits of eliminating oppressive and exclusionary employment practices for disabled students in my case. But Dickson-Swift (2005) argues that issues and risks may not be evident at the outset of the research, rather they may emerge at any stage in the research process. Consequently I took into account that it is not adequate to only consider ethical issues at the outset of the research, when considering its purpose, but rather ensuring ethical conduct is something that is part of the process of research and, as such, takes place in the design, methods, analysis and dissemination stage of the research process. So I took on board the nature of some of my participants who were disabled and ensured that I considered not causing them any harm during any stage in the research process. I have outlined earlier in this chapter how I considered the ethical issues related to disability research at the design stage of my research. However, it was essential to ensure ethical conduct in my selection of research tools, analysis of data and dissemination of my research.

One of the main principles of ethical conduct in research includes gaining informed consent from participants who have been provided with sufficient information about the research to consent to it (BERA, 2004; 2011). So I began my research by gaining informed consent form my participants. According to Dienar and Crandall, 1978 (in Cohen et al 2000) informed consent is about participants deciding to participate in research after they have been informed of any facts that might influence their decision. It

involves four elements, competence, voluntarism, full information and comprehension. Emanuel et al (2000:2703) define informed consent as:

> The provision of information to participants about the purpose of research, its procedures, potential risks, benefits and alternatives so that the individual understands this information and can make a voluntary decision whether to enrol and continue to participate.

The participants in my research were all given an outline of the proposed research in a letter and research participant information sheet (Appendix 11) that explained the nature, purpose and methods of the study and the demands that were likely to be made on participants. An oral explanation to ensure comprehension was also provided and the researcher's contact details were made available. The document made clear the right of participants to withdraw at any time and assured them that I would follow all ethical protocols. Participants signed and returned a consent form in which they agreed to take part (Appendix 12). At each research meeting the specific focus and purpose of the meeting and the type of information to be collected and how it would be collected was clearly outlined to participants. Another key ethical principle in research relates to confidentiality and anonymity. I promised all participants that I would maintain anonymity of their identity and the identity of the institutions in which they worked and this was evident in the documentation given to all participants. I gave all participants pseudonyms and did not name any institution in the research.

One of the key challenges in engaging in research with an 'oppressed' or 'vulnerable' group of students is to be realistic about and take advantage of the unique opportunities afforded to give a voice to those who have often been denied such a voice or had their voices ignored. Daly states that '...qualitative methods are especially appropriate to the study of vulnerable people' (1992: 3-4 cited in Liamputtong, 2007:7). Because the qualitative approach is flexible, it is appropriate and suitable for understanding meanings and subjective experiences of 'vulnerable' groups of people. So the qualitative approach I adopted allowed opportunities for the voices of disabled students to be heard, particularly in focus groups and semi-structured interviews. In analysing data I adopted

a constructivist grounded theory approach and this positive approach ensured that participants' accounts were visible in the final text so that:

> Making such connections clear, however, demonstrates the value the researcher places on the participant as contributors to the reconstruction of the final grounded theory model. It also meets the researcher's ethical obligation to "describe the experiences of others in the most faithful way possible" (Munhall, 2001:540).

Finally, in disseminating the findings of my study I made every effort to disseminate the information in a manner that would present the voice of disabled students and their views on how they perceived their exclusion. I have made recommendations, which propose some solutions to the exclusion disabled students experience which revolve around strengthening the social model in policies and practices in both university and placement contexts and these are based partially on the disabled students' views. As such, they have been given an opportunity to shape future policy and practice in both these contexts. I have disseminated some early findings in a university Disability Forum in which disabled students and tutors participate so that the disabled participants in the forum could share and advise on the shape of the research. Disseminating findings in a university research seminar has also promoted social model thinking and future developments.

I was aware of Oliver's (1996b) concerns that research about disabled people has often alienated them from the research process because they have not been involved in it and consequently their voice has not been heard or their perspective reflected. Therefore, what is needed is research that takes disabled students' views seriously. Such an approach sits clearly within a social model disability. I am confident that disabled students' views were taken seriously at all stages of the research process, including selecting a research design, methods , analysis of data and dissemination of findings. In this way the position of the researcher as non-disabled did not result in any of Oliver's concerns being realised. On the contrary a powerful voice was heard from which has

resulted in recommendations for a strengthening of social model practices in both university and placement contexts. The following section explains in detail how I conducted the research.

5.6 Using grounded theory to analyse data

I selected a case study approach in which theory development is part of the design (Yin, 2009:35) so I adopted a grounded theory approach which is:

> An inductive, theory discovery methodology that allows the researcher to develop a theoretical account of the general features of a topic while simultaneously grounding the account in empirical observations or data (Martin and Turner, 1986:141).

So grounded theory does not require the researcher to create an initial theory, rather, it allows the researcher the liberty to explore the research area and allow issues to emerge from data (Glaser, 1978; 1992; 1998; 2001; Bryant, 2002). My approach reflects the change in thinking from the original ideas around grounded theory which were developed by Glaser and Strauss and first described in The Discovery of Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). They were concerned that research focused on verifying theory rather than generating theory, and so they focused attention on generating theory purely from data. They developed two techniques to apply some of the rigour of quantitative analysis to qualitative data, that is, theoretical sampling and constant comparison (Cooney, 2010). However, over time it emerged that they had diverse and conflicting views, mainly in relation to data analysis. The main argument is whether verification should be an outcome of grounded theory analysis. Strauss (1987) stated that induction, deduction and verification are essential outcomes, while Glaser (1992) maintained that grounded theory is solely inductive. Glaser has remained faithful to the original view of grounded theory, while Strauss and Corbin (1990; 1998; 2008) have prescribed how researchers should undertake the process of data analysis, an approach that has been criticised for being over prescriptive (Glaser, 1992). However, in later books (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Corbin and Strauss, 2008) Strauss and Corbin have referred to deduction, validation and elaboration but not to verification and have emphasised flexibility and

researchers being prepared to use the procedures as they feel most appropriate. As such there is a shift in thinking from the original grounded theorists who believed that theory should emerge purely from data and more recent perspectives that recognise how initial ideas, perceptions and interactions can contribute to theory making.

Another issue of debate around grounded theory relates to ontology. Glaserian grounded theory, as originally described, fits within a positivist paradigm, assuming an objective external reality (Charmaz, 2000). However, Annells (1997) views classical grounded theory as critical realist linked with post-positivism and views Glaser's later work as continuing to reflect a realist ontology. Some writers (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Charmaz, 2000) see Strauss and Corbin's view as aligned with post-positivism, though more recently others (Corbin and Srauss, 2008) have adopted a more relativist perspective and associated with constructivism (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007). In this relativist ontological perspective it is recognised that both researcher and researched create theory together. In such a view the influence of social factors on action is acknowledged. It is also acknowledged that reality is situated and limited to time and space and as such cannot be fully known. Corbin states (2008:9) that there is no doubt that she has been influenced by feminists, postmodernists and constructivists in moving interpretive research methods more into postmodern sensibility, though she still agrees with Strauss' approach to data analysis. For Corbin (2008:10) concepts and theories are constructed by researchers from the stories constructed by research participants who are attempting to make sense of experiences in their lives, both to the researcher and themselves. Corbin also sees the need for knowledge that informs practice and brings about social change and improvement in other people's lives.

Finally Corbin agrees with feminists that we cannot separate our research from who we are and what we do. Hence we need to reflect on the research process and how it influences us. As such she is concerned with her role as researcher and the need to tell the stories of the participants, it is their story and in presenting their words along with her own that is co-construction. Epistemologically she views tools and procedures as 'tools not directives'. The key issue is the fluid and dynamic nature of qualitative analysis, not

the procedures. As such research tools should be 'relaxed, flexible and driven by insight gained through interaction with data rather than being overly structured and based only on procedures' (Corbin and Strauss, 2008:12).

Thus, I selected a constructivist grounded theory approach to this research because my study aimed to understand the impact of the social model of disability on policy and practice for disabled students in work-based placements. Meeting these aims required a methodology that focused on 'meanings, patterns and social interactions, social structures and structural features' (Cooney, 2010:25). I have outlined my ontological position in 5.1 where it is clear that I adopt a naturalist position in my research, thus aligning with Charmaz (2000); Bryant and Charmaz (2007) and Corbin in Corbin and Strauss (2008).

The advantages of using constructivist grounded theory in this study are that it enables the researcher to interpret complex phenomena (Charmaz, 2003) and the issues around disability and disabled identity are complex, overlapping and multi-faceted, especially when related to educational and employment contexts. As such interpretive research provided me with rich descriptions that helped me to disentangle conceptual relevance around my three key concepts of disability, inclusion and employability. I also had a clear purpose in doing disability research so that it was important to effect some positive social change (Barnes, 2008), so I agreed with Corbin's (2008) view that research should have a social purpose. Constructivist grounded theory is a useful approach to exploring themes of a social nature. It does not force any preconceived theoretical assumptions, rather it provides:

> A lens that does not bias emergence with *a priori* assumptions and does not
> thrust forward a selection of preconceived theories from which the researcher
> must explain the socio-technical phenomena (Jones and Alony, 2011:97).

Because I was working in an institution and on a course where the social model of disability was a central value and principle in policies it was essential for me as a researcher to avoid any preconceived ideas about practice and allow the rich data that

emerged to form the basis of my theory and to explain the social experiences of disabled students on their placements. However, I did not begin with a 'tabula rasa' as advocated by Glaser and Strauss (1967). I adopted Corbin and Strauss' view that some methodological structure can be a useful tool and as such some literatures were used to establish initial focus group questions. However, I allowed themes and semi-structured interview questions to emerge from data that came out of initial focus groups. I also took on board Strauss and Corbin's (1998) view that some validation is appropriate and this is explored in 5.2. Similarly the following section (5.6 i-iii) elaborates on the grounded theory approach I adopted.

Disability and impairment are socially constructed terms so that in an interpretive approach understanding is liable to be subjective and value-laden (Galal, 2001). As such, any data that is presented in the study is a 'composite social construction of the researcher along with the socially constructed views of those who are being studied' (Jones and Alony, 2011:97). First order concepts, the facts related to the research like the statements in policy documents and the quotes from the disabled students and other stakeholders are affected by the participants' interpretations. However, these are supplemented by second order concepts that are the researcher's interpretations of the interpretations and as such grounded theory gave me the opportunity to sort these first order concepts out through saturation and patterns emerging (Walsham, 1995). For example a pattern emerged in which lack of knowledge of the social model appeared to equate with more exclusive environments for disabled students. Also, saturation was reached with focus groups after three disabled student cohorts were involved, similarly the second interviews with students yielded no further data and so were terminated after the first three cohorts had been interviewed for the second time.

So I chose a constructivist approach to grounded theory in this study. It is generally accepted that Glaserian grounded theory fits within the positivist paradigm (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Charmaz, 2000). However, the ontology and epistemology espoused in this study views knowledge as ever changing and emerging and as interpreted by both the researcher and the participants. As such the study aligns with a constructivist

grounded theory (Charmaz, 2000) which is consistent with a relativist ontology. The meaning of diverse emotions, understandings and experiences of disability emerged through interactions and discourses between me as the researcher and the research participants and as such constructivist grounded theory provided a method which enabled me to deduce genuine meaning and insight. Corbin (Corbin and Strauss, 2008) demonstrates a similar ontological position and a shift in her viewpoint in which she acknowledges that 'concepts and theories are constructed by researchers out of stories that are constructed by the research participants'. I also took on board the constructivist maxim that there is a need to reflect on my own position as researcher and the impact that the research process had on me and I have done this in 2.3 and 9.9. So I now elaborate on the grounded theory process in the study by explaining how I progressed through my study using a grounded theory approach which began with an exploration of data which informed me about the impact of the social model on inclusion policy and practice in higher education and work contexts.

5.6 (i) The impact of the social model on inclusion policy and practice in higher education and work placement contexts

I began my study with an examination of the approach to disability, inclusion and employability adopted by the university in the study. The university and course policy documents including the disability statement, inclusion statement and employability statement were used as data which enabled me to uncover some of the policy contexts that may influence the research participants (Corbin, 1998 in Mills et al, 2006). Other course level documents included the module descriptors for modules students followed, particularly the *Introduction to Disability Studies* module which had an explicit social module focus and had been completed successfully by all the students in the study before they embarked on their first work placement and before any focus groups or interviews took place. Thus I began my data analysis around the university and course level legislation and policy documents with a particular focus on the extent to which the social model is reflected in them. It emerged from these documents that the university

appeared to adopt a social model philosophy to disability in its inclusion policies and guidance and that this is evident at faculty and course level in both documents and website information. So having established that university policies appeared to be located within social model thinking I then examined the interplay between the different stakeholders and these policies and the ethos in which they operated (Corbin, 1991) in order to establish how stakeholders understood and applied the policies in practice.

I began my examination of the data from disabled students so I analysed disabled students' understanding of the social model and how they perceive it working out at university and in placement. Students appeared initially to have an excellent knowledge of the social model which they had gained on the course. However, they perceived the work-based environment as less 'barrier-free' than the university context and that often, even though the policies appeared to be in place, social model practice was not always evident and that this was more of a problem in work contexts than university contexts. I used interviews with students in cohorts A-C on two occasions after their annual placements to explore why they perceived the barriers to their inclusion as more significant in work contexts. I conducted two interviews on separate occasions to gain richer data because students would have had further placement opportunities in different work contexts with different placement supervisors in each year of their study. However, when I explored their perceptions of barriers to their inclusion in both university and placement contexts students began to explain the barriers to their inclusion as mainly located in personal impairment effects. I hoped to get data about diverse barriers in different contexts so was surprised when the impairment issue emerged. So I was unsure why the students initially appeared to understand the social model but later appeared to be speaking in medical model terminology and identifying clear causal links between their impairment and their disability. I wanted to know if they were adopting medical model practice even though they knew and understood the social model or adopting a feminist perspective recognising that the social model did not adequately represent their personal experiences, especially in work contexts (Morris, 1991; French, 1993; Crow, 1996). I was also aware of Thomas' (2007) view that these are not barriers

but impairment effects which are socially constructed, (Tremain, 2002) so students may have been reflecting constructions of disability that they had encountered in their past experiences or were encountering in their current experiences.

Therefore two things emerged from this data on the social model, one that students appeared confused about the social model because even though they clearly understood it, they still located barriers to their inclusion mainly within their own impairments and their effects. Secondly it emerged that they associated more barriers to their inclusion with placement work-based contexts than university contexts. So I needed to find out why students appeared confused about the social model and the range of experiences, contexts and stakeholders that may be causing or contributing to that confusion.

So I then analysed other stakeholders' knowledge and understanding of the social model, how they perceived barriers to inclusion for their disabled students and how these perceptions reflected social model thinking. These stakeholders included academic tutors; placement supervisors; and the Head of Partnership. All the academic tutors articulated a clear understanding of the social model and how it worked out in practice. One held to a 'strong' social model (Barnes, 1996; Oliver, 1996a; 1996b; Shakespeare, 2006). Academic tutors perceived barriers to inclusion for disabled students as mainly structural barriers, lack of knowledge and awareness of disability, lack of a disabled student voice in planning and evaluation of courses and discrimination. One was particularly concerned to avoid being impairment specific in any way. So the academic tutors demonstrated a clear understanding of the social model and its implications for inclusive practice. Therefore, it appeared the students were not getting any confused messages about the social model from their academic tutors.

However, the students were also working in other contexts including work-based placement contexts and they had to work with the Partnership Team to organise and monitor their placements and with placement tutors once they were on placement. I needed to find out what these stakeholders' understandings of the social model were and whether their views impacted on the students' apparent misunderstandings of the social model. One surprising issue that arose out of the interview was that the Head of

Partnership had never heard of the social model. He perceived the main barriers to inclusion in work-based contexts for disabled students as located within impairments, especially those related to behaviour like mental health and autism related impairments. His understanding was clearly located within a medical/individual perspective. This further confirmed my thoughts about an issue emerging in my research around disabled identity which would illuminate the diverse experiences of the social model that the students appeared to be having.

The Head of Partnership's knowledge and understanding of the social model was in stark contrast to that of the academic tutors and, as such, I thought that this may be impacting on the students' confusion as they were confronted with very different understandings of models of disability from different staff members they encountered on their course. So I analysed data from similar questions about the social model and barriers to inclusion which had been put to the placement supervisors (Appendix 10). One of the four placement supervisors knew what the social model is and applied it in practice. The other three had never heard of it. I wondered if they actually operated a social model philosophy, even though they did not understand the term, so explored how they perceived barriers to inclusion for disabled students when in work placement contexts. The placement supervisors focused mainly on impairment effects, particularly around certain specific impairment labels, including mental health and Asperger's Syndrome. There were fears about the safety of children/students at the placement and the possibility of litigation if their rights and safety were infringed. This was again similar to the Head of Partnership's concerns and confirmed my need to explore the emerging theme of disabled identity in more detail in order to establish whether some impairments carry more stigma and exclusion than others.

Thus, another two key issues arose from this data. Firstly different stakeholders had widely different knowledge about the social model and that this was reflected in how they perceived impairment effects as barriers to inclusion. This meant that students experienced varied applications of social model thinking amongst stakeholders, including some holding a strong social model, others a feminist perspective recognising the impact

of impairment effects and others a post-structural perspective. All this contributed to the students' confused understanding of the social model. Secondly it emerged that some impairment effects were perceived by some stakeholders as more significant than others. Both the Head of Partnership and the placement supervisors were concerned that disabled students with mental health and behaviour related impairments were more difficult to include than other disabled students.

I next examined data around the theme of disabled identity in order to shed further light on both these emerging issues. This data would further explain if students were focusing on impairment effects as barriers because of confusion about the social model, or taking a medical model perspective, or taking a feminist standpoint. It would also illuminate why some identities were being perceived as more significant than others by some stakeholders and whether there was a link between lack of knowledge of disability and ascribing of negative identities.

5.6 (ii) Disabled identity: The significance of impairment

Having analysed the data around the social model it became clear that impairment effects were significant. So I analysed data around disabled identity to see if this further explained some of the students' confusions about the social model and their varied experiences of its implementation. This would further enlighten me as to whether a renewed model of disability in which impairment is recognised would enhance inclusion for disabled students. I began by analysing whether students were happy to disclose and affirm their disabled identity and whether they felt differently in different settings. I analysed how they perceived their identity and how their past and current experiences of education and employment settings affected it.

Disabled students appeared happy to disclose and affirm their identity at university and this normally took place through assessment and allocation of a learning contract, which was shared amongst academic tutors and the partnership team. Some students perceived this disclosure as having many benefits associated with personalised support and links with the disability support team. Others were willing to go a step further and

celebrate and affirm their identity and some academic tutors shared this affirmation and celebration. The university context was one which students perceived as a mainly safe haven in which to affirm and celebrate their identity in a positive atmosphere. However, the students often arrived at university having experienced negative labelling and stigma attached to their impairment from family, friends and teachers, particularly around their ability to gain and maintain a job. This led to some students internalising these views and adopting negative identities for themselves and provided some explanation for students locating barriers to their inclusion within the effects of their own impairments. Clearly these negative experiences had long-lasting effects which were hard to change. However, some students did change their perceptions of their identity and transformed negative self-identity into more positive identities. Gaining a place on the course, progressing through the course and success at in work-based contexts was a huge contributor to transforming their own negative self-identities and also how they felt others perceived their identity.

Hence, three things emerged. Firstly, that students were mostly happy to disclose and sometimes affirm and celebrate their identity at university, mainly to gain the appropriate support. Secondly, they had often encountered negative medical model identities in their past educational and family experiences. Thirdly, positive inclusion in education and employment could contribute to transforming those negative identities to positive self identities.

Having established how students felt about disclosing their identity I then analysed other stakeholders' perceptions of disabled identity and how impairment effects were significant in their setting. I wanted to analyse whether the consequences of disclosing and affirming disabled identity were more significant/risky in specific contexts (university/work) and for different impairment labels. It was apparent that transforming their own perceptions of their identity was one thing, but transforming and challenging socially constructed negative identities was particularly difficult in some contexts. Some placement supervisors feared dangerous and unstable people coming into their workplace because they may face litigation over the rights of the children in their setting.

It appeared that the workplace was a far less safe haven in which to disclose and affirm disabled identity than university, especially if the impairment was located in mental health or behaviour related labels. Finally, data from my observation demonstrated that all these issues were further compounded by multiple and complex identities.

Therefore, three more things had emerged around disabled identity, firstly, that even though many disabled students had changed their perception of their identity to a more positive identity they had not similarly changed other stakeholders' perceptions of their identity, especially the placement supervisors. Secondly, it emerged that some identities carried more likelihood of exclusion than others. Finally it emerged that students have multiple and complex identities that change over time and that are different in different contexts.

So I had more data that confirmed students have different experiences of social model thinking in university and work contexts and this was further confirmation of why they appeared confused about the social model. Their previous negative experiences often compounded this confusion, as did notions of complex multiple identities. I had further confirmation that some impairment labels are perceived as more significant than others in attribution of negative identities. All this was more evidence in a picture that was emerging of a correlation between stakeholder knowledge and understanding of the social model and exclusionary practice. Less knowledge of the social model associated with work-based contexts seemed to be associated with more ascribing of negative identities and more likelihood of exclusionary practice. In the university context where the social model was understood more widely students were less likely to be excluded, ascribed negative identities and more safely able to celebrate and affirm their disabled identity. I finally decided to further explore how different stakeholders perceived effective inclusionary practice in higher education and work contexts and their thinking in relation to appropriate ways forward.

5.6 (iii) Exclusionary structures in higher education and work policy and practice and possible ways forward

Having established that different stakeholders understand and apply the social model differently and that disclosing disabled identity is more risky in placement contexts, there appeared to be a correlation between stakeholder understanding of the social model and positive celebration of disabled identity. Similarly, lack of knowledge of the social model appeared to be associated with medical model thinking, negative identities and stigmatisation of some behaviour related impairment effects. I then examined data which articulated stakeholder understandings of 'inclusion' and 'employability' to see whether these views reflected social model thinking. I wanted to see how knowledge and understanding of the social model was reflected in interpretations of inclusion and employability.

It emerged that there were a wide range of understandings of inclusion which reflected confused understandings of social model thinking and consequently impacted on practice. Secondly, further confusion emerged when defining employability so that medical model, social model, feminist and poststructuralist perspectives were evident. All this contributed further to fractured and disjointed application of social model practice and further contributed to student confusion around the social model.

However, I wanted to further explore any aspects of good practice which were taking place, especially in the light of the positive impact of the social model on university and course policies. Many students commented positively about their inclusion at university and about the skills and knowledge gained in work placements. Students mainly enjoyed their work placements and valued the contribution it made to enhancing their employability. So I then analysed where stakeholders viewed inclusive practice as successful and how it could be improved to see whether these would confirm the appropriateness of the social model for inclusion, whether it should be strengthened or abandoned and a new model proposed. Students spoke very favourably about their experiences of inclusion at university and this concurred with their views in chapter 6 that the social model was well embedded in university practice. However, they also spoke in

positive terms about the knowledge and skills gained on work-based placements, even though the social model was not so widely understood in these placement contexts.

It emerged that although there are different interpretations of terms, diverse knowledge and understandings of the social model and different perceptions of disabled identity, there is still evidence of much positive practice happening that enhances student inclusion and employability and that reflects social model thinking in both higher education and work contexts. However, I needed to explore in more detail where issues are arising that are causing or reinforcing employment disadvantage. I explored where the issues arise for disabled students and other stakeholders, which limit the impact of inclusion in both contexts and how improvements could be made. Students raised issues around structural barriers like the organisation of placement days, but mainly that they had little voice in planning or evaluating how they were included in higher education or work contexts. Academic tutors felt they were trying to be inclusive in exclusionary environments. For the placement supervisors tensions arose around ensuring rights and safety in their settings and not having the time, knowledge, resources or training to meet the needs of disabled students, especially if they were 'risky' in relation to their behaviours. This was reinforced by the Head of Partnership. Thus it emerged that even though there is much successful inclusive practice evident that reflects social model thinking, there are still many tensions and issues that need to be addressed if students are to avoid any further exclusion, discrimination and consequent employment disadvantage.

Finally I explored how stakeholders perceived what needs to be done for inclusion of disabled students to be more effective in both higher education and work contexts. This was to see whether the social model needed to be strengthened, changed or abandoned. It emerged that in order to be more effective social model practice needs to be strengthened through training and knowledge in disability. Disabled students need to be given a stronger voice in planning and evaluating their courses and the required resources to implement inclusion need to be available.

Therefore, in adopting a grounded theory approach to analysing my data I was able to respond to issues that arose from the data which were unexpected, for example, the student focus on the significance of inclusion in higher education and work for positive identity formation. Because I adopted a longitudinal approach to the research new and emerging issues could be explored in semi-structured interviews at different times with different stakeholders, so providing rich qualitative data from diverse perspectives and contexts. I was also able to interview some disabled students on more than one occasion after annual work placements in order to ensure any new and emerging issues were further explored, though I found that these extra interviews did not necessarily yield extra significant data. However, they served as a further check on the first interviews with students and verification of that data. I was able to further enrich my data with a final observation in the higher education context in order to further explore issues around multiple identity that had not appeared in focus groups or interviews with students.

In summary, this chapter has outlined, explained and justified the qualitative research paradigm in which my inquiry fits with specific reference to disability research. It has articulated and justified my selected approach of using a case study and demonstrated the strengths and challenges of such an approach in relation to generalisability and validity. I have explained how I addressed these challenges through several means of triangulation. The constructivist grounded theory method of data analysis has been outlined and analysed in relation to research instruments and sample selection. I have explained how I fulfilled ethical protocols and made every effort to ensure that the voice of the participants, particularly the disabled students emerges in my theory. The following three chapters present the data in the categories that emerged from my data. They are presented in chapter 6 under the title of the Social Model as this formed the core category in my inquiry. Chapter 7 presents the data around disabled identity which illuminates much of the data in chapter 6, particularly around understandings and applications of models of disability. Chapter 8 presents data around the challenges of inclusion in both university and placement contexts and as such presents issues that emerged in different contexts experienced by the students. It also poses challenges for

more effective practice that are the basis of my recommendations in chapter 9. The data in 6-8 is coalesced into theory in chapter 9 where I combine the data, literatures and my own reflections in order to articulate my theoretical stance in this thesis.

CHAPTER 6: Social Model? What Social Model?

6.1 Introduction and themes emerging

In this chapter I present the data I collected which responded to questions about whether the social model influence on legislation and guidance was followed through in practice on the work-based placement aspects of the course selected for this case study. Much of the literature I presented in chapter 3 argued that although the legislation and guidance at national, university and course level has a strong social model influence, many aspects of practice are still strongly influenced by medical model thinking (Mittler , 2000; Massie, 2004; Houghton, 2005). In this chapter I present key stakeholder understandings of the social model and how they perceived it should work out in practice. Specific barriers were identified and located within the framework of models of disability. In this way I was able to present data from all stakeholders that illustrated and raised key challenges related to knowledge and implementation of social model thinking, which I argue enhance understanding of the employment disadvantage problem.

The main focus of questions that I posed to different stakeholders in semi-structured interviews was around understanding of the social model and their interpretations of the social model in practice. One question was directly related to the social model but the other questions were posed around barriers to inclusion, the disabled voice, training and liaison in university and placement contexts (Appendix 3a-c). As such I mainly used questions about inclusion at university, disability and employment and disabled identity to gain an understanding of perceptions of models of disability. The questions related to the issues around which this chapter is structured, that is, knowledge of the social model of disability, the main barriers to inclusion disabled students encounter at university and work placements, the extent to which disabled students have a voice in the planning and evaluation of their work-related learning, the training and knowledge that university stakeholders have in relation to disability related issues and how policies and practices at university and placement institutions are understood, shared and interpreted by different stakeholders .

Many of the responses related to barriers and tensions associated with the inclusion of disabled students in work-based placements overlap with data presented in the following data chapters on Disabled Student Identity [7] and Policy and Practice in Inclusive Higher Education [8]. I have explored the data in this chapter with a specific and explicit focus on understandings and implementations of the social model of disability by different stakeholders in different contexts (details of stakeholders, roles and contexts are provided in chapter 2). Firstly, I explored the disabled students' perceptions of the social model and its implementation at university and course level.

6.2 (i) *'Everything is in place ninety percent of the time'*

Students claimed to have an excellent understanding of the social model mainly gained from their course. One stated he had learned about barriers at university,

> *'Like the medical and social model...you know the way it is society rather than the person themselves, and this will make a difference to how disabled children are treated in schools' (Karl).*

Karl obviously expected that the social model would impact at school/placement level. He commented,

> *'In the first year...I didn't have much understanding, but as the course has gone on I have got a bit more understanding of the social model and how it affects policies'(Karl).*

In the light of their knowledge and understanding of the social model, most students perceived the university to be a mainly barrier-free environment. Some were positive in their comments about tutors and the student support services. Comments included:

> *'University X has been brilliant...they have been so helpful all the way...they have been fantastic. I would not fault them at all or student services (Sharon).*

'This university has been amazing, really supportive, really helpful and they couldn't do enough for you...there's more support here than I have had before...I know exactly what's going on' (Hannah).

'It is brilliant here, attitudes are fantastic here. It is really supportive and caring. If I have a problem someone will sort it' (Sandra).

However one student, Chantelle, commented that there are some barriers at university and that:

'Everything is in place ninety percent of the time...the education studies lecturers were inclusive but less aware than the disability studies tutors' (Chantelle).

This highlighted the fact that not all tutors are similarly aware of disabled student needs. For example, one tutor made extensive use of films in sessions but these were inaccessible to Jacob, a student who commented that:

'We watched films...the films we watched were quite old videos and didn't have any subtitles...so it was a bit difficult to follow...However, when I had Northern University , [an Education studies lecturer]), she wanted to show us a film and she got a transcript ready and gave it to me at the start and I really appreciated that' (Jacob).

Manuel felt that even the Disability Studies course and tutors *'Fails to practise what it preaches' (Manuel).* So it was clear that disabled students had a range of positive and negative experiences at university and course level and that some lecturers were more aware of the needs of disabled students than others.

Other more general university issues were raised about the unreliability of note-takers and inappropriate rooming arrangements:

'My note-takers didn't turn up...when note takers don't turn up, like for example yesterday, I had to go around everybody and borrow their notes and take them to be photocopied and come back...it does create a barrier' (Doreen).

'Rooms with high ceilings echo. It is not easy to hear everyone when we are working in groups. I cannot hear certain tutors and peers' (Sandra).

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Billy was concerned that university staff did not understand his impairment and that

> *'Because I do not look and I do not appear to be with them they are not sure how to deal with me' (Billy).*

It is clear from the student views outlined above that overall the students understood the social model. They were very positive about the university's response to disabled students and their statements confirmed that they perceived the university to be fulfilling its legal obligations and philosophical commitment to a social model of disability. However there were still some areas of inconsistency with some tutors more aware of or more effective in implementing the social model than others. There were also still some physical barriers in relation to lecture rooms and the logistics of disability support.

The above implied that the university had mainly responded to legislation and policy with a social model focus and to its own stated disability agenda, described on the University Disability Support Team website as a university that espoused the social model of disability and adopted the view that disability is socially created [Appendix13], (http://www.nu.ac.uk/services/sls/support/disability/policy.html). My discussions with disabled students implied that they understood the social model of disability and expected it to be implemented at university as stated in the above university policy document. This was in line with the Disabled People's International interpretation of the social model (DPI, 1982) which articulates the difference between 'impairment' as an individual limitation and 'disability' as related to social barriers. This was also a reflection of Oliver's (1992) interpretation of the social model of disability. However, in 6.2(iii) when I explored barriers to inclusion with students it was clear that their understanding of the social model was more confused than the data in this section implied.

It is clear from the findings above that even though the students responded mainly positively about the operation of the social model within university, a significant part of their course took place at their work-based placements. As such student perceptions of how the social model was understood and worked out in practice at placement

institutions was fundamental to a full picture of the students' experiences of the social model . So, next I explored data around the students' perceptions of the social model as it was worked out in practice at the work-based placement institutions.

6.2 (ii) *'It is always they see the impairment first, rather than the person'*

Students attended work-related placements in each year of study and spent approximately nineteen days at an educational institution each year (the organisation and structure of placements, including stakeholder roles are set out in detail in chapter 2). Students were not so positive about the placement institutions' response to the social model of disability so that 'It [the social model] was more so applied to practice here [at university] than in the outside world' (Manuel). Sandra commented on the fact that attitudes were different so that:

> 'Here [at university] it is more you are included but...you are still you, you don't melt into other people, you are still who you are. But in placement ...everyone merged into a class rather than being a person or an individual' (Sandra).

Other attitudinal barriers in placement were more obvious.

> 'She [the placement supervisor] automatically assumed that I could not do what I was there to do. You could see it in her face...she was put off by the fact that I was deaf. She felt like I actually needed help for me instead of me there to help the children. She made me sit in the back of the class for three weeks' (Sandra).

> 'He sat me at the back of the classroom. He did not want me to interact with any of the children...people think you cannot do stuff when you can' (Sandra).

> 'It is always they see the impairment first, rather than the person and that sometimes got to me...people are scared you are a liability if you do things' (Sharon).

> 'I think some teachers were reluctant to give me jobs to do' (Sandra).

Some students were also concerned that policies and legislation were not always followed in placement settings because:

> 'They have got all the policies in place where they cannot discriminate, but even though the policies are in place...policies are not always followed' (Ren).

> 'My placement I went to isn't responding to new legislation at all' (Tracey).

Sharon thought this situation had developed because university:

> 'Is more aware of inclusion...because of the Disability Support Team...Northern University are really good at disability awareness...and they are on top of it' (Sharon).

The fact that the placement settings were often very busy places that were focused on the needs of their students highlighted the reality of putting the social model into practice for disabled students so that:

> 'They might know it [the social model]...in academic terms, but it's treated very much...as a tick box thing. It's something, if we've got time for we'll consider it, but we've got things we need to get done and those come first and the social model doesn't really fit into that' (Manuel).

The discussions above demonstrate that awareness of and implementation of the social model at placement institutions was quite different than at university. Students identified placement institution's fears about disabled students not being able to do certain things and a preference for giving them more menial or less demanding jobs. The reasons given by students for this situation were that although placement institutions knew and understand policies and legislation they often did not implement them effectively because they had other priorities. Evidently students enjoyed a priority status at university that they did not experience on placement and one of the reasons for this was the support they received from the university Disability Support Team.

The above concurs with Clark et al (1998:84) who argue that the 'medical model is alive and flourishing'. It was clear that placement institutions often adopted an individual/medical model approach to disabled students and saw them as deficient and having a disadvantage, which was a consequence of their impairment and prevented them functioning 'normally' (Wood, 1980; Barnes, 1996). Clough and Corbett, (2000:11) fear that the consequence of this individual medical approach is a focus on deficiency and these fears were confirmed by data that located the 'problem' within disabled students and not the work-related and work-based placement curriculum. It was also evident that often the consequence of this medical/individual perception of impairment and disability resulted in non-disabled placement supervisors assuming that it was appropriate to do things 'to' disabled students rather than 'with' them (Johnstone, 2001:15).

It was clear that students perceived more problems in relation to the implementation of the social model at placement institutions than at university. Later in this chapter I explored the university tutors' and placement tutors' perceptions of the social model and this knowledge may be one factor that contributed to this discrepancy. Students were asked, in the light of their perception of the social model not being implemented effectively at placement institutions, to identify the barriers they experienced in relation to inclusion at placement institutions. The following section examines the students' views on what these barriers were. It is a significant section in that it raised, surprisingly, the fact that disabled students who appeared to know the social model equated many barriers to their inclusion as located within the effects of their own impairments.

6.2 (iii) *'Yes, Yes, I cannot answer the phone...a fact...true, but horrible!'*

When students were asked about the key barriers they experienced in relation to inclusive higher education and employability they often responded by identifying impairment effects as barriers (Thomas , 2007). Four students commented on spelling as the main barrier they faced, Sharon commented that the main barrier for her was:

'My spelling and my glasses will let me down' (Sharon),

and Chantelle stated that the main barrier for her is *'my visual impairment' (Chantelle)*. They also perceived some jobs to be out of their reach specifically because of their impairment. Billy commented that the placement:

'Showed me the impracticality of certain aspects of teaching for me as a job' (Billy).

And Rhian stated:

'I think there are certain impairments that prevent you from doing certain jobs' (Rhian).

Sandra identified a specific aspect of work that her impairment prevented her from doing, when asked about this she responded:

'Yes, Yes, I cannot answer the phone...a fact...true, but horrible!' (Sandra).

Lucy, a student with mental health issues commented that a key personal barrier for her was looking after herself and that she was aware of:

'Looking the way I do...with my big hair' (Lucy).

Jacob identified communication as a barrier and having to ask people to repeat themselves and look at him so that he could understand them. Related to this was the fact that students commented on how previous experiences affected their perception of barriers. Idris said that for him the main barrier was:

'Negative experiences beforehand...although the staff are not enforcing negative barriers it feels like they are and that is a personal barrier' (Idris).

However, students did identify some social barriers and the particular focus was on attitudes to impairment, misunderstanding of impairments and disabled people, practical barriers and lack of training and awareness of disability legislation and guidance. One of the issues was that disabled students had little voice in what happened at work-based placements and even though students were really positive about the extent to which the university supported disabled students, most felt they had little opportunity to have a voice in aspects of curriculum, pedagogy or organisation around placements. They identified opportunities to feed back through evaluations of the placement and also at the Staff Student Committee meetings, but this feedback was reactive rather than proactive. Disabled students did not have any opportunity to have a group voice on planning for placement. Billy commented that:

> 'They have not done enough research on disabled people's points of view...they haven't asked' (Billy).

In relation to attitudinal barriers these were mainly related to misunderstandings about specific impairments so that Manuel commented that he had received comments on placement:

> 'Oh, stop being a trouble-maker...or stop being an attention seeker...or you are making things difficult for people...haven't you learned to control it by now?' (Manuel).

He thought this was because the placement setting perceived that adults grew out of Asperger's Syndrome and

> 'I don't think they have ever come across adults with autism or Asperger's Syndrome' (Manuel).

Jacob stated that:

'It is not every day they are faced with working with someone with a disability, so there's maybe a certain perception to get their head around and maybe the person's physical or sensory features...' (Jacob).

Students labelled with mental health and impairments that affected behaviour appeared to feel more affected by attitudinal barriers so that Lucy thought that:

'People's reactions I think is a major barrier that I have faced and acceptance and understanding of people' (Lucy).

A range of practical environmental barriers were identified, including old buildings with limited access and available technology. The practicalities of getting to placement were identified by several students.

'The practicalities of getting to the employment or just getting around, thinking about how you're going to get there, how you are going to get back' (Jacob).

Linked to this was the fact that:

'Some disabled people find they have to plan more than other people, just the logistics of things...' (Jacob).

A major barrier at university seemed to be that although the Disability Support Team were viewed very positively by disabled students, their powers to implement legislation and guidance were limited at faculty and course level so that:

'The faculty's attitude is often, we'll do it if we want to' (Manuel).

One student, Lucy, viewed the legislation and guidance as an actual barrier for students because it was used as a veneer for discriminatory practice.

'They tend to do the minimum at the moment ...and work out ways where they don't have to do anything...and kind of know the legislation inside out so that...in some ways the legislation itself becomes a barrier because it is there to protect you but...the legislation says I only need to do this and only on this occasion....They become powerful because they know how to negotiate the law...and it becomes a real barrier in some ways' (Lucy).

Surprisingly, much of this indicated that some disabled students here were talking about their own impairments as barriers to study and employability, which may show a confused understanding of the social model. This was surprising as in 6.2 (i) and 6.2(ii) above the disabled students appeared to understand the social model, as they clearly articulated how it should work out in practice at university and in placement. It is clear that they were able to articulate what they had learned about what the social model is in Disability Studies sessions but still had misunderstandings about applying the model. This was similar to what is presented in chapter 8 where institutions similarly articulated the social model in policies but were challenged when implementing it in practice. It was interesting that students also identified the role of their previous life experiences as individual personal barriers. The main societal barriers they articulated related to lack of knowledge, misunderstanding and fear around impairment and disability, sometimes caused by non-disabled people not listening to the disabled student voice. They identified the consequences of misunderstanding as fear and lack of acceptance of disabled people. One even identified the disability legislation as a barrier because institutions can easily get around it and use it as a facade for discriminatory practices, allowing them to do the minimum rather than operate within the spirit of the legislation.

The above may have been a misunderstanding of the social model, whereby students identified 'personal barriers' and this can be related to Thomas' (2007) view that these 'personal barriers' aren't barriers, they are 'impairment effects' which are socially constructed (Tremain, 2002). The students may, however, have been adopting an individual/ medical model approach making a causal link between impairment and disability so that their impairments were being seen as the cause of disadvantage (Wood, 1980; Barnes 1996; Bury, 2000; Johnstone, 2001; Clough and Corbett, 2000). However,

on the other hand, the students may have been taking a post-social model approach (Morris, 1991; French 1993; Crow, 1996; Shakespeare 2006) and recognising the social model as working well on a large university scale, but not adequately representing them on a personal level because their impairments and past experiences were very real in their work placement experiences.

It was evident that two things had emerged. Firstly, students' understandings of the social model were more complicated and confused than they first appeared. Students often located barriers to their inclusion in both university and work contexts within their own impairment effects. Secondly, disabled students appeared to locate more barriers to their inclusion in work-based settings than university environments. I needed to explore why students appeared to be confused and the diverse experiences that were contributing to that confusion. So I explored other stakeholders' knowledge and awareness of the social model and their perceptions of barriers to inclusion when including disabled students in their settings.

6.3 (i) *'It's not the answer to everything but it's brilliant'*

Tutors also had an excellent understanding of the social model and how it should impact on practice. The tutors interviewed all articulated clear understandings of the social model.

> *'Yes there's impairment, but it's society that disables and there's a range of ways that society does that' (James).*

> *'The social model is about how somebody is socially constructed as being a disabled person' (Rose).*

The most sophisticated response was:

> *'My real feeling about the social model is that...everybody needs to believe in it for a certain time of their life and then they come through the social model...I think it's a massive...massively important political tool. I think in certain circles it's absolutely perfect for arguing with government, for arguing with University Pro-Vice-Chancellors for even the way learning contracts are*

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written, it's incredibly powerful, but it doesn't work in all circumstances at all times...so it's not the answer to everything but it's brilliant' (Rachel).

All the university tutors understood the social model, but Rachel recognised the limitation of the model, even though it is 'brilliant'. The next section, which examines the tutors' interpretation of barriers to inclusion for disabled students, revealed that James identified some limitations with the model too.

The tutors' interpretation of the social model reflected Oliver's (1996:22) view of the need to '...grasp the distinction between the physical impairment and the social situation'. This is a reflection of the DPI (1982) distinction between impairment and disability and the UPIAS (1976) view that disabled people are an oppressed group in society. Rachel's recognition of the power of the social model reflected Shakespeare and Watson's (2001) assertion that the social model enabled the identification of a political strategy to promote the inclusion of disabled people and Shakespeare's (2006) view that the social model formed the basis of a political strategy to transform society. This is reinforced by Crow (1996) who also argues that the social model has been extremely valuable in establishing the collective identity and political organisation of disabled people and that the social model's contribution to, and potential for achieving inclusion for disabled people is immeasurable. Rachel's view was that of a 'strong' social model as advocated by Barnes (1996) and Oliver (1996b) who argue that the social model still has much to offer and that it would be unwise, indeed dangerous, to abandon it at this time.

The university tutors understand the social model well. Rachel held to a 'strong' social model in which she recognised the limitations of the model but still believed it had not outlived its usefulness as a political tool and so she strongly advocated for the social model. In order to gain a more detailed insight into the university tutors' understanding and application of the social model in practice the following section explored their views of the main barriers to inclusion for disabled students on placement.

6.3 (ii) 'People think it's a disease that results in some terrible death'

University tutors identified a range of impairment effects and societal barriers in relation to disabled students at university and in work-based placements. One tutor, Rose, identified access and discrimination as key barriers and the problem that once disabled students disclosed they were faced with non-disabled people:

> *'Making assumptions about what they can and cannot do and that could very easily become a barrier to them in a working environment' (Rose).*

Rose also identified innate prejudice and ignorance as major barriers and the fact that:

> *'They focus on the disability instead of looking at the person, not through ill-will or intended but based on ignorance and misunderstanding of disability' (Rose).*

Rose gave an example of a student with Asperger's Syndrome, who behaved very aggressively to her and really upset her, but she was not aware of his impairment or the behaviours associated with it and if she had been aware of it and more knowledgeable about it she would not have felt so upset and threatened by him. She did think that disabled students had a responsibility to modify behaviours when on placement and that some behaviours associated with students with Autism and Asperger's labels, including aggressive and threatening behaviour, must be modified in the workplace. This was confirmed by another tutor, James, speaking about the same label because:

> *'Basically there's the school day, the school space, school time and along comes a student who doesn't get space and time in that way...result...chaos!' (James).*

However, James added that:

> *'But that is an impairment precisely because we run our lives in a disabling way for that student' (James).*

However, not all tutors agreed with barriers being related specifically to impairment effects so that Rachel thought:

'We should resist being impairment specific at every point in time' (Rachel).

Rachel identified barriers around 'imagination difficulties' and people who could not imagine that disabled students can achieve certain standards, so that tutors and placement supervisors were threatened by their presence.

'So it's that kind of failure to imagine what's possible' (Rachel).

This was significant at university and placement institutions because:

'So this students goes on placement, he represents the university and what is that student saying about what kind of students we allow in' (Rachel).

James identified similar barriers around awareness and understanding of impairment and the fact that:

'People think it's a disease that results in some terrible death' (James).

However, James clearly linked the barriers to a lack of resources, so that if employees were to be trained and made aware of disability related issues adequate resources needed to be in place. This became particularly significant in a social model approach, as in order to remove barriers employers and university tutors needed adequate resourcing for removing physical barriers and allocating the necessary time and support required by disabled students.

'They have to recognise that the resources that are required so that the impairment doesn't disable are considerable...and I think it becomes a vicious trap – policies, strategies, tactics – but actually when it gets down to it where

are the actual day-to-day resources that you would need to support that student in study or disabled person in work?' (James).

James was actually adopting a post-social model approach and stated that different impairments did have significant impacts.

'So there's a recognition that the impairment is there... disabled students]... actually need a level of support maintaining parity of esteem...helping them to continue doing that work' (James).

Tutors all agreed that disabled students had a voice at Staff-Student Committees and module/placement evaluations, as all students did. However, this was reactive and not proactive and was focused on individuals rather than a group of disabled students advocating for the disabled students on the course and being proactive in relation to planning for work-related placements. Rachel said that:

'You know, disabled students are not collective in a voice because they do not have a forum or representative and I don't know whether that would work' (Rachel).

James felt more strongly about this.

'I'm all for students actually organising and clarifying their voice collectively because they need to have more than just their individual voice , but it does not want to reach a point where that actually drowns out the little [voices].So it is not always the big voices that actually effect change, it's the smaller voices that just say "Can we look patiently and calmly at my need and can you own up that maybe you can't cope with it and then we can move forward"' (James).

Thus, the university tutors perceived the barriers to inclusion for disabled students on placement to be mainly related to social barriers like ignorance and misunderstanding of impairment and disability, and a lack of imagination around what disabled students could do. James did identify some impairment effects, but was able to see that these were a

result of a disabling society, and Rachel wanted to resist being impairment specific at all costs. The tutors' perceptions of barriers to inclusion for disabled students indicated a clear understanding of social barriers and an oppressive society and this reaffirmed their understanding of the social model in 6.3(i).

The above tutor views of societal barriers experienced by disabled students at placement reflected Johnstone's (2001:20) summary of the social model as 'recognising the interaction of structural and attitudinal issues in society that create disability' and 'acknowledging the political processes that oppress disabled people and deny them their rights'. The barriers were clearly located within a discriminatory society and its constraints on disabled students, not the form of impairment (Barnes, 1992; Oliver, 1996a; Shakespeare and Watson, 2001). However, Rachel's wish to avoid being impairment specific at all costs concurred with Finkelstein (1996; 2001) and Barnes (1998) who challenge any attempt to focus on 'personal experience' because it focuses away from the struggle to change society (Thomas, 2007). James' recognition that impairment exists only because of the disabling way we lead our lives implied a post-social model approach in which he recognised the existence of impairment but believed it is socially constructed and this is an argument advanced by Price and Shildrick (2002) and Tremain (2002).

Therefore the university tutors had a very sophisticated understanding of the social model and one, Rachel, advocated a 'strong' social model approach. These understandings were applied in practical understanding of the social barriers that disabled students experienced on placement. The tutors' understandings of the social model and barriers to inclusion may have been influential in how students understood these issues and it was clear from views presented earlier in this chapter that student understanding and application of the social model was more muddled than the tutors'. There may have been many factors impacting on student's understanding and application of the social model, and one may have been related to them being presented with different understandings and applications of the social model by different stakeholders in different contexts. As such I explored the placement supervisors'

understanding and application of the social model, as students experienced this while on work-based placements. So the next section explored how placement supervisors understood and applied the social model at placement institutions.

6.4 (i) 'Where does this come from? Who...?'

Three of the four placement supervisors in the sample showed no understanding of the social model of disability, when asked if they had any knowledge of it. Angela, a placement supervisor in a primary school, said she had never heard of it. Paula, a placement supervisor in a special school, said:

> 'I'm ashamed to say no, I don't...and where does this come from? Who...?'
> (Paula).

Paula was very interested to find out about the social model and spent a long time discussing models of disability with me. The one placement supervisor who did know and understand the social model was George, who was working in a local charity. He stated:

> 'I'm in no way an expert...but I know it's about society putting the labels on to people and denying things rather than the other way around...but the more medical side which is the impairments...and then the social side which says you have a disability. So I know enough of it...but not enough that (I've) studied it' (George).

Three placement supervisors had no knowledge of the social model whatsoever and seemed confused when I asked them what it is. Their lack of knowledge of the term 'social model' did not necessarily indicate what they did in practice. I wanted to find out if, in reality, they understood and implemented social model practices at their institutions, even though they had not heard of the actual term 'social model'. In order to do this I asked the placement supervisors to identify and explain what they perceived to be the barriers that disabled students experienced on placement.

6.4 (ii) 'Oh, my God, the media!...Everyone who has got a mental health issue is a murderer'

The placement supervisors identified a range of impairment effects and societal barriers to inclusion for disabled students on placement. These were often focused on specific impairments, mainly mental health impairments and Asperger's Syndrome/Autism were mentioned. Even George, the placement supervisor who understood the social model of disability said that:

> 'It depends on what the disability is...I think some places would...get scared of terms we hear about autism. It's in the news...Channel 4 do seasons on it and sometimes they only show the challenging behaviour" (George).

However, George added that very often this fear of students labelled with autism was related to:

> 'Fear of the unknown...some of the traits of autism may really, really suit certain jobs and so it may be a major benefit to have someone [with autism]' (George).

All four of the placement supervisors in the sample made similar comments, that often disabled students brought many positive contributions to the placement because of their empathy and knowledge of specific impairments. Angela said many issues had arisen when a student, Manuel, was placed in her school, as there was a:

> '...wide gap between his perceptions of what employment would be like and ours' (Angela).

Angela described problems around not understanding routines and procedures, turning up at the wrong places at the wrong time, not being where he was supposed to be. Manuel also criticised staff who he did not think were doing their jobs properly and so caused some management problems for the placement supervisor. She said:

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'He thought in any circumstance he knew better, though there was someone with a wealth of experience, with qualifications and training...he would be very critical and take them on and could be quite strident in his opinions...and I'd be sitting there horrified thinking, Oh grief! Now he's argued with someone' (Angela).

Angela thought the main issue was that he perceived the placement institution as an extension of university.

'He did not grasp that a different environment has different expectations' (Angela).

This attitude was confirmed by another placement supervisor, Carol who thought a student with autism

'Would find it difficult to fulfil all the requirements of a teacher. I think working with other adults, working with your peers, your relationships with children...I think that would exclude that person from being able to do the job, whereas if it was a caretaker with autism I wouldn't have a problem with that because the relationships aren't important' (Carol).

Another area of fear around disability was related to the effects of mental health impairments and the fact that placement supervisors and employers were concerned for the safety of others working with them, George said they were likely to respond by saying:

'Oh, my God, the media !...Everyone who has got a mental health issue is a murderer' (George).

George cited the recent example of Raoul Moat, a thirty-seven year old man with a history of mental health problems related to anger outbursts. Moat hit the news in July 2010 when he killed three people in Northumbria and then killed himself. (http://www.telegraph.co.uk/**news**/uknews/crime/7874014/**Raoul-Moat-**). The event was

very much in the news and resulted in an increase in popular fear of individuals with mental health impairments. Any placement supervisor or employee may think:

> 'Everyone with a mental health issue must be like him. We can't afford to have a tragedy and it be my fault because I took this person on...it's just easier to push that person away and get someone else in...particularly in schools we're very protective of children aren't we' (George).

This attitude was confirmed by another placement supervisor, Carol who said concerning students with mental health issues.

> 'I would find that difficult with young children because it's important that children have stability...I wouldn't want children to have someone who is unpredictable' (Carol).

All placement supervisors identified some social barriers, particularly around misconceptions of impairment and disability which result in fear and prejudice.

> 'They are often at the receiving end of prejudice' (Carol).

> 'And there's a lot of prejudice...people are wary of what they don't know' (Paula).

Related to misconceptions, a lack of knowledge and understanding of impairment and disability caused some fears among placement supervisors and employers because:

> 'I would say not having knowledge of the Disability Discrimination Act...being scared and thinking oh my gosh! If I am not perceived to be helping this person...okay I'll not bother having them' (George).

Much of this lack of knowledge and understanding was located within a lack of training in disability issues and a lack of communication and liaison with the university relating to specific impairments and particular students. All placement supervisors felt lack of

disclosure led to lack of understanding of the students and often misconceptions of their impairment.

> *'We had a student last year who had dyspraxia and none of us had heard of it...when she hugged you she hugged you really , really, really hard and we'd get annoyed at it...and then they came in and did this little workshop and explained that it's the brain not getting the messages...and we were like Ah! We get it now' (George).*

Paula thought disclosure was important because she said she wanted to hear more of the disabled student voice in order to know what she is doing right or wrong because:

> *'One size does not fit all and so we need to have that dialogue' (Paula).*

The placement supervisors focused mainly on specific impairment effects as barriers but some societal barriers were identified. It was evident that their main concerns were around impairments that affected behaviour, that is, mental health impairments and impairments related to social communication like Autism and Asperger's Syndrome. Their fears were related to disabled students upsetting their staff, and threatening the safety of their students. Another concern was that disabled students may have taken the institution into litigation for not implementing disability legislation.

However, all placement supervisors commented on the fact that the key issue was about disabled students being able to do the job, so that if impairment effects limited the ability to do the job then it was a barrier to inclusion in placement and employment and this is explored in detail in chapter 8. The placement supervisors identified some social barriers around limited resources and prejudice, often incited by the media and lack of knowledge and understanding of impairments. Related to this was lack of disclosure by students, so that they needed to know what impairment they were dealing with in order to make appropriate reasonable adjustments for the disabled students. Some of the placement supervisors recognised the specific benefits of having disabled students on placement as

their knowledge and experience was often very useful with the disabled children at the institution.

The above reinforces Llewellyn and Hogan's (2000) view that the individual/medical model discourse presents disabled people as something to fear. It also reflects Barnes' (1996) and Oliver's (1986) assertion that the individual/medical model identifies the impairment as the main cause of the disadvantage experienced by disabled students. It concurs with Clough and Corbett (2000) who view an individual/medical model approach as locating problems within individual disabled people rather than in any curricular or pedagogical context and Bury's (2000) view that impairment effects are more significant barriers to inclusion than social barriers. The fact that some placement supervisors thought some jobs were not suitable for some disabled people is reinforced by Gough's (1979: 25-26) perception of a 'functional limitation' view of impairment which legitimises exclusion from the labour market. Walker (1982); Thomas (1992); and Barnes (1992) refer to this as underemployment, whereby disabled people find themselves in low status jobs below their capabilities. The focus on impairments associated with unpredictable behaviour is confirmed by Cefai and Cooper's (2010) assertion that disabled students with behaviour related impairments are more likely to be excluded and be on the receiving end of discrimination than disabled students with other impairment labels. The specific concerns around mental health issues are not so surprising according to Thomas (2007:131) because disability studies has concentrated on social barriers that physically impaired people confront and researchers and writers in disability studies have only recently begun to explore the workings of 'the mind'.

As such, placement supervisors identified some social barriers for disabled students related to limited resources and prejudice, but they focused very strongly on impairment effects, especially around impairments affecting behaviour. They were afraid of the consequences of having disabled students that may be a threat to the students, staff or the placement institution. This fear was exacerbated when the impairment label was unknown to them or if the student did not disclose the nature and implications of their impairment. Clearly their main priority was not disabled students on placement, but their

own students, and so they were unwilling to take any risks. The main link person between the university and the placement institution was the Head of Partnership. He liaised with the placement institution in order to place disabled students in appropriate placements and was the main link if the placement supervisor had concerns related to students on placement. The next section examines his understanding and application of the social model, as he was a crucial link between university tutors and placement supervisors.

6.5 (i) 'If a disability comes up [we] go on the Internet and try and find out more about it'

The Head of Partnership, Lee, had no understanding of the social model, when asked if he knew anything about it he said 'No' (Lee). When asked whether he has had any training or staff development on disability issues he also responded 'No' (Lee). When asked about relating decisions to university policy the reply was:

> 'I'm not sure. I'm not really up on university policies for disabled students...all we do if a disability comes up is go on the Internet and try and find out more about it. If it looks a really serious one, then we'll contact Disabled Student Support and ask them if there's anything else apart from what's on the learning contract that we need to know' (Lee).

The Head of Partnership's responses revealed that he had never heard of the social model. However, disabled students rated the Partnership Team and the support offered by them very highly indeed. One student, Lucy, stated 'They were fantastic' (Lucy). As with the placement supervisors who indicated no knowledge of the social model, I thought it best to explore the Head of Partnership's views on the main barriers to inclusion for disabled students at work placement, in order to explore whether he did apply a social model, even though he was unaware of the term. The following section explores this.

6.5 (ii) 'We've got to look at the reaction that the (placement) setting might have to the disability'

Lee, the Head of Partnership, identified the main barriers to inclusion at placement settings as being related to the type and severity of the impairment, so that students with the dyslexia label were easier to place, as settings were aware of dyslexia and knew how to respond to disabled students who had dyslexia.

> 'A lot of the time we don't take a lot of consideration of that (dyslexia) because most of the settings are clued up on that...and there's not many problems there' (Lee).

However, Lee stated that the barriers experienced are directly related to:

> 'The type of disability we are dealing with...with more serious issues obviously we've got to look at the reaction that the (placement) setting might have to the disability' (Lee).

He stated that serious mental health issues and Asperger's syndrome/autism cause the most problems for the Partnership Team and placement supervisors, but that this was exacerbated if disabled students chose not to disclose. He gave an example where a student with 'severe mental disability' caused a 'lot of issues' (Lee).

In relation to Asperger's Syndrome and autism:

> 'We've had one student...who I found quite short...and forthright in their opinion at first and at first I just thought it was the student's attitude - as did the first placement- ' (Lee).

However, Lee noted that once he researched the impairment, he realised that the behaviours exhibited were related to the impairment. He felt that disclosure was key in ensuring placement supervisors understood the reasons for some behaviour and could relate them to specific impairments. However, for some students who had disclosed they were then sent to do only menial tasks as the placement setting was unable to cope with

the effects of the impairment. For students with physical impairments the main barriers were related to travelling.

Another major barrier was the contents of the learning contract, which was generally very limited in relation to useful information about support in work-related placements:

'Because the other problem with the learning contracts is it says on placement sort of one line and that's it...it is not really about placement' (Lee).

Thus, the Head of Partnership indicated that there was a particular and strong focus on impairment effects by the Partnership Team, and what appeared to be a lack of engagement with the social model. Some impairment labels like dyslexia, were perceived to be less of a problem as placement institutions could cope with them. The main problems were identified in relation to impairments affecting behaviour like mental health issues and social communication impairments like Autism and Asperger's Syndrome. The main issue was that the Head of Partnership's fear that placement settings may react negatively to students with these specific impairments. He also noted the problem of lack of disclosure leading to misunderstandings and the limited contribution of learning contracts to placement aspects of the course.

These views concur almost identically with those of the placement supervisors but are strikingly different to those of the university tutors. The data reflects Borland and James' (1999) view that many staff still operate within the context of medical model assumptions and Holloway's (2001) findings that staff with a specific interest in impairment and disability are more likely to have positive attitudes. It is clear that the university tutors worked with disabled students on a daily basis and so had regular contact with them and a specific knowledge of disability issues. The data also reflects the views of Visser and Dubsky (2009), who state that that those with physical disabilities are more accepted than those with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD). They argue that this is because SEBD students are perceived as *being* a problem and their behaviours are unacceptable because they are perceived as controllable.

Hence, the Head of Partnership's views were remarkably similar to those of the placement supervisors, and quite different to those of the university tutors. The university tutors displayed a clear understanding of the social model and its application in practice but the Head of Partnership and placement supervisors demonstrated a lack of understanding and application of the model in practice. They also introduced issues around some specific impairment effects being more significant than others. These different understandings and applications of the model may well have impacted on students who displayed a confused understanding of the social model earlier in this chapter.

6.6 Summary: *'They are very, very complicated issues'*

It is clear that diverse understandings and applications of the social model of disability were evident on many levels. The social model did not suddenly appear historically because of disability rights activity, key legislation or philosophical changes and it is not bound by historical timeframes. The social model was evident in some policies and practices, with some people in some places at some times, but its impact was disjointed and fractured on many fronts. As one tutor, Rachel, stated:

> *'They are very, very complicated issues that disability studies has not thought through and we are in the middle of changing times and they are very, very difficult issues ' (Rachel).*

Like Shakespeare and Watson (2001) Rachel perceived disability as extremely complex. In this chapter three main issues have been shown to contribute to this complexity. Firstly, the social model is understood and implemented differently by different stakeholders in different kinds of institutions and this was reflected in how they perceived impairment effects as barriers to inclusion. The university in this study appeared to have adopted the social model in policies and guidance and this was evident is much practice at faculty and course level. However, as the accounts above illustrate, there were problems when implementing social model practices as not all academic and administrative staff were aware of the social model and its implications, so some staff

adopted a strong social model approach and others did not. Academic staff generally understood the meaning and implications of the social model, but some implemented it in practice, others partially implemented it and others not at all. This supported the view that for some staff a 'strong' social model was not always a sufficient explanation of impairment (Crow 1996; Shakespeare and Watson, 2001; Thomas, 2004a; 2004b; Shakespeare 2006).

This problem was compounded when university administrative staff, who were significant in selecting and liaising with placement institutions, knew little if anything about the social model, so that the philosophy informing practices in work-related learning lectures and at course level was not clearly linked to, or evident in, placement operations and practices. In working with a wide range of educational settings to provide educational placements the issue was further complicated with the above issues being multiplied over a diverse range of settings and placement supervisors.

Even though many placement supervisors were unaware of the social model as a term, often their practices indicated that they were practically supporting a strong social model. Oliver (1996a:32) argues that the social model is 'not yet grown up' and the fact that the placement supervisors knew little or nothing about it indicated that Oliver may be right in stating that 'If we turn her out into the world too soon we do so at our peril'. Clearly if significant professionals like the placement supervisors were unaware of the social model then it has much work left to accomplish. Sometimes the placement supervisors employed social model philosophy to their children/students but not to adult students sent on work-based learning placements to their institutions. They saw their first responsibility as to their own students, not placement students and as such the inclusion of disabled students was not their priority. If disabled students were causing any problems or extra work at placement institutions then the placement supervisors did not have the resources to meet their needs. Students often chose not to disclose their disabled identity at placements, so that placement supervisors' knowledge and ability to support students was further reduced. Certain impairments, particularly those associated with certain behaviours like mental health impairments and Autism/Asperger's syndrome,

were seen as particularly difficult to make reasonable adjustments for and this confirmed recent data showing that individuals with challenging behaviour are the most excluded group in education (DCSF, 2009, Statistical data). The issues associated with identity are the main focus of chapter 7.

Secondly, students appeared confused about the social model in that they initially appeared to understand and associate with a strong social model and its implications for practice and expected to see it worked out in practice. However, when asked to identify barriers to their inclusion they predominantly referred to personal barriers linked to the effects of their own impairments. This became particularly significant when they spoke about placements and the workplace rather than university. Crow (1996) argues that the social model works well on a large scale, for example challenging discriminatory and oppressive practices, but that it does not adequately represent disabled people on a personal level because it does not adequately represent the full range of their experiences. The students' experiences also concurred with Shakespeare's (2006) view that removing societal barriers for disabled people does not remove all their problems as the problem of impairment still remains. The students seemed to reinforce this view of the social model, though their understandings were varied and confused and did not always appear to be consistent or well thought through.

Thirdly, one of the key aspects of the social model is recognising the opinions of disabled people and thus putting power into the hands of disabled people (Johnstone, 2001). We need to allow disabled students a voice because this group of individuals seem to have lost their voice (Wright, 2006). All the stakeholders in this study commented on the fact that the disabled student voice was not heard in relation to work-related learning and this was a concern if it meant that disabled students were still the subjects of decisions made by non-disabled academic tutors, placement supervisors and partnership administrators. If disabled students did not have a voice they would certainly not be able to be in a position of power in relation to their experiences at work-based placements.

In conclusion, it was clear from the above that the social model had contributed positively in many aspects of higher education for disabled students. Policies and practices on

many levels were significantly affected by social model thinking and students recognised this in their responses. However, evidence of the fragmented, disjointed and diverse implementation of social model policy and practice at university and especially at work-based placement settings was a consequence of a range of issues as outlined above. This confirmed Llewelyn and Hogan's (2000) view that even though the models help explain situations they do not, in and of themselves, constitute a full explanation.

So this chapter illustrated that the medical model was still 'alive and well' (Clarke et al 1998:84). This appeared to be related to many aspects of higher education and work, including attitudes and practices that appeared hard to change, but also appeared to be changing at a different pace in university and work contexts and with different stakeholders, thus confusing students. Therefore, I next explored the data around disabled identity in order to shed more light on the issues raised in this chapter. In relation to the disabled students' identities I used the identity data to explore why they were focusing on impairment effects as barriers. I wanted to further examine questions about why they were confused about the social model, whether they were taking a medical model perspective or adopting a feminist standpoint. In relation to the other stakeholders I wanted to explore how diverse knowledge and understanding of the social model impacted on how barriers and disabled students' identities were perceived and whether some impairment labels were more stigmatised in different settings. So in chapter 7, I used disabled identity as a key contributor to understanding how models of disability were applied by different stakeholders in different settings and to make links between the disabled students' experiences in the two settings of higher education and work.

Barnes (2002) sees the social model as a tool to highlight barriers and work towards policies and practices that remove these barriers so chapter 8 examines the links and gaps between policy and practice in inclusive higher education so that areas for improvement can be identified and recommendations for change made.

CHAPTER 7: Personal or Political? Disabled Student Identity

7.1 Introduction and themes emerging

Over recent years the issue of identity has become increasingly significant and within disability studies a large and growing body of literature on identity formation has emerged (Campbell and Oliver, 1996; Corker, 1996; Barnes et al, 1999; Linton, 1998; Thomas, 1999; Michalko, 2002). Scott-Hill (2004:87) argues that identity mediates between personal/private worlds in every-day life and collective social relations so 'it is a pivot between the social and the individual'. I used the theme of disabled identity to illumine the issues raised about models of disability in chapter 6 around the personal and social issues related to impairment and disability.

This chapter explains how disabled students and other stakeholders in my study made sense of disabled student's identity. Much of the literature I present in chapter 3 examines key issues around disabled identity, for example what is meant by the term, which factors impact on identity and how identity can be transformed. I found the issue of disabled identity was particularly significant in relation to inclusive education and models of disability. The issues explored in this chapter began to emerge in the data presented in chapter 6, where it became clear that some disabled students and other stakeholders perceived disabled student identity as in some way related to their impairment or its effects. Some of the data I presented in chapter 6 raised the issue of identity in relation to student disclosure of disability and the collective voice of disabled students on the course. A significant issue that emerged in chapter 6 related to the identity of students with mental health or behaviour related impairments, as these appeared to be more significant personal identities when related to the workplace and work-based placements and these students were identified by some stakeholders as more difficult to include because of their 'characteristics' and 'behaviour'. The following chapter, [8] on policy and practice will develop the identity issue in relation to the challenges it poses for inclusive practice in higher education.

This chapter presents key stakeholder understandings of disabled student identity through a focus on themes emerging in the data related to the nature, purpose and consequences of disclosure and affirmation of disabled identity; the impact of past experiences on how disabled people view their own identity; strategies and opportunities for transforming identities and issues related to individual, collective and multiple identities The identity theme enabled me to make links and connections with the university and work-based contexts experienced by the students and so make a unique contribution to knowledge on how the complex interplay between different contexts and stakeholders impacted on student experiences of inclusion.

The main focus of questions that I posed to different stakeholders in interviews was around perceptions of disabled student identity in relation to inclusive higher education and employment (Appendix 3a-c). The questions asked were focused on the main benefits of paid employment for disabled people and whether these are different than those for non-disabled people; how the term employability is understood; the importance of disclosure for inclusion and the extent to which the disabled student voice should be heard in quality assurance procedures around inclusive education and work-based placements. I also conducted an observation of a placement work-related education lecture which examined identity. I include student responses to questions and discussion in that lecture which focused on the question of how students perceived their identity.

Many of the responses related to identity overlapped with those presented in the previous chapter on the social model [6] and the following chapter [8] on policy and practice. In this chapter I have maintained a specific and explicit focus on understandings of disabled identity at university and work-based placements by different stakeholders in different contexts (details of stakeholders, roles and contexts are provided in chapter 2). Firstly, I explored how the disabled students and other stakeholders understood the issues associated with disabled student disclosure of their impairment in the university and work-based placement contexts.

7.2 *'It's all on my learning contract, so it cannot be changed'*

The disabled students selected for my study have already identified themselves as disabled because they have a learning contract from the university. Indeed, this is how I selected them as research respondents. None of these students objected to the need for an assessment or having a learning contract and the associated labels attached to their learning contracts. On the contrary, most stated that the help that came from the Disability Support Team, the academic staff and Partnership Team as a result of their assessment and learning contract to be invaluable. However, some did not disclose their university learning contract or impairment at work placements (Some of the reasons for this will be explored further in chapter 8). Manuel was very happy to disclose his impairment from the outset of the course and he appreciated disclosure and having a label and a learning contract as a positive identity because it resulted in support.

> *'I signed a document when I started university saying I was willing for it to be shared with everybody. So...if you are clever you will sign that document saying you agree for it to be shared so people can help you' (Manuel).*

Lucy commented positively on the role of the Partnership Team and the positive contribution of her learning contract:

> *'They were fantastic because I was able to put on my learning contract about how many hours and the days I could do, the sorts of placement that I could do. It's all on my learning contract, so it cannot be changed. It was not treated as a problem...it was treated as "How do we solve this?"' (Lucy).*

Jacob was glad he had disclosed at university and had a learning contract because in getting it he was made aware of the Disability Support Team and their support meant:

> *'I just set up a rapport with them and set up having note-takers for every seminar and lecture and that allowed me to participate in the seminars and lectures without worrying about taking notes and remembering the content of*

the session...I could just let the note-taker get on with it and I could concentrate on listening and reading and talking and things' (Jacob).

Jacob was happy to disclose in work-based settings too.

'I am happy to mention it. I think it would set a good example and would allay any fears that an employer might have heard that I am deaf. So yes, I think that disclosing a disability is important' (Jacob).

Some students wished that there was more widespread disclosure of their impairment amongst tutors. Billy emphasised the need for more of an emphasis on knowledge and understanding of his specific impairment by academic staff so that adequate provision for him could be made. Billy was concerned that university staff did not understand his impairment adequately and that because he did not appear to be 'with it' staff were unsure about how to deal with him. Some tutors agreed with the students that identification of disabled students and disclosure at university was positive because it meant they could put appropriate support in place.

Rose thought that if students did not disclose then misunderstandings might occur.

'I had a very difficult encounter with a student with autism...who I did not know at the time had autism and If I had known would probably have spoken slightly differently to him. I was utterly intimidated and actually felt threatened by his response to me and if I'd know that he had autism I would not have felt threatened...I was very upset. Very upset' (Rose).

It became clear that although the learning contracts worked in the university context they did not work so well in work-based placement contexts and that disabled students often chose not to disclose at work-placement even though they were happy to disclose at university. The Head of Partnership, Lee, saw disabled student disclosure as important for him to ensure an appropriate placement for the student in which they experienced minimal barriers and he could only do that with appropriate impairment information. He

also felt that it was important to convey that information to placement supervisors so that they understood impairment effects and made reasonable adjustments.

> 'So in one instance we had a student who had severe sort of mental disability and didn't want us to say anything, but clearly when she was at the setting there were real issues and obviously the setting didn't know what this was and thought the student was just...was a really poor student and so we had a lot of issues there. The placement actually wanted to withdraw the offer because they thought she was just a really bad student' (Lee).

Like Lee, some of the placement supervisors were concerned that disabled students should disclose their impairment before going to their work-based placement, mainly because if they disclosed the placement supervisors could avoid misunderstandings about the student and also make appropriate reasonable adjustments to ensure the most effective and useful placement experience.

> 'We didn't actually know that the student coming to us had disabilities...we hadn't been able to put any preparation in terms of talking to the team that the student would be working with' (Paula).

If Paula had received appropriate details about the students' impairments before they went to her school on placement:

> 'It would be helpful to know in advance because that would be a conversation we could have with the student as to whether they had any particular needs that we could accommodate' (Paula).

This was mainly because she had had a previous experience where Doreen, one of the disabled students in the study, had been placed at her school and chosen not to disclose.

> 'I think people's awareness [of Doreen's dyslexia] would have allowed them to be a bit more understanding' (Paula).

Carol was concerned that if disabled students chose not to disclose:

> *'I cannot make the necessary adaptations if I don't know and that's impoverishing their placement and employment' (Carol).*

However, Gareth had a different experience, as when Lucy was placed at his setting she did disclose her mental health impairment and he found that helpful in terms of supporting her.

> *'She did explain a situation to us...so I think it is really good that someone has explained that they have got a perceived disability' (Gareth).*

However, several issues emerged in relation to the learning contracts and these will be explored further in the following chapter 8 on policy and practice. One issue was that the student referred to by Rose above had disclosed and did have a learning contract but that information, for whatever reason, had not reached Rose.

Also, another tutor, Rachel, viewed the Learning contracts and student labels with more caution.

> *'I would have to recognise the social value and the functional value they play. They play a function. Unfortunately, they open doors to funding, and they open doors to filling forms in and we live in systems that use those values. They function. They are valuable in the games you have to play, but on another level I think they are deceptively useful. I think we pretend they are useful, but actually they are not at all. They tell us very little about a person (Rachel).*

Lee, the Head of Partnership, perceived that the declaration on learning contracts was limited in its usefulness because very little reference to work-based placement is included in the learning contract.

> *'It [learning contract] doesn't really tell us how to cope with placement issues'*
> *(Lee).*

Thus disabled students perceived that being labelled as disabled and having a learning contract was a positive thing, as it provided many benefits around personalised support at university and in placements. Some students, like Doreen, were happy to disclose at university but not at work placement. It became clear that although the learning contracts worked in the university context, they did not work so well in work-based placement contexts, and that disabled students sometimes chose not to disclose at work-placement even though they were happy to disclose at university. One tutor, Rose, agreed with the students about the value of the learning contracts in relation to support but another tutor, Rachel, was more cautious, viewing them as a "deceptively useful'. The Head of Partnership, Lee, was more scathing as he saw no value in the learning contracts for placement purposes and this issue will be explored further in chapter 8. All the placement supervisors and the Head of Partnership wanted the disabled students to disclose their impairment in order that they could provide them with adequate support.

The fact that most of the students valued the benefits of their learning contracts as recognising their impairment as part of their identity concurs with the feminist view (Crow, 1996; Morris, 1996; Vernon, 1997; Thomas 2004a; 2004b) and also Shakespeare (1994); Shakespeare and Watson, (2001) and Shakespeare, (2006) that impairment does matter and that if students are to be included and appropriate support provided it is essential that their impairments are recognised as part of their identity. The learning contracts were perceived by disabled students and some tutors as political tools to acquire appropriate resources and support and as such for the disabled students in this study the personal was political. This confirmed Shakespeare's (2006:501) view that 'In making "personal troubles" into "public issues" disabled people affirm the validity of their own identity'. However, it also could illuminate some of the confused understandings of the social model that the students displayed in chapter 6. This data appeared to confirm that some students did not actually hold to a 'strong' social model but to a feminist perspective (Crow, 1996, Morris, 1996; Thompson 2001; Shakespeare and Watson, 2001;Thomas, 2004a; 2004b;Shakespeare 2006) in which they viewed impairment as a significant aspect of their identity. Rachel's perception of the learning contracts as

'deceptively useful' reflects Lawson (2001: 205) who fears that radical changes in provision are held back by 'political correctness in special educational language'. Lawson (2001:203) expresses concerns similar to Rachel in that he agrees that special education is both 'villain' and 'saviour' in relation to disabled identity. The fact that some students chose not to disclose in a work-based setting verifies Goffman's view (1968:23 in Thomas, 2007:23) that disabled people may use strategies like 'passing' or hiding their impairments in order to avoid the consequences associated with their label because there is a profound and serious impact on personal identity for those who are culturally credited as not normal.

Therefore, disabled students demonstrated that they were mainly happy with their identity at university and felt adequately supported through recognising impairment as part of their identity, but students did not always disclose at work placement settings. Most of the other stakeholders saw disclosure of impairment as essential in providing adequate support. However, it is evident in the following section that for some students and stakeholders the purpose of disclosure of disabled identity should not be about support but it should be about affirming and celebrating disabled identity.

7.3 'I am unique'

Disabled students Lucy, Billy, Ren and Manuel wanted to establish the positive and unique contribution of their identity in relation to employment situations and work-based placements. When asked what made her employable Ren said 'Me!' Billy highlighted the skills and knowledge that he has, but few others have.

> 'I am unique. I am from a minority group. I have skills that nobody else has'
> (Billy).

However, one tutor, Rachel, was not really happy about forcing students to disclose, though she thought that in disclosing students could affirm and celebrate their identity.

'[On the course] we do not talk about disability as a deficit thing. They are encouraged if they are disabled to celebrate that and be proud of that...I do not know of any of my students who have chosen not to make it known' (Rachel).

Another tutor, James, concurred in that students who affirm disabled identity are saying:

'I want to actually recognise that this is my impairment and I'm therefore disabled by the expectations of the world in relationship to that impairment' (James).

One student, Lucy wanted to work with people with similar impairments to her own and felt that she could more easily empathise with them.

'The reason I want to do this job is because of my mental health problems and because of my experience and it actually helps me to show the employer that I can do the job' (Lucy).

For another student, Manuel, the key issue was that he brought a unique insight into certain people's impairments which was a valuable characteristic of his employability.

'Being the person in the workplace who is a creative thinker or someone who spots things and ideas that other people don't...being that person who says "What about accessibility?" "What about cultural sensitivity?"...If you can demonstrate through your degree or through experience that you have had that you can do these things, then I think employers are keen on that (Manuel).

Gareth, a placement supervisor, perceived some benefits of employing disabled people precisely because of the benefits related to the impairment effects.

'Actually, that person, regardless of the disability may fit in really, really well. So for example autism, - some of the traits of autism may really, really suit certain jobs and so it may actually be a major benefit to have someone [with autism]' (Gareth).

Gareth also thought that previous bad experiences related to mental health could be used beneficially in work, so that someone with mental health impairment might be able to help someone else with similar experiences.

'So they might see someone shout at someone and think "Well I have been there. I have been through that situation. I am going to have a chat with that person"' (Gareth).

Gareth also thought that these impairments could actually be positive he was willing to affirm and celebrate disability as an identity because:

'I think people view disabilities as a negative thing that's obviously imposed on them, but actually we could turn it around and use it as a positive, definitely' (Gareth).

Some students, Manuel, Billy and Lucy, were affirming and celebrating their identity and the unique contributions they could make in education and work contexts. Even though they had experienced negative labelling, exclusion and stigma in the past, they were still confident to affirm and celebrate a positive identity in which their impairment was recognised. They were also confident that employers would recognise their unique positive qualities and possible contribution in the workplace and consequently employ them because of these unique contributions. The tutors had quite different views in relation to disclosure. Rose saw great value in disclosure that affords appropriate support and understanding of specific impairments. Rachel and James saw disclosure as more related to affirming positive identities and celebrating difference. For James the impairments were socially constructed anyway.

Only one placement supervisor, Gareth identified positive contributions that disabled people could bring to a work situation. Gareth's view corroborated Thompson (1997:8) and Shakespeare (2006:501) that in affirming their identity disabled people validate the importance of their own identity and that disabled identity can function as a 'counterpoint to the norm'. This also reflects views held by Johnstone (2001) and Swain and French

(2000) that in affirming a positive identity disabled people demonstrate the benefits of their experiences of impairment. Rachel and James' affirmative model perspective in which they celebrated difference and impairment showed their willingness for disabled students to disclose was not related to support but in order to celebrate their disabled identity. This view is articulated by Swain and French, (2000:569) who argue that an affirmative model is 'a non-tragic view of disability' which celebrates positive aspects of disability culture and the benefits of being disabled. Similarly, Peters, (2000) perceives being disabled as an essential aspect of personal identity.

Hence, it emerged that some disabled students were happy not just to disclose their identity in order to gain support through learning contracts, but ready to affirm and celebrate their identity and promote their unique qualities to employers. However two key issues emerged that further confirmed issues emerging from data in chapter 6. Firstly, that disabled students were happier to affirm and disclose their disabled identity at university than in work contexts and, secondly, that learning contracts did not necessarily work in work-based placement contexts so that student confusion was compounded by these diverse experiences in the different settings. I found that student confusion was further reinforced by previous negative identities ascribed to them in past and current life experiences. So I explored data that highlighted how these negative identities impacted on how they perceived themselves and were viewed by others.

7.4 'Look! Ha! I've got there. You never thought I could but I am here'

Disabled students may not come to university with positive self - identities if they have experienced negative consequences associated with labelling and stigma attached to their impairment in their past. However, the actual achievement of gaining a university place and progressing in university through passing assessments did help them to transform negative self- identities to positive ones.

> *'I got told I would not be able to come to university because I would not be able to understand where they are coming from. I actually went back and told*

him [college teacher]. I felt brilliant, that sounds horrid but I had great pleasure in telling him "By the way I passed the first semester as well!"' (Sandra).

Students also felt that in getting and maintaining employment they were able to 'prove' themselves. For some students proving themselves related to changing the negative identity that emerged from previous social experiences in their families and at school. In proving themselves through work some students felt they could change their negative identities to positive ones. These identities included the disabled students' own perceptions of themselves, how others perceived their identity and their own feelings about how others perceived their identity.

For Sharon and Chantelle they had had experiences that led to negative identities through past experiences in their families and at school and thought paid employment could overturn that negative perception of their impairment.

'I think it's independence and it shows you can do something for yourself and you prove a lot of people wrong...teachers, sometimes family members, friends. I think with me it's like teachers mainly' (Chantelle).

'From primary and secondary school all the people I knew with disabilities got kind of dismissed...if there was a job to do it was always given to someone else. With employment you can say "Look! Ha! I've got there. You never thought I could but I am here". I've made it even though you didn't believe I could and now I've got status and I've got this piece of paper so say I am as good as anyone else' (Sharon).

'Since I've been diagnosed with dyslexia my gran turned around and said, "Oh, well you can't get a job with that"' (Sharon).

However, some students referred more to their current situation and how part-time employment they undertook as students or through their work-based learning placement gave them positive identity.

I can do it and especially because I am dyslexic, because I do a lot of paperwork with my job so it proves that I can do it' (Rhian).

Jacob summarised the main perceptions of work and its contribution to identity transformation for the disabled students.

'I think some disabled people might think it is a real achievement to hold down a job because their impairment might really restrict them doing something, but if they are doing a job, then it can be seen as a success. I think for disabled people it could be about breaking down barriers and perceptions that other people have and also they have of able-bodied people in work. They might be fearful or they might be daunted by it, but they could realise that it is perfectly normal and it can be achieved' (Jacob).

One of the placement supervisors agreed. George perceived paid work as extremely important in establishing a positive identity for disabled people.

'For me it is sort of feeling that you are contributing and you are getting rewarded for contributing and whether that sort of narrows the gap between being perceived as different because you have got a disability....the main benefit is to say "Well look, I am normal, I have got a job"' (George).

George recognised the power of past experiences in making disabled people desire a 'normal' identity or label.

Disabled students had many negative past experiences related to being labelled as unable to do certain things, especially gaining the necessary skills to work and gain paid employment. Most of these negative experiences emerged from teachers, friends and family members and impacted on the formation of negative identities. The fact that so many of the negative identities came from teachers and the education system reinforces the literature which suggests that inclusive education policy is not working in practice and this is explored further in chapter 8. Nevertheless, the disabled students perceived paid work or work-based learning as an opportunity to change negative perceptions of their impairments and what they could achieve in relation to work. They were obviously becoming more positive in relation to their self-identity but also saw paid work as

changing identities ascribed to them by other people. In doing so, they in turn felt more positive about how they were being perceived.

The above bears out other writers' views (Bradley, 1996; Foucault, 1997a; Jenkins, 2004; Galvin, 2006), that identity is not unchangeable or fixed, it can be transformed and disabled people are constantly transforming their identities in different contexts and at different stages in their life. It also concurred with Morris, (1991:37) who stated that 'Our ideas about ourselves are generally formed by those who are not disabled' and Galvin (2006) who asserts that these identities are challenged and changed because they are socially constructed by non-disabled people. The fact that the disabled students' identities were powerfully affected by their own historical experiences affirmed Wood (2000 in Swain and French, 2008:67) who argues that identity is 'at the interface between the personal, and the social' so that some disabled people take up certain identities while refuting others.

Therefore, disabled students had often experienced negative labelling and stigma related to their impairments in a range of social contexts. Teachers and family members had particularly contributed to these negative identities by casting doubt on whether disabled students could succeed in higher education, but more poignantly in work. Clearly these past negative experiences further contributed to students' confused experiences, but many of them perceived their ability to take part in paid employment or work-based learning as a tool for overcoming those negative identities. I next explored how transforming negative identities was realised on the course.

7.5 'You may get a nice warm fuzzy glow if you go out to work'

One of the key purposes of the placement aspect of the course was the enhancement of student employability. When asked about if and why paid employment is important for disabled people the disabled students virtually all saw employment and employability as crucial to their positive self-identity and how they were perceived by others. For Billy paid employment was about supporting himself and credibility.

> *'I need the credibility factor, I need to prove myself. I want to be able to support myself'* (Billy).

Katherine similarly identified self-worth and a decent standard of living as key to her identity.

> *'Paid employment is significant in our society for self worth and to have a decent lifestyle'* (Katherine).

> *'Having a job...there's a certain status to it...to be employed carries a certain status'* (Jacob).

> *'Just independence. Not having to rely on people and showing people you can do something...you just feel you have got a purpose'* (Chantelle).

Paula, a placement supervisor, agreed that paid employment contributes to a positive identity and 'normalisation'.

> *'It's about self-esteem, kudos, a place in society, feeling that they are contributing, having economic...wellbeing, they have got their own money that they can have control over'* (Paula).

> *'There might be a group of disabled people who perhaps don't have as much say or as much control over how their lives are run for whom that [paid employment] would be very empowering because it would give them a degree of independence that they wouldn't otherwise have'* (Paula).

This was confirmed by one of the tutors, Rose, who argued that:

> *'Employment gives you job satisfaction, and it gives you career prospects, it gives you financial independence...I think personally a feeling of self-worth...Being in paid employment is very good for how you feel about life and your place in society* (Rose).

In Rose's view not working sustained negative identities so that:

'I personally have been unemployed at various times in my life and I know how that can impact on your self-esteem' (Rose).

For another tutor, James, employability:

'Is about [disabled people] actually developing their own consciousness of themselves as people who are engaged and involved in social and economic life, not labelled as over here as something other – as disabled' (James).

However, some issues arose as for one tutor, Rachel, who agreed that work contributes to positive identities and could even help get rid of some negative things around disability.

'Employment, for better or worse, makes you feel part of society. It enables you to contribute to society, it enables you to partake in society because you have the financial and the social resources to do so and that can counteract some of the bad things that can happen through being disabled in society' (Rachel).

So Rachel was not completely convinced as she felt that it is not right that employment is there to counteract bad things about being disabled like past negative experiences of people assuming that disabled people cannot work.

'It should not be the case that it has to happen in the first place...there are benefits to being employed if you are disabled but that benefit shouldn't have to be there' (Rachel).

A bigger issue was raised by two students, Lucy and Manuel, who did not agree that work contributes to positive identity. When asked about the value of paid employment they stated:

'I've never seen it as important...There's more to life than going out to work' (Lucy).

'I do not like the idea that society judges people...this person is worth more than this person because they go to work and they are not necessarily a burden to society...you may get a nice warm fuzzy glow if you go out to work...and that is a nice feeling...but it is wrong for society to judge people as worthless because they don't go to work' (Manuel).

Lucy also felt that the media portray an image of paid employment as providing positive identities so that they spread the idea that:

'Hard work will set you free' (Lucy).

One tutor, Rachel, like Lucy and Manuel, similarly challenged the whole notion of it being good to work and the stigma attached to not working.

> *'I think there is a bigger barrier...which is this idea that it is good to work. So there is a stigma attached to not working' (Rachel).*

> *'This push to make everyone employable otherwise they are not worthy of being a human being troubles me massively' (Rachel).*

Some students perceived the threat of negative identities and stigmatising labels if they did not work, so saw employment as a way of avoiding negative stigmatisation. Rhian was concerned that:

> *'I think emphasis on being lazy or scroungers if you do not work...push people into employment because they don't want to be seen like that' (Rhian).*

Sandra felt that the media drive much of the negative identities because:

> *'Saying everyone has to have a job. I read one (newspaper) last week saying everyone is living off benefits' (Sandra).*

But in reality Lucy did not feel she could actually sustain full time paid employment because:

> *'Well perhaps no you cannot go out and get a job because, you know, however much you put those adjustments in place, someone's not going to be able to do a job. I couldn't stand up all day and that's nothing to do with disability. That's just that I could not stand up all day...you need to realise that...and you have got no way around it as such' (Lucy).*

Manuel saw benefits as contributing to independence in the same way as paid work.

'To be independent, to live on your own, and to sustain yourself can be done even if you live on benefits. You are sustaining yourself because you are the claimant of benefits' (Manuel).

Disabled students were keen to experience paid employment because of the advantages it afforded in relation to social status, self-worth, purpose, financial independence and the consequent positive approval of others and this was confirmed by the tutors. Some students feared the stigma of not working and claiming benefits as a key driver in their desire for paid employment. Hence, they perceived work as a necessary aspect of their own positive self-identity but also of how other people perceived their identity. However, Lucy and Manuel were willing to challenge the notion of work as a major factor in their independence or positive identity and they perceived a positive identity outside of paid employment and independence as achievable on benefits. They clearly challenged as oppressive any notion of paid work as a necessary element for positive identity and independence and one tutor, Rachel, shared this view. Lucy also challenged the idea that removing barriers to her inclusion in the workplace would result in her being able to work.

This view of the power of paid employment in positive identity formation is presented by Galvin (2006:500) who argues that work is a primary site of identity loss for disabled people if they are unable to access it. As such those who can access paid employment are 'winners' and those who don't are the 'losers' and become 'dependent' and 'poor'. Foucault (1980) agrees that the level of respect and self-esteem accorded to an individual is related to their ability to work and they may be seen as 'feckless and culpable' if they do not work (O'Malley 1996:2002). For this reason, disabled people are often encouraged to participate in work in order to be emancipated and empowered. However, Manuel, Lucy and Rachel were holding a post-structural perspective in which they questioned the social construction of employment (Wilton, 2004; Barnes and Mercer, 2005). They were reflecting (Galvin, 2006) questions about the notion of the necessity of work and acknowledged that for some people it is not an option. Galvin

(2006:504-5), like Rachel , Lucy and Manuel, view this idea of it being good to work as a 'very seductive' idea which is 'hard to resist' but that 'actually, the objectives inherent in neo-liberal self-actualisation are more about preserving the conditions which disable people with impairments than overcoming them'. Their views also back up Hendey and Pascal (2001) and Abberley (1999; 2002) who question the value and status attributed to paid work.

Thus, most disabled students in the study were keen to join the paid workforce and viewed their education and work-based placements as contributing to the skills and knowledge they required to be part of the paid workforce. They, and other stakeholders, saw paid employment as a key factor in their financial independence, social status and self-worth. As such they equated inclusion in employment with positive identity.

Nevertheless, disabled students may have changed their own perception of how they viewed themselves but that did not mean that they had managed to change society's perception of them. Two groups who were most significantly impacted by negative labelling and stigma were those with mental health impairments and impairments related to behaviour and this was highlighted in chapter 6. I now explore in detail some of the key issues related to identity for disabled students with mental health and Autism/Asperger's Syndrome labels. I have deliberately maintained a focus on impairment effects around these specific labels because in chapter 6 it was clear that the Head of Partnership and some placement supervisors were particularly worried about disabled students with these labels.

7.6 'The kind of stigma that someone with mental health problems is kind of unstable and perhaps violent'

Even though most students identified paid employment as essential in establishing their credibility, financial independence and status in society, they perceived some barriers to gaining and maintaining paid employment and these included negative impairment effects related to their identities. Some of these were articulated in chapter 6, for example Sandra and Sharon identified some 'impairment effects' like poor spelling or not being

able to answer the phone as affecting their ability to gain and maintain paid employment. Mental health impairments were perceived to be particularly significant negative identities:

> 'Because of the stigma involved with mental health problems...the kind of stigma that someone with mental health problems is kind of unstable and perhaps violent' (Lucy).

Related to this was the fact that some students felt that in disclosing their impairment and identifying as disabled they may have incurred negative attitudes at university or placement institutions or from employers.

> 'With my mental health problems I have had so much abuse' (Lucy).

> 'All sorts of connotations with having a specific mental health problem label and if you put that on an application form they'd automatically make those assumptions about you' (Lucy).

Lee, the Head of Partnership, regarded some impairment effects as more significant than others.

> 'I think it is some of the rarer mental disabilities that we have some difficulties with where we don't have the knowledge either' (Lee).

Some placement supervisors agreed. When Manuel, a disabled student with the label of Asperger's Syndrome, went on placement to Angela's setting problems emerged because:

> 'It was very much centred around himself rather than looking at the bigger picture...people at times were very irritated' (Angela).

> 'There was a very wide gap between Manuel's perceptions of what employment would be like and our perceptions...there were conflicting expectations' (Angela).

Paula was similarly concerned about aspects of Autism and Asperger's Syndrome that would impact on employment in her setting where empathy was a really important skill:

> 'Because it is something that people with autism find hard to do isn't it, to empathise' (Paula).

> 'And sometimes people with autism want to operate within their own rules and structures and find it difficult to fit in to someone else's rules and structures' (Paula).

Gareth thought there could be problems with disabled people identified as having mental health impairments because of perceptions that:

> 'Everyone with a mental health issue is a murderer....unfortunately in this case I think disability is seen as a bad thing...they are deviant, away from the norm' (Gareth).

However, Manuel, was adamant that disclosure of his Asperger's Syndrome and associated behavioural impairments was essential, he said:

> 'I've never understood the non-disclosure thing' (Manuel).

This shows that for some students there was a stigma attached to their impairment that was more significant than that attached to other impairments. The deaf student, Jacob, had no problems disclosing his impairment but Lucy, the student with mental health impairment, had many concerns related to her past experiences. As such it was more of a challenge to disclose your identity as a disabled person labelled with mental health impairments or behaviour related impairments because negative consequences like stigma, segregation and exclusion were more likely than with other impairments. For some disabled students fear, misunderstanding and abuse was a very significant aspect of their experience. Added to this was the fact that these were 'hidden impairments' and as such not immediately apparent so that if students had not disclosed they may have been perceived as 'bad students'.

This verifies Thomas' (2007:23) view that there may be serious and profound negative impacts on disabled people who are culturally discredited as not 'normal'. It also substantiates Bury's argument (1996:25) that some practices exclude those who deviate from socially constructed norms. For some people the labelling process results in a stigma associated with prejudice, stereotyping and even victimisation which sometimes leads to a fear of disclosing some impairments (Johnstone, 2001:156). It also affirms that it is not the impairment that matters but how it is viewed and categorised by powerful individuals and dominant values and structures within society (Bury, 1996).

Hence, students often managed to transform negative identities associated with past life experiences through positive experiences on the course, particularly being able to participate in work placements, which they perceived as enhancing their employability and proving to others that they could do it. However, transforming their own perceptions of their identity did not necessarily mean that they had managed to transform other people's views of them This was particularly significant for those with more stigmatising impairments related to mental health and behaviour. Students experienced further confusion around their identity, especially if their labels were associated with mental health and behaviour. One final issue emerged in my semi-structured interviews and an observation of a work-related learning lecture on identity, where students identified complexities around their multiple identities.

7.7. 'Barriers begin with race, gender, sexuality or disability'

One of the issues that emerged in chapter 6 was that some students expressed a desire for more of an opportunity to affirm a collective disabled identity in order to work towards positive changes and more inclusive higher education and work-based placements. All students were concerned about the lack of opportunity for a collective disabled voice for political change at university but it was clear that this was not in place and this is explored in detail in chapter 8.

Some students commented on other factors which were related to complex multiple identities and the labels and stigma attached to them. The students perceived oppression as located within a number of identities, including gender, social class, race, disability and outward attractiveness or bodily perfection. They were happy to affirm some identities but not others. Ren talked about the oppression she faced due to her gender.

'Being female in organisations that are male dominated' (Ren).

However, she also felt there were oppressive practices associated with other identities.

'It seems that barriers begin with race, gender, sexuality or disability and prospective employees are judged on these before being questioned on their thoughts and feelings' (Ren).

Some felt their identity was often perceived by society in relation to how they looked. Lucy commented on how she looked because her purple hair stood out and she found it difficult to take care of her appearance.

However, when students were questioned about their identity in relation to social class in a placement work-related education lecture one student from an ethnic minority responded:

'That is an intrusive and irrelevant question' (X).

Clearly, being asked about identity in a public lecture forum was more threatening. Maybe identity related to social class was more sensitive than disabled identity. Other students in the lecture said:

'At school it was very important what jobs you (parents) did' (Z).

When asked about how society portrayed social class identity one student commented:

'It is inherent in society, part of who we are. It is all around us' (Q).

Overall the students felt that negative identities associated with social class were hidden, but not dead and were quietly affecting many people's lives so that:

> 'It is not dead...it is not spoken of...it is hidden and less obvious but is affecting a lot of people's lives' (X).

Thus disabled students' identity was not just bound up in their impairment, they had complex multiple identities. The fact that they may identify with more than one oppressed group, for example female and disabled or disabled and from a socio-economically deprived background made it more difficult to affirm their identity as a disabled person as this was only one aspect of their identity. This may also explain why collective identity for disabled students on the course was an issue in chapters 6 and 8. They may also have been happier with affirming some identities than others. Disabled students were mainly happy to affirm their identities in order to gain appropriate support for inclusive education and employment. It may be that some identities, including social class, are less easy to affirm. It may also be a factor that it is one thing to disclose in a learning contract, which is only seen by tutors and partnership staff, but quite a different challenge to disclose your identity to a group of your peers.

These issues are similar to those raised by Ferguson (2003) and Shakespeare (2006) who note that affirming identity is complex and questionable because we hold multiple identities. If impairment is a factor in defining identity it is not the only factor and even if it was the type and severity of the impairment would also be a factor. Shakespeare and Watson (2001) similarly argue that disabled identity is complex and that being female or from an ethnic minority maybe a more salient aspect of identity than being disabled.

Clearly identity was a complex concept for the students. Their prior experiences of assumptions about their inability to succeed in work settings affected their beliefs about themselves. They were, however, able to transform the negative self-identities associated with past experiences through success in higher education and work contexts. This transformation was limited in that they did not necessarily transform the

way that others viewed their identity and this was particularly difficult for those with mental health and behaviour related impairments. Multiple identities complicated the issue further. Disabled identity may be perceived differently in different contexts by different stakeholders and the disabled students in the study worked in the university and placement contexts while on their course. The fact that they felt more positive about their identity and who they are, and even felt more positive about how non-disabled people judge their impairment, did not equate with having changed non-disabled people's negative assessments of the impairment, or the practices that continue to oppress them.

7.8 Summary: *'The solution is not necessarily just to tell everyone'*

It is clear that when seeking to understand issues related to disabled student identity that this was a complex issue on which different stakeholders had very different views. Identity was constantly being transformed and so it was not something fixed and it was also something that could be quite different in different contexts at different times. The complexity of identity is summed up by Jenkins (2004) who sees it as always transformable and related to who we are, how we feel about ourselves and how others perceive us. I have summarised five key issues that have emerged in this chapter which enhance our understanding of disabled identity.

Firstly, some students were confident that, even though past experiences had led to negative identities, it was appropriate to affirm and disclose their disabled identity and this included recognition of their impairment by others. This worked well at university where most staff held similar ideologies and so it was a safe haven for students to disclose their impairment and have it published in a learning contract or all tutors and Partnership Team to see. Indeed, this was seen as extremely supportive and beneficial. However, learning contracts were not so useful for work placement settings and sometimes students adopted different identities in diverse settings, opting to disclose at university but 'pass' as non-disabled at work placement. Data from placement supervisors and the Head of Partnership in the following chapter on policy and practice shows clearly that the workplace was not such a safe haven and that disclosure of an

impairment may lead to disabled students being given menial tasks on placement, and being denied more senior and responsible jobs.

Secondly, past history and experience of stigma, labelling and exclusion had profoundly impacted on how disabled students perceived themselves in relation to what they could achieve academically and in employment settings. It was significant that most of these negative experiences emerged from families, friends and teachers. As such being labelled as different often led to exclusion and discrimination (Swain, French and Cameron, 2003).Clearly, if staff in higher education and work environments continued to perpetuate such negative identities then there was a gap between inclusion policy and practice and this is something I explore chapter 8.

Thirdly, many experiences changed disabled students' identities in relation to how they perceived their identity and how they were viewed by others. Most students felt that getting to university, progressing at university and getting employment opportunities contributed to positive identity including self worth, status and independence. Jenkins (2004:5) similarly argues that 'One's identity - one's identities, indeed, for who we are is always singular and plural - is never a final or settled matter'. The students' views were confirmed by the other stakeholders in the study. However, some students and tutors were willing to challenge the notion of having to work in order to improve identity and challenged the oppressive stigma attached to not working and claiming benefits. Hendey and Pascal (2000) and Galvin (2006) similarly see this idea of the necessity of work for enhancing positive identity as very alluring and difficult to avoid. This has implications for the work-based curriculum and its focus on employability so the next chapter will explore issues related to the curriculum for disabled students. Others challenged the notion of disabled identity by highlighting their complex multiple identities (Ferguson 2000). If the students' identities included other 'negative' identities like being female, from an ethnic minority or from a socio-economically deprived background then the disabled identity was just one aspect of their identity. Clearly students may experience 'deep exclusion' (Daniels and Cole, 2010:16) if they identified with more than one 'oppressed' group in

society. It was evident that all models of disability were evident in students' experiences of identity.

Fourthly, for those declaring mental health or behaviour related impairments like Asperger's syndrome the 'risks' of disclosure became more significant, as these students were feared and misunderstood at the workplace more than those with other impairments. This appeared to affirm Berthoud (2008) who asserts that severity of impairment does impact on employability and that not all impairments are subject to the same barriers.

Fifthly, this exploration of disabled identity illuminates some of the issues raised in chapter 6 on the social model. It confirms that for most stakeholders a strong social model is not necessarily an adequate explanation of impairment (Crow, 1996; Shakespeare and Watson, 2001; Thomas, 2004a; 2004b; Thompson, 2004; Shakespeare, 2006) because barrier removal does not ensure the needs of individual impairment effects are met. This chapter helps explain why the students' perceptions of the social model appeared confused in chapter 6. They still experienced stigma, labelling and exclusion associated with individual medical models in education and work-based contexts (Barnes, 1992; Johnstone, 2001) but were presented with a 'strong' social model at university lectures. Some adopted a post-social model approach (Morris, 1991; Peters, 2000; Swain and French, 2008) in which they affirmed and celebrated their identity and this was encouraged by some tutors. It was clear that the disabled students' 'confused' focus on impairment effects in chapter 6 related to their different experiences or expectations in varied contexts and with different stakeholders, that is, who they are with, where they are and what the consequences of impairment effects might be.

To conclude, it is clear that disabled student identity was formed and transformed by a range of past and current experiences. The course they were following brought them into contact with different stakeholders in varied contexts where their identity was viewed in a range of ways. This subsequently impacted on how they perceived their own identity. As such, student confusion about the social model in chapter 6 is further explained by the identity issues emerging in this chapter. Firstly, past experiences of being subject to

medical/deficit model thinking about their functional limitations was mixed with opportunities on the course to 'prove' this thinking wrong and demonstrate their employability in work-based placements. Secondly, the chapter further affirmed that they had varied experiences in different settings so that it appeared safer to affirm, and disclose disabled identity in university than work settings. Thirdly, more evidence emerged in this chapter that some disabled identities resulted in more discrimination and exclusionary practice than others. So this chapter provided more evidence supporting the assertion in chapter 6 that students were confused about the social model and further explanation for this apparent confusion related to their many varied experiences of social model thinking. It appeared that all models of disability were represented in beliefs about their identity.

These different experiences often resulted in a gap between social model policy and practice because inclusive, social model ideologies were not implemented similarly by different stakeholders or in different institutions and contexts. I wanted to further explore the issue of whether knowledge and understanding of social model thinking was a key contributory factor in diverse applications of social model thinking articulated in chapter 6 and evident in how disabled identity was judged in chapter 7.

Barnes (2003:20) argues that it is this oppression which is the key factor, not whether disabled people chose to identify themselves or not and the data seems to confirm this view. Lawson, (2001:12) cites Marks (1999:162):

> The aim is not to understand how people feel, but rather to provide fully inclusive physical environments, institutions, policies and practices. Individual accounts are seen as a diversion from the main political struggle of ending collective oppression.

The next chapter on policy and practice explored the issues emerging for inclusive higher education and employment which enhanced or challenge inclusion and employability for disabled students.

CHAPTER 8: Inclusive Policy and Practice: Rhetoric or Reality?

8.1 Introduction and themes emerging

Since universities have adopted widening participation agendas the inclusion of disabled students in higher education has become a matter of debate, particularly as there is often a gap between the rhetoric of ideology and policies and the practical realities (Dyson and Gallannaugh, 2007; Hodkinson, 2010). Few studies have been undertaken concerning inclusion in higher education, but even fewer focus on the views of disabled students about this process and experience (Hurst, 1996; Oliver, 1996a; 1996b; Fuller et al, 2004). This chapter explores how disabled students and other stakeholders in my study perceived the relationship between inclusive policies and practices at the university and at work placements. The issue of models of disability and disabled identity were particularly significant in relation to inclusive education, so the findings in this chapter began to emerge in those presented in chapters 6 and 7, where it became clear that some disabled students and other stakeholders articulated some challenges when inclusive policy was implemented in practice at both university and work-based contexts.

The main themes emerging in chapter 6 revolved around differential knowledge of the social model amongst stakeholders and inconsistent application of social model practices in university and work-based contexts. Disabled students appeared confused about the social model, but this was not surprising as they were subjected to different applications of it, depending on where they were and who they were with. The university appeared to be less exclusive than the work placements and university staff seemed more knowledgeable about the social model. Chapter 7 reinforced the apparent student confusion around the social model as they experienced all models of disability in their current and past identities. The correlation between stakeholder knowledge of the social model and positive identities was again evident and, once more, the university seemed a more positive environment where it was safer to celebrate and disclose disabled identity. Therefore, it appeared that student confusion was related to diverse experiences in different contexts and that work contexts were less inclusive and their staff less informed

about disability than university tutors. I further explored this apparent correlation between knowledge of the social model of disability and inclusive practice in this chapter by exploring understandings of 'inclusion' and 'employability' amongst stakeholders to see if this further confirmed differential knowledge in different contexts. I also explored where practice was perceived as successful, and the tensions emerging which impeded inclusive practice in both environments, so that I could establish positive inclusive practice and key ways forward for inclusion within the context of the social model.

The main focus of questions that I posed to different stakeholders in interviews was around perceptions of the nature, purpose, successes and challenges of inclusive education for disabled students in work-related and work-based contexts. The specific questions and the research tools used are summarised in (Appendix 3a-c).

Firstly, I explored the stakeholders' interpretation of what inclusion is.

8.2 'Defining inclusive education is too much of a dream world for me'

Many disabled students in this study defined inclusive education in a similar manner. They focused on equality of opportunity and treating everyone equally in relation to a 'level playing field'. Rarely did they focus only on disabled people, rather, they understood inclusion as relating to all excluded groups of people in society.

> *'I think it's ensuring that all pupils of all age and ethnicity and disability get the chance to do the same thing as their peers so that they're not felt disincluded or excluded from something' (Jacob).*

However, one student, Manuel was concerned about an approach that he saw as merely 'geographical' inclusion.

> *'Everybody has the same chance to prove their academic ability...I think people have taken the word inclusion to mean everyone sits in the same room. That's not inclusion because what if not everyone likes that room? That's not very inclusive is it?' (Manuel).*

The placement supervisors defined inclusive education similarly to the disabled students, emphasising equality of opportunity and access as significant factors.

> *'We take all children and whatever their needs are we meet them and we treat all children as individuals and that, to me, is inclusive education' (Carol).*

> *'Inclusive education is about delivering for everybody' (Paula).*

> *'Inclusive education? I would define it as giving everyone the chance to have equal education, to have the same access to education' (Gareth).*

It was interesting that one placement supervisor saw schools as a reflection of society so that a diverse society should be represented by diverse schools.

> *'We live in a society with a lot of different people and I think schools should reflect that society' (Carol).*

The tutors had more difficulty defining inclusive education. One tutor, Rose, began by thinking about the need for removing hindrances related to impairment effects and this was similar to some of the individual/medical model focus we saw in chapter 6. Rose stated how difficult she found it to articulate her definition:

> *'Giving everybody the opportunity to develop their skills and increase their knowledge without any hindrance from their disability. So give everybody equal opportunities...it is not really equal opportunities though...oh, I don't know how to put it really. It's difficult, isn't it?' (Rose).*

Rachel was more concerned about the use of the term 'inclusive education' and she articulated the challenges associated with making the rhetoric reality.

> *'That's another word that gets thrown around and no-one ever stops and says what do we mean...exclusion is a lot more useful word than inclusion because it actually focuses on what we are all worried about. We are worried about people not being included. So defining inclusive education is too much of a dream world for me...if I had to [define inclusive education] it would be an education that included everyone. It's really simple...it would be an opportunity to be educated that didn't exclude anybody' (Rachel).*

When Rachel was asked about why inclusion is important she related this to ideas about citizenship. She was very concerned about the term being used lightly, so that it did not really happen because of the lack of adequate funding to make the rhetoric reality.

> 'This notion that we all have to accept everybody and that part of that is you have to be seen to accept everybody and the fact that we don't actually is neither here nor there, we have to be seen. And I think the perception of inclusive education being important is part of the neo-liberal notion that you have to be seen to be a tolerant citizen. So people pay lip-service to it. It's a nice little phrase, "We're including everybody" and the level that its importance is at is never matched by the level of funding or consideration' (Rachel).

The sentiments described above demonstrated that most of the students and placement supervisors understood inclusive education as relating to equality of opportunity in relation to access to education. Their focus was on a wide range of excluded groups, not just disabled students. One placement supervisor, Carol, could see the importance of inclusive education as education institutions represented a diverse society. The main challenges iterated were from one student, Manuel, who was concerned about the notion of simply adopting a geographical approach to inclusion, so that often it is assumed that if they are 'in the room' then they must be included. The tutors perceived the notion of inclusive education as challenging in relation to resourcing it and the danger of it being given only 'lip service'.

Ainscow's (1997) understanding of inclusion relates to accepting and valuing all and Barton (1997) sees inclusion as identifying and removing injustices. Most stakeholders adopted this 'broad' (Armstrong et al, 2010: 38) definition of inclusion which included all diverse groups, not just disabled students. However, like Rachel, Armstrong et al (2010: 29) feared a 'rhetoric of convenience' around inclusive education which 'embraces the 'feel-good aspects of inclusive education without seriously confronting the key issues related to the purposes and values of educational practice'. Connor and Ferri (2007:66) cite Kauffman (1999) who has similar concerns that inclusion may become an insignificant slogan which may give only a veneer of authenticity and become a mere

whim. Connor and Ferri (2007:72) mention Saslow (1999:3) who fear, like Manuel, that geographical inclusion results in sitting in the same building which is not an education plan but a 'space plan'. It was clear from the data that defining inclusion is not easy and Thomas (1999); Hornby (2002) and Houghton (2005) confirm this definitional challenge. Farrell (2001:6) agrees that defining inclusive education is a contentious issue because there is a range of contradictory views on what it means and how it should work out in practice.

Stakeholders found inclusive education very difficult to define and there were contradictory views on what it is and how to implement it in practice. Added to this definitional challenge was the problem that many people paid lip-service to it because inadequate resources were provided to ensure its full implementation. This is an issue that is explored in more detail later in this chapter where all stakeholders articulated their concerns around implementing inclusive practice. However, I also explored stakeholder understandings of employability in order to establish whether further definitional variations amongst stakeholders illuminated the issues emerging around differential knowledge and practice in diverse settings.

8.3 'I think when people talk about employability they are talking about someone who can be employed and not cause any trouble' (Rachel)

However happy they were about disclosure at university and the value of paid employment in contributing to positive identity, some respondents were concerned that in affirming identity or disclosing impairments students would be at risk in a work environment and that this was a tension when including disabled students in work-based placements. One tutor, Rose, stated:

'Immediately somebody sees that somebody has a disability or reads that they have disclosed that they have a disability they may then make assumptions about what they can and cannot do and that could very easily be a barrier to them in a working environment' (Rose).

As such, Rose felt that disabled students may not always wish to disclose because of the risks associated with disclosure.

> 'It is up to them whether they share that information or not and whether they wish to be public knowledge and whether they wish everyone around them to treat them differently because they have disclosed that they have this impairment' (Rose).

Rachel could see that not disclosing at placement would cause problems in relation to including the disabled student at placement but she did not see disclosure as the answer. She feared that in taking disabled students there may be concerns about them 'causing trouble' for the institution.

> 'I think when people talk about employability they are talking about someone who can be employed and not cause any trouble. I think that is the bottom line and that they can be paid to do a job and they will do that job satisfactorily, adequately, not cause any extra resource issues or any trouble' (Rachel).

Lee, the Head of Partnership recognised some of the negative consequences of disabled student disclosure as being excluded on placement and given menial tasks to occupy their time.

> 'The other problem we had is if a student does declare, what is the setting going to do? Because we have had some students where the setting has gone "Alright, so we'll give you photocopying in a little room somewhere and treat you completely different". So it's can they actually cope with giving the extra support that may be needed' (Lee).

Some settings may have decided they were not in a position to support disabled students and totally excluded them:

> ' Because if they have to put a lot of time into supporting the student...all this takes time to arrange...so it's just whether they have got the time to do that' (Lee).

Lee's fears were confirmed by some of the placement supervisors who stated:

'I would say not having the knowledge of the Disability Discrimination Act...being scared and thinking "Oh my gosh! If I'm not perceived to be helping this person...Okay, I'll not bother having them' (Gareth).

'Just feeling you are under scrutiny and ...what resources will I need to put in place as an employer to give this person equal opportunity?...Have I got the money or the resources to be able to give that person a fair chance?' (Gareth).

'We are in a blame culture...so if we take this person on and we do have an issue then it's my fault. I've got to keep my job in this current climate. It's just easier to push that person away and get someone else in' (Gareth).

Similarly, some of the placement supervisors were aware of the risk of prejudice once students were included at placements. Some of the fears about negative consequences of disclosure that the placement supervisors articulated were:

'Fear on the part of the employer that they would be having someone who could not do the job as well as an able-bodied person' (Carol).

In relation to specific impairments:

'It's important that children have stability...I wouldn't want children to have someone who is unpredictable. So if it was someone with past mental health issues who now had that under control then I can't see why they would not be employed' (Carol).

'In schools we're very protective of children aren't we, and anything that's seen to compromise that, whether real or not,...I think that is going to impact majorly...unfortunately I think disability is seen as a bad thing – they're deviant, away from the norm' (Gareth.)

In relation to disabled people with the label dyslexia:

'It would probably present issues because...how can they teach phonics or reading if they've got problems themselves?' (Carol).

'I wouldn't employ someone who was disabled in some way if they couldn't do the job just because I felt they should have special treatment or something' (Carol).

One student, Manuel, admitted that he may be excluded in a work placement or employment situation because:

'I'm not very good in the mornings at all. I'm somebody who does all my work at 2, 3, or 4 o'clock in the morning...so in terms of societal barriers for me are that everybody works from 9-5pm and for me that's not very good. My ideal job would start at about 7pm and I'd finish maybe 3 or 4 in the morning' (Manuel).

He also stated that:

'People don't always practise what they preach...people who are apparently very wised up...in the education system a lot of people are very clued up on children with Asperger's Syndrome and I do not think that people have realised that Asperger's is a lifelong condition...They seem to think it is a condition only children have...I think people seem to forget that there are adults with autism and Asperger's Syndrome who may very well be trying to get a job in that system' (Manuel).

'The attitude is shifting, but it hasn't shifted away from the medical model perceptions...it is still very much "These children have problems and these problems need to be stamped out". I've always put the idea into people's minds that "well if little Jimmy likes rocking backwards and forwards, well maybe little Jimmy just likes rocking backwards and forward...it's just because you think it's weird so you think it must be stamped out. Why? and people find it immensely difficult to understand, let alone agree with...the presumption is that some things just cannot be because they are too weird' (Manuel).

For students with visible impairments exclusion may relate to:

'The way you look, communicate. I am not the clearest person in speech...other people's attitudes and the way they treat you. People can be very rude and inhospitable' (Sandra).

'If you don't look right for the job they won't even interview you' (Sandra).

Clearly then, some tutors were more wary about inclusion in work contexts than at university because of perceived prejudice in the workplace. They also feared assumptions about what disabled people could and could not do. This could lead to disabled students being treated differently or totally excluded on the basis of their impairment in work-based environments. This was reinforced by data from the Head of Partnership, Lee, who had experienced placements refusing to take disabled students or just giving them menial tasks. Responses from the placement supervisors also reinforced this point because even though the placement supervisors wanted the disabled students to disclose, they were clear that they themselves were concerned about the impact of some impairment effects on the children or adults in their setting and would not necessarily employ a disabled person in their setting, especially if there was some fear about an impairment effect that 'threatened' anyone in their setting.

The fears articulated by stakeholders above about the impact of impairment effects in work situations corroborate Lawson's view (2001) that inclusion does not and cannot eliminate all the effects of impairment. Thompson (2001) and Johnstone (2001) agree that difference has the potential for discrimination and oppression towards those perceived as different. Like the tutors they are concerned that discrimination against those labelled as different can be institutionalised and impact negatively on employment opportunities for those perceived as not fitting in with the 'norm'. However, the fact that other placement tutors would not employ some disabled people confirms some concerns that discriminatory attitudes in the workplace are often justified on the basis that the work is unsuitable (Barnes, 1992), and that even though difference can lay people open to veneration and high esteem, it is more likely to result in intolerance, prejudice and discrimination (Swain, French and Cameron, 2003). Similar sentiments are expressed by Shevlin et al, (2004), who fear that if disabled students disclose at university they are at risk of unfavourable treatment and that this unfavourable treatment is more significant in

employment situations. Gareth's point about the rights of students at placements confirms Connor and Ferri's (2007) concerns over competing civil rights at stake, though Foster (2007) believes that it is more about employer willingness to include disabled students than any right that the disabled student has to be in the workplace. Hahn (1997) and Nickson et al (2005) talk about the acceptable image and disabled students being encouraged to minimise the prominence of disability at interviews and on application forms and data similarly raised such concerns from students. Berthoud (2008) has noted that variations in job chances are more related to the type of impairment than to being disabled and the fact that some impairments were feared by employers more than others appears to support such a view.

The data presented above provided further evidence of differential knowledge and understanding amongst stakeholders. All stakeholders found defining inclusion and employability difficult and the wide range of understandings of the terms reflected varied models of disability, which consequently impacted on practice. It was clear that disclosing disabled identity in a workplace situation was more risky in relation to negative consequences and assumptions about employability than at university and further confirmed that disabled students who disclosed in a work environment often risked exclusion rather than inclusion. All this contributed further to my findings that a fractured and disjointed application of the social model contributed to student confusion around the social model.

However, it was evident that in many ways inclusive practice was evident in policies and course documents so I wanted to explore the extent to which these policies did successfully impact on practice at university and work placement settings. The next section examines the positive aspects of the disabled students' experiences of inclusive education while at university and on work-based placements so that evidence of social model practice could be located.

8.4 *'It proves to me that people are changing, they are not just saying it, they are meaning it'*

Disabled students in the study, without exception, commented very favourably about their experience of inclusion at university. This concurred with the views they articulated in chapter 6 in which they viewed the social model as well embedded in university policy and practice. Disabled students often associated inclusive education with barrier removal. When asked about being included at university Ren said:

> *'I am not worried at university...I don't feel I have any barriers at university'*
> *(Ren).*

Sharon added:

> *'The friendliness of the staff really helps...we are all on the same level...very much working with you rather than working against you' (Sharon).*

Students also commented very positively about their experience of inclusion at work placements, even though, as we saw in chapter 6, the placement supervisors appeared to have little or no knowledge of the social model of disability. Many commented very positively on the knowledge and skills developed through their work placements, particularly in relation to their employability. Manuel thought placement had helped him develop employability skills.

> *'For me it has helped develop working relationships, being able to maintain working relationships' (Manuel).*

> *'The ability to develop working relationships with people and just a general understanding of how things operate...the structure of how a day is in the working environment...So I have learned a lot...and placement has been the most enjoyable part of the course because, in terms of personal development, it's where I've learnt most' (Manuel).*

> *'I really enjoyed it [placement] and it's something that gave me inspiration to think about a further career and line of work' (Jacob).*

When asked about whether placement developed employability skills Lucy stated:

'Oh, incredibly! My placement was really good...a real steep learning curve...to deal with people who I've never had experience of dealing with before. So it was really interesting' (Lucy).

'Because it was the first time I've been in an employment situation since I've been on benefit...it was good practice to have that sort of negotiation in a kind of safe way...if I did negotiate something and they reacted badly then it wasn't like paid employment' (Lucy).

'I've gained the experience of working with different sorts of people, so it has really helped in that way that I've got that additional experience with working with people that I wouldn't have thought that I could work with' (Lucy).

For Sandra the experience of being included in her work placement proved that inclusive education is not just rhetoric but reality for her.

'It proves to me that people are changing, they are not just saying it, they are meaning it' (Sandra).

Several of the tutors also thought that students were benefitting from, and being included in work-based placements.

'So our placement and the way we do it, which is very supportive and they get three different placements, makes our disabled students, I think, a lot more employable than it would have done had they just done a degree without placement in it and I don't think we make enough of it' (Rachel).

'I think the bottom line is "are these students being enabled to be included in that [placement] experience?" And I have to say I think for the most part they are without that much trouble' (Rachel).

As far as James was concerned the policy shift towards inclusive education was having many positive consequences, including shifts in attitudes and knowledge and understanding of disabled people.

'So let's widen participation and that engagement of people. So you've got a policy or strategy shift. You've certainly got social shifts in people's attitudes and understanding' (James).

The discussion above shows that even though the rhetoric of inclusive education may not actually result in reality there were many successful and positive aspects of the university work-based placements. Most students felt included, more employable and more confident about the workplace. Some tutors like Rachel and James thought that disabled students had a good, inclusive placement experience and that some attitudes and understanding of disability were shifting in a forward direction.

Clark et al (1998) argue that there is a new philosophy in society in which all members of society are valued so that it is natural for educational institutions to be places that welcome students from diverse backgrounds because it is their duty to do so. Aspects of the discussion above clearly reflect this. Pumfrey (2008) agrees that the higher education system in the UK is becoming more inclusive because more disabled students are entering university and finding appropriate support is in place for them to be included. Borland and James (1999:90) identify the personal tutor system as 'the mainstay of student support' and two of the personal academic tutors who took part in the study, Rachel and James, were positive about the way in which students are being included. Dyson and Gallannaugh (2007:473) believe that inclusive education is successful because successive New Labour governments have driven the inclusion agenda forward and that this began in 1994 with the Salamanca Statement.

It is clear that many positive practical applications of inclusive education were experienced by disabled students at university and work placements so there was evidence of moving forward in social model thinking in practice. However, many challenges related to implementing inclusive practice were identified by stakeholders and so now we explore these challenges, in order to further explore issues raised so far, establish where improvements and developments can be recommended, and locate these findings in models of disability. I have divided these up into issues around learning, teaching and assessment [8.5], matters related to knowledge, training and resources [8.6] and finally quality assurance and liaison concerns [8.7].

8.5 The work-related curriculum: *'In higher education we are trying to be inclusive in an exclusive environment'*

Some tutors were concerned about the work-related curriculum at university. They had articulated above that they perceived many benefits for disabled students in relation to employability and other development opportunities on placement. However, concerns were raised about the learning, teaching and assessment approaches currently adopted. For one tutor, James, the course had not really matched its rapid expansion in relation to both widening participation and work-based placements with an appropriate curriculum and assessment approach.

'I think our work-based learning and our placement activity have expanded...I don't know whether necessarily the curriculum has shifted significantly in understanding the pressures that are brought to bear by disabled young people coming into university and having the experience of having to do something that I think is very tricky...we are actually asking them to go out and do an academic piece of work, some critical reflection from observation all the way through to research at level 6. So I think we have to address the transitions for them...and we don't necessarily do that' (James).

For one student, Lucy, she recognised that whatever adjustments were made for her to be fully included at placement she just could not maintain two days at placement standing up all day. She related this to impairment effects. The curriculum structure required students to complete two days a week for eight concurrent weeks at work placement but Lucy could not meet this requirement.

'I know my limitations...there are a lot of people out there who think that regardless of impairment you can do whatever you like, that can cause real problems...you need to recognise sometimes that perhaps, no, you can't go out and get a job because, you know, however much you put those adjustments in place, someone's not going to be able to do a job...I couldn't stand up all day and that's nothing to do with disability. That's just that I couldn't stand up all day' (Lucy).

One of the issues raised in relation to inclusive work-related curricula was that of maintaining academic standards. Some tutors were concerned that the curriculum was not 'dumbed down' in order to ensure inclusivity.

'How do we get those students to make that transition into a complex arena so that we're not dumbing down in a way which says "Right, yeah, it's fine. Just do the descriptive piece of work. That's great. That's a 2:1' (James).

Rachel thought that inclusive education may even have been perceived as a threat by some academics and she regarded university as an exclusive environment.

'In higher education we are trying to be inclusive in an exclusive environment...We gate-keep who's allowed to come in to our universities and we are in a contradictory position in that once we let them in, we are expected to be inclusive of them...and once they are in they are expected to meet certain standards and those standards are often traditional standards that have not been looked at for years but that people talk about as if they are related to this idea of employability. So academics, - and I include myself in that - are worried that inclusive education might mean dumbing it down...for allowing people to get grades that they would not ordinarily have got...Some academics...are not prepared to give up some of these standards and view inclusive education as a threat' (Rachel).

Rachel identified what she called 'imagination difficulties' so that academics failed to imagine what was possible in relation to inclusive education and she was concerned that this led to fears about inclusion. She also recognised the academic tutors' fears about sending into placements students who may have harmed the university's reputation if they did not meet standards adequately.

'So I think there are some imagination difficulties and I think there are some difficulties of just getting their head around the practicalities of it. I know a blind lecturer and he has had people say to him "how the hell do you mark their work?" But they send it to me electronically". So it's that failure to imagine what is possible. And also I think some people are threatened by what it means for standards and what it means about what we are

doing...and there's a worry about the reputation of the university. So this student goes out on placement, he represents the university and what is that student saying about the kinds of students we allow in ' (Rachel).

Another tutor, James was concerned that the assessment process was not inclusive but also that when adjustments were made it did not appear that disabled students were being given a simpler task. He recognised that this was a very complex and difficult process.

'What can we provide...to ensure that the students isn't disabled by the assignment process and yet doesn't feel as though they are being given something different because they aren't quite up to it' (James).

'I think we have to work very carefully and painfully and (it can be a difficult process) on including...recognising different needs. People marching to a different drumbeat...right, ok, we'll provide a slower drumbeat here, but it's not dumbed down. A faster one here...' (James).

Thus we can see that tutors and students identified some issues around the inclusive learning, teaching and assessment approach adopted on the course, particularly for work-related learning modules. The key concerns were around inappropriate curricula and assessment and a failure to imagine how these could be changed to be more inclusive. A significant issue was academics' fear around dumbing down or reducing academic standards through meeting the needs of widening participation students. The student, Lucy, was concerned that no matter how inclusive the curriculum was, she simply could not physically do what the placement curriculum and assessment required her to do.

Work by Yorke and Knight (2003) supports James' view that disabled students following a university work-based learning curriculum challenge traditional academic cultures to be more inclusive and that the university curriculum needs to change if students are to become more employable. Brennan and Little (1996) similarly challenge the 'normative power of traditional degree curricula'. Like Rachel, Bolt (2004) proposes a modernisation of what he calls the 'ableist' way in which students are taught at undergraduate level.

Bernacchio et al (2007), like Rachel, challenge the traditional curriculum failing to imagine what is possible and they cite Style (2000:81) who states that 'All students deserve a curriculum which mirrors their own experiences back to them upon occasions'. Mezirow (2000) similarly feels that to improve university course pedagogy and content requires 'transformational learning' that forces all learners to examine new perspectives and question deeply held beliefs and assumptions. Goodley (2011) and Giroux (2003) call this critical pedagogy. Shevlin et al (2004) concur with the data from James and Rachel that there is still a myth that disabled students threaten academic standards and require more support than their non-disabled peers and Massie (2004) and Houghton (2005) see these myths as being deep rooted in attitudes organisations, systems and environments and consequently hard to change. Hall et al (2004: 814-815) concur with the view that 'the rhetoric of inclusion and the rhetoric of 'high standards'...deeply contradict one another and Jung (2002) agrees that disabled students are vulnerable as they raise issues about 'fairplay' and 'educational quality'.

There were clearly some challenges associated with inclusive learning, teaching and assessment related to inappropriate curricula and assessments. There was a fear about preserving the status quo in relation to curriculum and assessment which was associated with fears about drops in academic standards. It was also related to a lack of imagination about what can be done. The students did not only experience challenges to their inclusion in relation to the university aspect of work-related learning. When they went on their placements, issues arose around inclusive work-based placements and these are now explored.

8.6 'How do we support, when we haven't got the resources?'

When stakeholders were asked about the relationship between policy and practice they raised many issues about gaining appropriate information and knowledge about disabled students. This was related to training and the required resources required for all these things so that successful inclusion of disabled students could take place. One of the tutors, James, felt very strongly about this and commented that:

'They have to recognise that the resources that are required so that the impairment doesn't disable are considerable...you have a very reliable young worker, but somebody who actually needs a level of support maintaining parity of esteem...helping them to continue doing that work' (James).

...a student comes with a range of disabilities which actually require intensive support. We haven't got the resources for that' (James).

'And I think it then becomes just a vicious trap – policies, strategies, tactics – but actually...where are the day-to-day resources that you would need to support that student in study or disabled person in work?' (James).

One student, Manuel, agreed that resources had to be put in for him to have an effective work placement.

'A lot of things needed...procedures needed explaining to me in quite fine detail and, you know, reasons given for why things happen. If a class was too rowdy I might need to leave that class' (Manuel).

Manuel commented strongly on government cuts because of the economic downturn and the impact on disabled people in relation to cuts in benefits and:

'Inclusion into work for disabled people? That's something we can cut. So on all fronts disabled people suffer' (Manuel).

Another student, Chantelle, realised the issues related to not resourcing inclusion.

'I think there are more improvements to make. It's all very well saying "yeah, we'll give that person a job "and then it is just letting the institution have the money to adapt the building to enable the person to be able to do that job on an equal level with everyone else' (Chantelle).

One of the placement supervisors also confirmed that resourcing was an issue.

'We have students ...who have got disabilities but it's very, very difficult to give students the time that you would like to. You can't be explaining why you're doing things all the time' (Paula).

James feared that if those resources were not available the consequence at placement would be:

'"Go and do that bit of photocopying". That's not a placement' (James).

He also worried that university tutors did not have enough work plan time to invest in disabled student support.

'And it [inclusion] requires effort and hard work...it actually involves that emotional investment in students ...and you can't come to your line manager and say "Well, that's six hours". You can't do that' (James).

Alongside, and related to the issue of resources, was knowledge and understanding of disabled students. In chapters 6 and 7 it became clear that there was limited knowledge of the social model and specific disabled student requirements among placement supervisors and the Partnership Team. This issue led to comments about the need for training in order to raise levels of awareness and understanding of disability issues.

'I think big battle resources [other big battle] awareness and understanding' (James).

When asked about training Lee, the Head of Partnership, said he has no training but learns from:

'Advice from Disabled Student Support, what we find on the Internet...but there's no official training on different disabilities...which might be helpful' (Lee).

When he was asked how the Partnership Team planned for student's placements in relation to policy and practice he said:

'I'm not sure. I'm not really up on university policies for disabled students. We just know that we go by the university guidelines and the learning contracts and what they state is what we do' (Lee).

Three tutors confirmed this:

'Well I've not had any formal training other than informal conversation'
(Rose).

'And I'm hesitating to use the word, but I will – the T word, training...there is an awareness issue' (James).

Rachel was asked if staff are trained around disability issues.

'I would not know about the partnership staff. It [training] is one of those areas where I have often wondered but it is like a can of worms - I did not want to go anywhere near it' (Rachel).

When asked about knowledge of the DDA, one student, Ren, thought it was generally not understood.

'Not many people are clued up on it. It's not very accessible' (Ren).

However, the tutors recognised that even though there was little training students still got a good inclusive experience.

'It shouldn't be this way, but I think for the most part staff are just good people and it comes out in how they respond. I don't think we are very good at being anticipatory, which is what the legislation requires of us, but when we are responsive -which is what we shouldn't be doing - I think we are quite good at saying " Oh, there is a problem" and we very rarely I think for more than thirty seconds blame the student and we are quite creative with our solutions - but we don't think ahead much about certain situations that might come up and there are some situations I can think of where we cross our fingers and hope it will be alright' (Rachel).

'I think it tends to be quite opportunistic and pragmatic. "Oh, my God! We've got a problem here" (James).

The placement supervisors also saw the need for training

> *'Provide training for us...if there's something that we've not come across that*
> *we may be fearful of. Maybe providing training for it...or provide a workshop*
> *on someone' (Gareth).*

Related to the issue of resources and training was the fact that the learning contracts seemed of limited value in relation to placement issues and concentrated on academic issues. The Head of Partnership, Lee, stated that:

> *'Because the other problem with the learning contract is it says on placement*
> *sort of one line and that's it. It's about exams, it's about timetabling and it's*
> *not really about placement...It doesn't really tell us how to cope with*
> *placement issues. So it just says "Give them an extra half an hour for this" or*
> *"They miss these sessions". Those kind of things' (Lee).*

Lee also stated he did not always understand what was in the learning contract.

> *'Obviously what we get is the learning contract through, which although that*
> *may explain some of it, it's again do we understand what's in the learning*
> *contract as well' (Lee).*

One student, Manuel, agreed.

> *'Learning contracts barely deal with the issues of accessibility at the*
> *institution (university), let alone placement...it is just not thought of because*
> *there aren't enough people employed to deal with it' (Manuel).*

Manuel suggested that there should be central alerts when disabled students go on placement so that Partnership and Placement supervisors were automatically informed that they are about to receive a disabled student.

> *'The way the Learning contract system works is so out-of-date...It could all be*
> *done so easily but nobody has ever taken time and effort to do it' (Manuel).*

Manuel thought that the learning contract system could easily be improved.

'It all needs to be computerised and an effective system needs to be made...like Facebook...it is all there on the system' (Manuel).

In relation to data protection legislation preventing disclosure without the disabled students' express permission,

'To me....that's just nutty! If you have got a learning contract how can that learning contract be implemented if people don't know you have a learning contract...It makes no sense' (Manuel).

The discussions above demonstrate that inclusive education relied for its success on many factors associated with resources, knowledge and training, but that there were clear gaps related to the implementation of inclusive policy at university and placement. These were perceived by stakeholders to be a lack of information about some disabled students because of inadequate learning contracts, especially in relation to work placement issues. This was exacerbated by the issue raised in chapter 7, where it was clear that some students chose not to disclose the contents of their learning contracts at placement, so that placement supervisors were not aware of their specific needs. This lack of knowledge of individual disabled student needs was compounded by a lack of knowledge and awareness of disability related issues in general and inadequate training available to tutors, partnership and placement supervisors. The resources needed to fill the gap in relation to training were not available. However, one academic tutor stated that university staff were basically good people who did their best to include disabled students despite lacking adequate training and resources and this confirmed the students' comments in 8.3 above.

The above findings corroborate assertions that training is 'woefully inadequate' (Corbett, 2001 cited in Hodkinson, 2010) and that where staff lack adequate knowledge and funding for the support required for disabled students then disabled students are likely to have adverse experiences (Leyser et al, 2000; Holloway, 2001; Tinklin et al, 2004; Fuller et al, 2004). Houghton (2005) also concurs with some of the placement supervisors'

concerns about lack of training from the university. He argues that universities have a significant responsibility to work with employers in providing appropriate structures that support disabled students in their transition to paid work. Armstrong et al (2010: 33) see this as related to universities continuously balancing what is 'achievable' within the constraints of limited resources and what is 'desirable' in relation to inclusive education and similarly Konur (2000:1048) argues that inclusion is only compatible with appropriate training, but that this has to take place avoiding 'unreasonable expenditure'. James mentioned the lack of work plan hours available for the 'emotional' input needed to support his disabled students and Thomas et al (2002) and Houghton (2005) focus on staff unwillingness to engage in disability awareness training because of other time constraints and inadequate resources. The fact that some tutors felt the university is reactive rather than proactive to disabled students is raised by Dunn (2003) who perceives that the DDA requirement for staff to be anticipatory rather than reactive has enormous implications for the training of staff and this is followed up later in this chapter.

Implementing inclusion at university and in work-based contexts was limited because inadequate resources were available to ensure adequate support for disabled students and sufficient training for key stakeholders. In order to ensure appropriate inclusion for disabled students an ongoing liaison and evaluation needed to take place. The data revealed that alongside the resource and training issue there was also a lack of liaison between stakeholders and this impacted negatively on inclusion.

8.7 'I would say it is completely hit and miss...we're responsive rather than proactive'

I asked the stakeholders about how quality was assured on placements, with a specific focus on liaison between stakeholders. The university tutors were not sure that quality was being assured because little liaison between stakeholders was happening. Rachel said:

'God knows. I think there are some placement visits happening...I have heard dodgy stories though '(Rachel).

'I would say it is completely hit and miss...we're responsive rather than proactive' (Rose).

'I think it's an issue of a fairly obvious thing about levels of communication with partners so that we can train each other and recognise each other's difficulties' (James).

One placement supervisor agreed.

'I think it is about good communication [with university] and it's about face to face communication' (Paula).

Some disabled students confirmed the university tutors' fears about lack of liaison between stakeholders.

'It is very much of a lottery. Some courses take it more seriously than others...The break in the link is that I don't think there is a dedicated person in each faculty whose sole job...is making each faculty accessible to everyone –there's no-one –that liaises with the Student Support Team. There's nobody that does that job. There's someone who might spend an hour on it in a week, but there's no-one who's dedicated to that and that's what needs to happen' (Manuel).

In relation to the link between Central Support Services and placement:

'Non-existent' (Manuel).

'There was nowhere specific to go [if you had problems on placement] if you were having a problem related to disability...perhaps a few weeks into placement someone could be sending an email to the disabled student [asking] How's the placement going? Is there anything that could be changed?' (Lucy).

However, Lucy and Ren thought that quality assurance issues were more serious than just lack of understanding, knowledge or communication amongst stakeholders. They thought that often stakeholders were doing the minimum deliberately because they often

knew the legislation but purposely avoided putting it into practice. Lucy interpreted this as subversion.

> 'They [employers] tend to do the minimum at the moment...and work out ways where they don't have to do anything...they know the legislation inside out...In some ways the legislation becomes a barrier because it is there to protect you, but you get the barrier of "Well legislation says I only need to do this and only on this occasion"...Like they become very powerful because they know how to negotiate the law and you don't and it becomes a real barrier in some ways' (Lucy).

> 'They've got all the policies in place...where they cannot discriminate now, but even though the policies are in place...policies aren't always followed' (Ren).

There was an issue about the organisation and structure of placements within the programme and the fact that students following Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) courses get far better placement experiences than the students following the Education Studies programme. One placement supervisor, Carol, stated:

> 'It does seem very much a second-class system. I just think the teaching (PGCE/QTS) students get so much more from us and from you' (Carol).

Carol also thought that many of the disabled students' needs were not her responsibility as a placement supervisor and that if they had any 'issues' they should be referred back to university.

> 'Sometimes students are very needy and maybe needy in an inappropriate way and I think meeting their needs as trainee professionals we are very good at. Personal needs? I'm not sure that that's our responsibility anyway, So I would say that staff don't want to really...don't see that as part of their role and I don't either. I think that if they've got personal issues, then we're here to signpost them back to university and "Go and speak to your tutor"' (Carol).

A problem that the disabled students identified in relation to liaison with them was that their voice was not being sought after or heard in relation to quality assurance and course development and this impacted negatively on their inclusion at university and work placements.

> 'They do try but it tends to be people without disabilities that are setting the equal opportunities laws...and they do not know what [disabled] people are having to battle against, like the barriers and things...so although they do put things out there, it is not necessarily what needs to be there because they are not fully aware of what needs to be done' (Sharon).

As far as Billy was concerned nobody had ever asked him for his point of view.

> 'They have not done enough research on disabled points of view...they haven't asked' (Billy).

Lucy thought this area should be improved so that there was more,

> 'Kind of sitting down and talking and reviewing placement, finding out if there are any problems' (Lucy).

Some of the placement supervisors said that they would be happy to hear the views of the disabled students in order to improve practice but this does not currently exist.

> 'I need to know from the students themselves where we are getting it right and where we are getting it wrong and what we can do to put it right because ....one size doesn't fit all' (Carol).

One of the tutors, Rose, was also concerned that the disabled students did not have any voice in the placement aspect of the course and that they tended to take any issues directly to the Disability Studies tutor.

'Not that I am aware of. I mean there is the staff-student committee. There are the same channels for all the students. There is no specific channel other than if they want to they can go to the Disability Studies tutor' (Rose).

James agreed.

'I don't think that voice is collectively organised enough outside of the Disabled Students' Forum...some of our students are engaged in that' (James).

However, some tutors and the Head of Partnership were unsure about the need for a 'collective ' disabled student voice on placement issues.

'I am all for students clarifying their voice collectively because they need to have more than just their individual voice but that does not want to reach a point where it actually drowns out all the little voices' (James).

Rachel agreed.

'You know disabled students are not collective in a voice...and I don't know whether that would work or be a good idea or not...at course level it is heard individually but not as a collective' (Rachel).

In relation to giving disabled students a collective voice, the Head of Partnership, Lee, perceived some benefits and limitations with this.

'We don't have a group of [disabled] students who are saying "This is what we need". I think the other issue is obviously the variety of disabilities. If you get ten people with disabilities, what they need are ten completely different things' (Lee).

He was not convinced about any value in a collective disabled student voice because disabled students were not a homogenous group, so that he perceived impairment effects and needs as very different for each student. This reflected Lee's lack of engagement with the social model in chapter 6.

The discussion above demonstrated that most stakeholders were concerned about inadequate opportunities for liaison between students, tutors, placement supervisors and

the Head of Partnership. They perceived this breakdown in communication as having a detrimental effect on the inclusion of disabled students at work placements and particularly on the development of effective quality assurance procedures. Some stakeholders felt particularly strongly about the lack of a disabled student voice in quality assurance and the impact on future course developments. However, not all stakeholders thought a collective disabled student voice was the answer to the problem. It was quite interesting that some students felt that tutor and placement supervisors deliberately 'subverted' legislation and did only what was essential in order to stay within the law. As such they viewed the issue as not about liaison but about subversion.

The above suggests that the concerns articulated by Tinklin et al (2001) that the legislation, particularly the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA, 2006), is limited and full of get-out clauses and that institutions may respond with risk assessments rather than radical changes in provision are valid. Even worse, Riddell et al, (2005) found many university staff resistant to social justice. Madriaga (2008) views the DDA as requiring universities to involve students in planning and implementation processes and Riddell (2005) concur, that student monitoring and evaluation is key to meaningful feedback and improvements in practice. Holloway (2001) and Ashcroft et al (1996) are of the same mind, emphasising that it is crucial to involve disabled students in monitoring and evaluation processes because not only is it crucial to hear their voice but also to inform relevant changes at departmental level. Tinklin et al (2004) sum this up by stating that unless we listen to student voices then we will remain oblivious of the barriers they face. For Wright (2006) disabled students seem to have lost their voice. As such Fuller et al (2004) conclude that increased inclusion cannot effectively take place while the voice of disabled students is unheard. However, respondents articulated some concerns about the collective voice of disabled students. Some of these, like Lee were located in a medical model that focused on impairment effects. However, others like Rachel and James' concern around the value of a collective voice for disabled students, related to Ferguson's (2000) concern about the simplistic notion of group identities and this concern is shared by Shakespeare (2006).

Therefore, there were inadequate structures in place to afford appropriate opportunities for liaison amongst stakeholders and this had a detrimental effect on quality assurance procedures for work-based placements. The fact that the disabled student voice was hardly heard in quality assurance was of particular concern, particularly as it was established in chapter 6 that in order for a social model ethos to succeed it is essential that the disabled voice is heard and involved in driving policy forward. The following section summarises the main issues that have emerged in relation to the gaps evident in inclusive policy and practice related to disabled student work placements.

8.8 Conclusion: *'I think that the gap is closing [policy and practice] but is still there'*

Clearly inclusive education has made many strides forward and disabled students articulated many positive inclusive experiences at university and work-based placements. The work-based curriculum included employability and contributed enormously to skills, knowledge, experience, and positive identities for disabled students. Students spoke highly of their placements and saw the learning contracts as enhancing their inclusion. Clark et al (1998:4-5) sum up why they believe inclusion succeeds and this reflects many of the attitudes of the stakeholders in this study:

> ...because it chimes with the liberal philosophy of a liberal political system and a pluralistic culture - one that celebrates diversity and promotes fraternity and equality of opportunity. Inclusion must be at the heart of any society that desires these values.

However, it is clear that although many positive developments were evident which enhanced the inclusion of disabled students at university and on work placements there were still many gaps between policy and practice. One student summed this up:

> *'I think that the gap is closing [policy and practice] but is still there'* *(Chantelle).*

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So it was clear from the data that even though inclusive education in higher education had made enormous strides forward there were still many challenges to making the rhetoric of inclusive higher education a reality.

> At the same time as the discourse of 'inclusion' has become more widespread and has become embedded in policy and accountability frameworks, there are respects in which the practicalities of inclusion...remain problematic (Dyson and Gallannaugh, 2007:474-5).

This chapter explored data that identified some of the gaps in inclusive policy and practice in order to identify some ways forward for reducing or eliminating those gaps within the context of models of disability. The main areas of concern which this chapter highlighted are now summarised under six issues.

Firstly, the main issue related to inclusive education was that there was no agreed definition of the term and the consequence was that, because there were so many understandings of the nature of inclusion, the course risked it meaning all things to everyone but nothing to anyone at the same time. Many interpretations of the term tended to be a 'rhetoric of convenience' which embraced a 'feel-good factor' without seriously addressing practice and as such implementing inclusion in practice was bound to be a challenge (Armstrong et al 2010: 29). In reality, Ainscow (1999:218) defines inclusion as a 'never ending process' which is dependent on 'continuous pedagogical and organisational development' but in the data several aspects of practice raised challenges to such an ongoing process.

Secondly, in relation to understanding employability, there were still many different views on whether disabled students were employable which reflected all models of disability. The issue of human rights was complicated because, although there was an ideology of inclusion in employment as part of every disabled student's human rights, this ideal came into conflict with the rights of other students and particularly the rights of children in work placement institutions. As we saw in chapters 6 and 7 this was particularly significant for those students falling into the 'unstable' category around behaviour, as

placements were fearful for the safety and rights of their children. They were also fearful of any ensuing litigation. Armstrong et al (2010: 32 cite Smith 1998:164) who concur that the 'rights of individuals' are not always compatible with the 'common good', so that disabled students were only an inclusion or employment priority when they were not interfering with the rights of the non-disabled majority. This was what Rachel was referring to when she talked about employability meaning disabled students not 'causing any trouble'.

Thirdly, the work-based curriculum was ideologically focused on inclusion and employability but realistically rooted in traditional approaches to learning, teaching and assessment and, as such, was not an adequate tool for including all disabled students. Goodley (2011) fears that when students have to follow such a narrow curriculum they are likely to be excluded from the outset. It appeared that the curriculum needed to be re-thought with critical pedagogy in mind so that a more inclusive curriculum matched the inclusive ideology. For Jarman (2008) disability studies should form part of the curriculum for all students and lecturers so that disability is seen as an alternative source of values and norms and so promoting new relationships between students and staff. Darder et al (2009) see this as staff and students undergoing 'conscientisation' and so gaining deeper knowledge and awareness of social realities that mould their experiences and their own abilities to recreate them. In this way oppression is revealed and challenged so developing a pedagogy for liberation (Goodley, 2011). This is what Rachel was referring to when she spoke about 'failing to imagine what is possible'. Bolt (2004) agrees that all students and staff, not just disabled students will benefit then from actual rather than rhetorical inclusion.

Fourthly, and related to the above, inclusion became elusive when an academic standards agenda dominated and so disabled students were perceived as a threat to the academy and its reputation. However, I found that this was related to trying to include disabled students within exclusive environments, structures and practices. The consequence was that adjustments had to be made to the curricular, assessment and pedagogical arrangements in order to enable inclusion and disabled students were then

perceived as receiving a 'dumbed' down or easier academic experience than non-disabled peers. As such an inappropriate curriculum, assessment and pedagogical approach perpetuated negative perceptions of disabled students as receiving an inferior or easier educational experience. The findings demonstrated that such beliefs are deeply rooted and difficult to change (Massie 2004; Houghton 2005) and that universities and work places were pressurised places where respondents feared that 'the rhetoric of inclusion and the rhetoric of 'high standards' ...deeply contradicted one another' (Hall et al 2004: 814-815).

Fifthly, there was an issue around resources, knowledge and training. It was clear that if inclusion was to work more effectively then placement supervisors and some staff needed training in legislation and learning, teaching and assessment for disabled students and this required a time and financial resource which in the prevailing economic climate was shrinking rather than growing. If the resource was not available inclusive education could not function effectively either. Borland and James (1999) fear that in such a climate the fact that departmental policies are built around the social model will not necessarily mean that the social model operates in practice. Rather, in the absences of training, knowledge and understanding staff will operate within medical model assumptions so that what is happening on an everyday level in practice will contradict policy. The data in chapter 7 confirms that this is what was happening and that often stakeholders operated within quite different understandings of models of disability. Beilke and Yssel (1995) fear that even worse, attitudinal changes are more difficult to develop than physical changes so that without appropriate training negative attitudes will continue. This was evident in the data presented in this chapter. The learning contract system clearly operated within a medical model assumption in which individual impairments were identified and shared with academic staff and partnership staff, with the assumption that appropriate support will follow. The learning contract system was falling down on many fronts, including departmental and faculty coordination and communication. Another issue with the learning contracts was that they did not relate to

work placements, only to university situations so clearly attention needs to be focused on learning contracts so that inclusion is more effective in both university and work contexts. Finally, quality assurance procedures were lacking in that very little liaison between stakeholders took place. If a prerequisite for effective inclusion is a dialogue between those involved and those who experience it (Jones, 2005; Rogers, 2007, cited in Hodkinson, 2010), then some tensions around inclusive practice were evident in the data. The main feature of this lack of quality assurance was the lack of a voice for disabled students in feedback on course issues and planning and development of work-based curricula. Tinklin et al (2001:6) recognise some of the issues in that while quality assurance procedures are not in place the responsibility will always fall on the disability tutor and any curricular changes will remain 'add-ons'. If it is true that student feedback is key to effective planning and development (Ashcroft et al, 1996; Holloway, 2001; Tinklin et al, 2004; Fuller et al, 2004; Riddell et al, 2005; Madriaga, 2008) then the fact that disabled students appeared to have no voice in quality assurance related to their work placements was a major concern for inclusive practice.

To summarise, this chapter provided more evidence that knowledge and understanding of disability, inclusion and employability impacts on social model practice. It also provided further evidence that university contexts appear to offer a more secure knowledge and application of social model thinking than work contexts and thus were a safer haven for disclosing disability. However, this knowledge was not shared with work-based placement settings. More evidence of stigmatisation of some disabled students with specific behaviour related impairment effects is offered in the chapter. The chapter added to these factors the issues around exclusionary environments including traditional learning, teaching and assessment approaches, inappropriate and ineffective learning contracts and a lack of the disabled student voice in planning and evaluating the work-related curriculum. The chapter indicated that working towards more effective practice requires a strengthening of aspects of social model thinking, including stakeholder training and knowledge of disability, the removal of exclusionary curricula, pedagogy and

assessment practices and the disabled student voice being incorporated into the decision-making process.

In conclusion, my findings demonstrated that even though the course was, in many ways, inclusive and the students enjoyed many positive experiences in relation to inclusion at university and work-based placements, many challenges still existed. The consequence was that the rhetoric of inclusion was not matched by reality so that students were often excluded, especially in work contexts.

When asked how we improve in this area one tutor, James, anticipated a massive task.

'It's massive that. It's massive...it's huge' (James).

Clearly this is an ongoing struggle and a continuous process (Ainscow, 1999; Leo and Barton, 2006; Armstrong et al, 2010). So now I summarise the key findings of the research that emerged from the data chapters and recommendations that emerge.

CHAPTER 9: Summary and Recommendations

9.1 Introduction

In this chapter the findings I presented in chapters 6-8 are summarised in relation to how they address the issues raised in chapter 1 that is, to discover some of the reasons for the employment disadvantage experienced by disabled students in comparison to their non-disabled peers and suggest some solutions to the stated problem. In this chapter I attempt to respond to the 'employment disadvantage problem' in the light of the findings in my study and discuss my findings within the context of the debates about the social model of disability expressed in chapters 1-4.The argument is advanced that the social model, while achieving much to reduce exclusion in higher education and employment for disabled students, is limited in its application because of inconsistent knowledge and application of its principles. It is proposed that this is a significant contributory factor to the employment disadvantage problem, especially because issues around limited knowledge of the social model are more obviously evident in work-based contexts than at university.

I begin this chapter by summarising my findings in relation to the positive aspects of inclusion policy and practice, which reflect social model philosophy in the case. This is followed by a critical exploration of my findings concerning the main challenges to inclusion and employability for the disabled students in the study. These challenges are articulated in terms of the diverse implementation of social model policies and practices, the effects of disabled identity and how stakeholders attempt to implement inclusion in exclusive environments. The summary of findings is followed by an analysis of the appropriateness of the social model of disability as a framework for inclusion. The practical and theoretical implications of the study are summarised and some suggestions for future research are outlined. I begin with an examination of the positive aspects of inclusion that arose in the study.

9.2 The social model: promoting inclusion in policy and practice

Despite the employment disadvantage experienced by disabled students (Burchardt, 2000; Jolly, 2000; Barnes and Mercer, 2005), I found many positive developments related to inclusionary policy and practice, which appear to refute the criticisms of the social model as an inappropriate framework for inclusive practice (Morris, 1996; Crow, 1996; Shakespeare and Watson, 2001; Thomas, 2004a; 2004b; Shakespeare, 2006). These optimistic aspects of social model philosophy and practice were reflected in inclusion and employment policies at university and course level. The university in the study clearly adopted the social model in its policies and guidance and the statement below, which appears on the website verifies this assertion (Appendix 13).

> The University adopts the social model of disability and accepts that disability is socially created. Responsibility lies with the University to identify barriers and obstacles which exist within the institution and work towards removing them whenever reasonably possible. We aim to provide the support services, equipment and physical adaptations which remove barriers and obstacles, and facilitate inclusion into the university and access to all facilities and services. (http://www.nu.ac.uk/services/sls/support/disability/policy.html).

The social model philosophy adopted by the university was apparent in the information available for prospective students on the university Internet site, policy documents (Disability Equality Scheme, 2006-2009) and course documents. It was further authenticated by most of the disabled students and academic tutors interviewed in my study. The fact that disabled students had gained a place on the course and were able to engage in work placements reflected an achievement of the national social inclusion agenda in broadening the range of people engaged in education and work (Dyson, 2001). The social model focus on removing social barriers, working simultaneously with this social inclusion agenda, has enabled disabled students to enter higher education, gain employability skills and have a stake in the employment market.

A key consequence for disabled students on the course was that they often felt that gaining a place at university, progressing on the course, and particularly gaining employment or becoming employable, significantly transformed their negative self

identities gained from past exclusionary experiences. Working in a placement context enabled some students to prove to others and to themselves that they could succeed in paid employment and this was an extremely positive achievement associated with the work-based placements. Some students gained part-time posts at placement institutions as a result of their work-based placement and for them they felt very positive about the course. This confirmed that students were able to use inclusion in work-based placements to engender positive feelings about their own self-worth and change how others perceived their identity. This was very important for their 'credibility' (Billy). I agree with Jenkins that:

> Identification by others has consequences. It is the capacity to generate those consequences and make them stick which matters (Jenkins, 2004: 20-21).

Some disabled students felt able to celebrate and affirm their disabled identity (Peters, 2000) and this was encouraged by some academic staff. Placement supervisors and students were often able to see the value in having a disabled student on placement to relate more effectively to disabled children at the work placement institutions. So the students were able to demonstrate to themselves and to other stakeholders the valuable contribution they could make in work contexts and this greatly enhanced their employability.

The degree programme offered significant opportunities for work-related learning, including three substantial placements in work-based contexts. Traditional medical model explanations of 'functional limitation' had been challenged (Barnes, 1992; 1996; Oliver, 1996; Davis, 1997; Barnes and Mercer, 2005.) and the work-based aspect of the course focused, not on individual limitation in relation to work, but rather on discriminatory and exclusionary attitudes and oppressive employment policies and environments. Disabled students spoke extremely positively about their work-based placement experiences. This was a part of the course that they enjoyed very much and that they felt resonated with reality in relation to linking theory and practice. Students felt

well supported in the placement aspect of the study and saw many advantages in relation to the employability skills they gained on placement. Some also found it useful in enabling them to experience a range of possible career opportunities and to explore whether these careers were appropriate for them. Academic tutors concurred with this view. Regardless of how paid employment is valued in our society, it is what most of the students aspired to and they saw the work-related and particularly the work-based aspects of the course as contributing very positively to their employability. This appears to support Brennan and Little (2006) who argue that work-related learning contributes positively to employability and refutes Yorke and Knight (2003:4) who assert that:

> It is...a mistake to assume that provision of experience, whether in higher education or without, is a sufficient condition of enhanced employability. The curricular process may facilitate the development of prerequisites appropriate to employment but does not guarantee it. Hence it is inappropriate to assume that a student is highly employable merely on the grounds that they have experienced a particular curriculum.

As such, the course, in many respects, enabled students to gain confidence, skills and self esteem and to prove to other stakeholders the contribution they could make in employment contexts. It also enabled them to transform negative identities related to limitation and restriction that had been attributed to them in the past and affirm and celebrate their disabled identity with confidence. This corroborates the view that work is a key factor in positive identity formation (Galvin, 2006).

> People have defined themselves by their work, so 'I'm a printer' could be said with pride; 'I'm on benefit' is a mark of exclusion (Hugil, The Observer 1999:29 in Johnstone, 2001:7).

Most of the disabled students who participated in this research were following a degree in Education and Disability Studies. The fact that the university had validated a degree which included fifty percent Disability Studies was a reflection of the social model's positive impact on academia as the development of Disability Studies as an academic

subject in its own right is one of the main achievements of the social model (Johnstone, 2001; Shakespeare, 2006). The Disability Studies content of the course adopted a strong social model stance throughout and this was evident in course documentation and confirmed by interviews with staff and students. The first module students completed was called 'Introduction to Disability Studies' and focused almost exclusively on knowledge, understanding and application of the social model, particularly in educational contexts. This social model philosophy was clearly exhibited and verified in interviews with academic tutors who demonstrated good knowledge, understanding and application of social model practice.

So the social model had an enormous positive impact on disabled students' identity, enhancing their self-worth and enabling them to participate in higher education and employment contexts, which they had often been led to believe were unrealisable dreams (Crow, 1996; Shakespeare and Watson; 2001). It appeared that the social model had 'resulted in unparalleled success in changing the discourse of disability' (Oliver in Barnes, 1996:1) and had made a significant contribution in eliminating many of the worst practices in education which were 'condition-related, categorical and deterministic to a very large degree' (Lyndsay, 2003:5). This confirmed the view that the social model has achieved much in forming the starting point of a political strategy to change society, to promote inclusive education for disabled students and to fight for anti-discrimination and civil rights legislation (Crow, 1996; Shakespeare, 2006).

Nevertheless, it was clear that:

> Entering the gates of higher education does not guarantee a barrier free route to employment...disabled graduates do not appear to benefit from the possession of a degree in the same way as conventional students (Houghton, 2005:7).

Therefore some issues arose which identified some problems with applying social model practice and which hindered inclusion for disabled students in both university and work placement, thus adversely affecting their employability. I have presented these under

three categories related to knowledge and understanding of the social model, disabled identity and exclusionary environments.

9.3 (i) Diverse knowledge and understanding of the social model of disability

Despite the fact that there is much to celebrate in relation to the achievements of the social model, several tensions and issues emerged in policy and practice in both higher education and employment contexts, which demonstrated that these achievements are often partial, limited and incomplete. Firstly policy and legislation drew on more than one model of disability, resulting in many opportunities for stakeholders to choose to ignore or subvert it. This confirmed work by Konur, 2000; Tinklin et al, 2001; Riddell et al, 2003 and Houghton, 2005 who argue that the legislation is easily avoided if practitioners choose to do so. It also reinforces Barton's (2003) view that the legislation reflects more than one model of disability and Dunn's (2003) concerns that the legislation is biased towards impairment. As such it appeared that sometimes:

> Many equal opportunity policies are 'empty shells'; they contain nothing of substance or value to the victims of discrimination' (Hoque and Noon, 2004: 482).

Secondly, despite interviews with disabled students and academic tutors which demonstrated that disabled students and academic tutors appeared to have an excellent knowledge of the social model, interviews with the Head of Partnership and placement supervisors revealed a distinct lack of knowledge of the social model of disability amongst these participants. These findings corroborated research by Leyser et al, (2000); Shevlin et al, (2004); and Riddell et al, (2005) who state that lecturer knowledge is a key problem for inclusion in higher education and Holloway's assertion that 'Where staff lacked awareness or specific knowledge of the disability and support available, students reported adverse experiences' (2001: 605).The social model philosophy adopted by the university and course were not necessarily evident with the Head of Partnership, who operated at an administrative level on the course, and was a key player

in the organisation and monitoring of work-based placements. More significantly, placement institutions did not always share the strong social model philosophy adopted by the course, as the rights of the children and young people in their institution took priority over disabled students on placement, an issue raised by other researchers (Smith, 1998; Wilson, 2000; Armstrong et al, 2010). Thus, knowledge and application of social model philosophy to inclusive practice was more evident in the university environment than employment/work contexts.

Thirdly, questions about barriers and tensions in inclusive practice revealed that this lack of knowledge of the social model amongst some stakeholders was further compounded by the fact that there was little indication that the university academic tutors shared their knowledge and understanding of social model thinking with administrative staff or placement supervisors. There was also very limited evidence of opportunities for training, knowledge transfer or liaison between these different stakeholders and a lack of adequate resources for such knowledge development further compounded the problem.

The consequence was that medical model thinking and practice was very evident amongst the Head of Partnership and the placement supervisors, an issue of concern which is raised in the literature (Borland and James, 1999; Holloway, 2001). As such, there was a clear breakdown of communication between university and placement, particularly between the academic staff at university and placement supervisors, which resulted in a lack of shared knowledge and understanding of the application of the social model to inclusive practice and this was confirmed in interviews with academic tutors, the Head of Partnership and placement supervisors. Corbett (2001) and Hodkinson (2010) comment on the negative impact of such inadequate staff training on inclusion practice. Disabled students had to move between both contexts and work and liaise with all stakeholders while little communication was taking place between academic tutors and placement supervisors. The main links were students with academic tutors and placement supervisors with the Head of Partnership. Therefore an incoherent disabled student experience of social model philosophy and practice and the subsequent confusion it caused was largely inevitable.

Fourthly, interviews with disabled students confirmed that this lack of liaison extended to disabled students who had not been consulted in relation to the planning and evaluation of their course, particularly the placement aspect of the course. If social model practice was consistently applied, then listening to and recognising the opinion of disabled students should have been a priority (Johnstone, 2001; Wright, 2006) because 'disabled people will fare better if they have a positive, coherent, collective identity from which they can draw strength to challenge the inequalities and oppressions they face' (Lawson, 2001:218). Disabled students on the course had no collective voice in planning their placement experiences apart from filling in a form identifying their personal details and preferred employment setting. Their only opportunity for evaluating their course was at the general Staff Student Committee and therefore every aspect of their work-related and work-based placement experience was led and directed mainly by non-disabled academic tutors, administrative staff and placement supervisors.

Fifthly, regardless of social model thinking being evident in much university policy and academic staff having an excellent knowledge of the social model, many aspects of the course, both at university and work-based contexts, maintained a focus on impairment specific issues. I interpreted this as medical model practice being retained on the course both at university and work-based contexts. For example, students were assessed and labelled as 'disabled students' with learning contracts in order to gain appropriate support and curricular/assessment adaptations. Labelling and categorisation is an inevitable consequence of medical model thinking which identifies disabled people according to their impairment. Unfortunately, in the past such labelling has led to negative consequences like prejudice, discrimination and oppression (Thompson, 2001; Swain, French and Cameron, 2003) and I found that such labelling sometimes resulted in discriminatory and unequal treatment of disabled students, particularly in work-based contexts. The interview with the Head of Partnership confirmed that some disabled students were difficult to place because placement supervisors were not necessarily happy to take them on and even if disabled students were accepted they were likely to be given menial tasks (Barnes, 1992; Thompson, 1997). Traditional explanations of

difference in work and economic status for disabled people are based on an individual medical model of disability (Oliver, 1986). Learning contracts were used to 'determine individual pathology' (Johnstone, 2001:7) and explain conditions and possible solutions, so they clearly sat within a medical model perspective. This medical model focus on impairment clearly contradicted the social model ethos of the university and the course. Disabled students revealed that they viewed many benefits in being labelled and categorised in the form of a learning contract as it brought with it support from lecturers and the Disability Support Team. However, some academic tutors viewed the learning contracts as 'political tools' which were 'necessary evils' and part of university practice. Also, these learning contracts did not work in all contexts. They addressed support issues at university, but rarely said anything about support arrangements for work-based placement situations. The learning contracts were only partially successful in achieving support for disabled students as they rarely applied to situations beyond university.

Therefore, staff and students found themselves forced to work within the relics of medical model thinking and these were part of the university's structure. Students could only gain the required support that they needed to function on their course if they fell in with this practice. It was clear that the medical model was still clearly evident at university where students were categorised and labelled in order to gain the resources allocated against learning contracts. Indeed, the disabled students selected for this research were selected on the basis of having a learning contract in which their impairment was categorised and labelled. This confirmed concerns held by Borland and James, (1999); Holloway, (2001) and Runswicke-Cole, (2008) that medical model thinking often prevails, and Clark et al (1998:84) who state that:

> The medical model is alive and flourishing...covertly pursued through the assumption of education by category...It is part of the individual approach to educational difficulties, in which the failures of education are attributed to deficits.

Therefore, I concluded that the implementation of social model philosophy was disjointed and inconsistent and led to students encountering diverse and confusing experiences. I

found that despite the positive impact of opportunities to participate in higher education and employment contexts on their identity, a range of positive and negative experiences related to disabled identity on the course emerged as a key factor in causing further confusion around understanding and applying the social model in practice.

9.3 (ii) Disabled identity: affirmation, celebration or discrimination?

The first, and most surprising, issue which arose in initial focus groups with disabled students revealed that their identity was profoundly influenced by negative experiences in their past and present which reflected medical, deficit model attitudes. They often came to university with negative identities, which usually emerged from non-disabled members of their families and non-disabled school teachers, an issue which has been highlighted by disability writers (Morris, 1991; Swain, French and Cameron, 2003). Many of the students internalised these views and assumed very negative perceptions and identities for themselves. It was difficult for the students to surmount these experiences and identities or to convince non-disabled stakeholders to change their perceptions of them, rather, they had to work hard, getting to university, progressing on the course, getting a placement and 'proving' themselves to others by demonstrating that they can 'do it', that is, become employable. Such negative experiences put them at an employment disadvantage as compared to their non-disabled peers.

Nevertheless, a second issue related to identity became clear in semi-structured interviews with disabled students after two different work-based placements. These interviews revealed that they were sometimes able to change their own negative identities and gaining a place on the course, progressing successfully on the course and succeeding in work-based placements often enabled them to transform these negative self-identities, transformation which Bradley (1996); Foucault, (1997a); Jenkins, (2004) and Galvin, (2006) assert is always possible. Hence it was evident that work-based placements contributed very positively to disabled students' perceptions of their own employability and self-worth.

Thirdly, it became clear that some disabled students had got to a position where they wished to affirm and celebrate their disabled identity in the positive manner described by Peters (2000), where the focus is not on impairment as loss. Interviews with academic tutors confirmed that this positive approach was shared and encouraged extensively by academic tutors in the university and course context. But an observation of a work-related lecture revealed that some disabled students articulated their complex multiple identities (Shakespeare and Watson, 2001; Ferguson, 2003; Shakespeare, 2006). I concluded that some settings, like university, are safer environments for those wishing to disclose, affirm or celebrate their disabled identity than work-based contexts where stakeholders appeared to retain elements of medical model thinking. This was reflected particularly in interviews with placement supervisors who were concerned about disabled students not being able to do the job or being a risky employment option that may result in litigation for employers. One of the tutors, Rachel, thought this reflected a perception of employability as related to 'not causing any trouble'. Disabled students met significant barriers when trying to change medical model thinking amongst some stakeholders, while the Head of Partnership found that disabled students were often difficult to place because work placement institutions were wary of the risks involved to their students and reputation if they took on disabled students. Some students were happy about disclosing their disabled identity at university, but in work-based settings they were sometimes unwilling to disclose and this appeared to reflect the different perceptions of their identity by different stakeholders. As such Peters' (2000) idea that a focus on impairment can be positive rather than restrictive was not assumed by all stakeholders, and this was further confirmed by some students choosing to do what Goffman, (1968) called 'passing' in those situations. My findings support Armstrong et al's (2010) assertion that the focus on 'impairment friendly' education in the legislation does not really address why discrimination is so embedded in the education system or how the power relations that exist within the system and support discriminatory practice can be transformed. It was clear that students found it much more difficult to persuade stakeholders in the workplace, than to convince themselves, or their tutors, of their employability.

Fourthly, this ascribing of negative identity was particularly significant for those students with mental health and behaviour related impairment labels who faced more discrimination, stigmatisation and exclusion than other disabled students. Interviews with placement supervisors and the Head of Partnership located them within a 'dangerous' or 'threatening' category, particularly in work-based contexts where the rights of other vulnerable young people were at risk. Smith (1998:164) similarly argues 'some of the rhetoric associated with inclusion concerning 'rights of the individual' has been construed by some professionals as 'incompatible with the common good' (Cited in Armstrong et al, 2010:32). This accorded with Goffman's (1968:23) explanation of the relationship between 'normal' and 'stigmatised' people and the fact that there is a profound and serious impact on personal identity for those people culturally discredited as 'abnormal', so that stigmatisation can be associated with victimisation, stereotyping and prejudice (Thomas , 2007:23). Disabled students were facing increased competition for university places, work-based placements and employment opportunities and so had to work increasingly hard to overcome negative labelling and stigmatisation, constantly trying to deal with being ascribed negative identities and those with mental health and behaviour related impairments were most significantly affected. This particular stigmatisation corroborates fears articulated by Visser and Dubsky, (2009) and Cefai and Cooper, (2010) that impairment labels associated with behaviours outside the accepted societal norm attract more significant negative identity. It appears to confirm Berthoud's view that some impairment labels carry more risk of exclusion than others.

> The substantial variation by disability characteristics within the disabled population strongly contradicts the view that the main disadvantage is between disabled people as a group and non-disabled people as a group...detailed information about disability characteristics provides a much more powerful explanation of variations in job chances than a single crude indicator dividing disabled people from non-disabled' (Berthoud, 2008: 139).

However, he located the problem within the impairment and this thesis refutes this idea and demonstrates that it is attitudes to impairments, not the impairments themselves that cause disadvantage. This thesis, rather, verifies the following sentiments:

> In practice, whether or not someone is accepted for employment will be influenced by the attitudes and values of employers, and the practical constraints of the workplace. However, for some vocations and some disabilities, unacceptability for employment is presumed at the pre-employment stage (Borland and James, 1999: 94).

Thus, it was evident that, unfortunately, some disabled students were more likely to experience employment disadvantage than others.

Therefore, the diverse knowledge and understanding of the social model resulted in varied experiences of disabled identity for disabled students. However, these conceptual and definitional confusions were further compounded by definitional confusion around inclusion and employability and practical barriers in both university and work contexts. Findings on stakeholder definitions and understandings of inclusion and employability and their perceptions of barriers to inclusion and employment for disabled students in specific settings and how these might be overcome shed more light on issues related to knowledge and understanding of social model thinking and obstacles to its practical application in university and work settings. It also enabled me to identify some practical solutions to the stated problem of employment disadvantage for disabled students. The next section articulates these findings.

9.3 (iii) University and Employment Settings: inclusion in exclusive environments?

I found that in many ways Hodkinson's fears that policies do not always work out in practice were born out.

> The current push for the implementation of inclusive education is one example of an instance where policy development and philosophical thought outpace practice (Hodkinson, 2010:61).

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Firstly, stakeholders appeared to have very diverse understandings of key terms like inclusion and employability, so that these confusions further contributed to misunderstandings around knowledge and understanding of the social model. Stakeholders adopted a range of approaches to inclusion, which mainly sounded politically correct, and demonstrated that they were concerned to be inclusive. However, such confusion reaffirmed concerns (Cole, 2005) that there is a danger that the term becomes so vague and slippery that it actually means nothing. Similarly, there were different perceptions of employability so that often 'functional limitation' (Barnes, 1992; 1996; Oliver,1996a;1996b; Davis, 1997; Barnes and Mercer, 2005) remained a key consideration, especially for placement supervisors, who appeared to concur that being able to do the job was the key to employability. However, others like one academic tutor thought it was more about being able to do the job without causing any trouble. For others, mainly one student and one academic tutor, the whole social construction of terms related to employment and the values on which they are based was questioned. This reflected a poststructural view (Shakespeare, 2006; Galvin, 2006). These findings demonstrated the challenges associated with ensuring clear, consistent and commonly understood understandings of the key concepts associated with disability, inclusion and employability. Lack of a clear and consistent understanding of key terms by stakeholders further added to the diverse, fractured and inconsistent student experiences, thus impacting on their effective inclusion. However, understanding concepts was one issue, putting them into practice presented further challenges.

> It is difficult to deny it is an egalitarian principle, a basic right and important feature of a democratic society. Yet identifying a 'coherent theory that puts these feelings and concepts into shape' (Wilson, 2000:297) is far from easy. Translating any such theory into practice would seem to be even more problematic (Cole, 2005:287-288).

The second exclusionary aspect of the course I found was located in discriminatory structures, practices and attitudes that remained around the work-related curriculum,

assessment and pedagogy. Many issues related to curricular and pedagogical contexts were not evaluated or questioned because the focus on learning contracts and the Disability Support Team deflected attention away from connecting the disabled students' performance with the teaching approaches used or the teaching and learning resources employed. As such a continued focus on individual impairment and deficit was perpetuated and social and environmental barriers largely ignored. I found that academic tutors perceived the work-related curriculum, teaching and work-based learning and assessment approaches on the course as mainly 'ableist' and that they had not been thought through in relation to inclusivity for disabled students, thus reflecting the concerns about ableism asserted by Bolt, (2004); Bernacchio et al, (2007) and Style, (2000). For example, learning contracts focused on university related aspects of the course but very rarely addressed placement issues. This resulted in one student facing a long commute to work placement on a bus, even though she experienced a phobia of using public transport. Long placement days which began at 9 am were particularly inaccessible for another student who operated more effectively at night.

Disabled Student Support worked effectively and many academic staff worked hard to ensure inclusion for disabled students because of their own strong commitment to a social model of disability. This affirms the view (Holloway, 2001) that commitment to inclusive education is limited to disability studies and support staff and, unfortunately, positive attitudes are not held by all staff. However, regrettably, an exclusionary curriculum and the structure of modules around assessment and progression was part of the structure of the university environment and disabled students had to fit within these exclusionary structures. It was evident that even though the university adopted a social model policy the learning contract system still located the problem with the disabled student and little attempt was being made to tackle curricular, pedagogical and structural barriers to inclusive education on the course. This confirmed the assertion that putting disability support under a 'welfare umbrella' is bound to reinforce medical model practice and that:

Ideological issues are concerned with power relationships and in the context of disabilities, become most obvious at the policy level where tension between the social and medical models of disability is evident. At an institutional (and a formal policy) level, the University largely holds to a social model; but the medical model is so deeply ingrained in the everyday life experiences of both staff and students that there is a tension/conflict at the heart of the institution's provision (Borland and James, 1999:100).

Thus, work-based learning challenged traditional academic cultures to be more inclusive but, unfortunately, many structural barriers remained unchallenged (Brennan and Little, 1996; 2006; Yorke and Knight, 2003). For some disabled students and staff interviews revealed that a poststructuralist approach which challenged the whole notion of employability and the value attributed to paid work needed to be considered in any re-structuring of curricular and assessment approaches on the course (Beck, 2000; Levitas, 2001; Wilton, 2004; Barnes and Mercer, 2005). Thus, the exclusive curricular, assessment and pedagogical arrangements further added to employment disadvantage for disabled students.

The third practical issue that arose was that a major consequence of this learning contract focus on impairment was that the unsuitable curriculum and assessments often had to be adapted in order to effectively include disabled students and this led to some academic tutors perceiving these adaptations as diluting and threatening academic standards (Shevlin et al, 2004). I found that such an exclusionary environment made the inclusion of disabled students within traditional learning, teaching, assessment and curricular structures extremely clumsy. It also appeared to perpetuate academic tutors' fears of a threat to academic standards and traditional practices (Massie, 2004; Houghton, 2005). The exclusionary and discriminatory nature of traditional curricula, assessments and pedagogy, and the subsequent need to adapt them in order for disabled students to fit the system, meant that disabled students became exposed to questions that were raised about impartiality, fairness and excellence (Jung, 2002). Therefore it was evident that 'the rhetoric of inclusion and the rhetoric of 'high standards' deeply contradicted one another' (Hall et al, 2004: 814-815).

Many academic staff and some disabled students recognised these structural barriers, but found them very difficult or impossible to change. Thus, some medical model thinking was so embedded in practice that it formed structural barriers that only a massive societal change could remove. The value attributed to paid employment, traditional academic curricula, learning, teaching and assessment had not really been challenged and often sat in direct opposition to social model philosophy and practice. Consequently, stakeholders were trying to be inclusive in exclusionary contexts, and until some traditional values that are part of the fabric of society and university and work cultures were removed, this could not easily change. My findings concurred with Massie's findings that:

> Discrimination and disadvantage does not disappear overnight - it is deeply rooted - not just in attitudes and assumptions but within the built environment, organisations and systems, within tried and tested ways of doing things, within professional norms, within the way we learn and the way the world is presented to us (Massie, 2004:2).

So in the light of the above findings it is clear that the social model of disability has had a profound and in many ways positive impact on inclusion for disabled students in higher education and work-based placements. However, it is evident from my findings that the issue of employment disadvantage remains and so the question emerges as to whether the social model is an adequate or appropriate framework for inclusion.

9.4 The social model: an adequate framework for inclusion?

I argue that the social model is an appropriate practical framework for inclusion in higher education and employment settings and that in order to reduce or eliminate employment disadvantage for disabled people it should be more rigorously applied and understood in both higher education and employment settings. I argue my case on the basis of my data and the dangers I perceive in revising or abandoning the social model. The following explains how I came to these conclusions.

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Firstly, one of the key findings of this thesis was related to the inconsistent application of the social model in policies and practice. It has been demonstrated in chapter 3 that legislation and policy draws on more than one model of disability, so that there are many get-out clauses which enable stakeholders to ignore, dilute or subvert it. I found [chapter 6] that disabled students perceived these inconsistencies as a smoke screen behind which stakeholders could operate exclusionary practices. These inconsistencies and loopholes in legislation and policy were directly reflected in practice because disabled students experienced a range of models of disability while on the course. At university their tutors had an excellent knowledge and understanding of the social model, though some came from feminist and post-structural perspectives. When they went on work-based placements it was often the case that medical perspectives dominated thinking and practice. The students confronted by such a range of perspectives on disability while at university and on work placements became confused about the social model which they knew and understood very well. I contend that a significant contributor to continued exclusionary practice in both higher education and work contexts is a fractured and disjointed knowledge and understanding of the social model amongst stakeholders which, compounded by insubstantial policies, led to confusion, misunderstanding and uncertainty. I advocate that it is not the social model that is the problem, but an insufficient understanding and application of its principles in policy and practice and propose that a more rigorous application of social model thinking in legislation and policy accompanied by more widespread understanding of its principles would be effective in reducing exclusionary practice.

My view that a more meticulous application of social model ideas would enhance inclusion for disabled students was further confirmed in the findings of chapter 7, where it became clear that sound stakeholder knowledge and understanding of the social model often equated with more effective inclusionary practice. Where social model values were widely known and understood, primarily in the university environment, disabled students generally felt secure in disclosing and sometimes celebrating their disabled identity. Some students felt the whole experience of getting on to the course and gaining work

placements transformed negative identities from their past life experiences and so increased their self-worth and belief about becoming employable. Conversely, where a limited knowledge or understanding of social model philosophy was evident, for the most part amongst placement supervisors, students were less willing to disclose their identity and more likely to be regarded as a risky option and unable or unlikely to do what was required of them in a work environment. Disabled students with impairments associated with behaviour and mental health were regarded with particular suspicion. So I contend that this knowledge and understanding of social model thinking directly correlated with how disabled students experienced inclusion. The logical conclusion to draw from the above is that inclusive practice is more effective where the principles of the social model are well known and applied so that strengthening its application rather than abandoning or revising it would be a reasonable response.

This claim as to the need to apply the social model more rigorously was further confirmed by the findings in chapter 8 where several stakeholders claimed that it is extremely difficult to manage successful inclusionary practice when operating in exclusionary environments. As such, even when social model policy and practice was in evidence there were many relics of medical model thinking within university and employment structures so that social model thinking was struggling to survive. Labelling and categorisation was still a major element of practice, compounded by a lack of opportunities for the disabled student voice to be heard in course planning and evaluation. I concluded that the ideas of the social model in many ways met a brick wall when confronted with the remnants of medical model thinking and practice and it is only when such exclusionary structures are removed that disabled students can be effectively included. This conclusion was further verified when stakeholders proposed that more effective inclusion would only happen if more opportunities for training and knowledge sharing around disability issues were provided and resourced. Disabled students requested a voice in the work-based elements of their course, again a social model value. Hence, all the stakeholders identified aspects of strengthening the application of the social model in order more effectively to reduce exclusionary practice.

However, I recognise that both disabled students and other participants in the study demonstrated a range of perspectives on disability which may have been interpreted as questioning the validity and usefulness of the social model or advocating an alternative post-social model for inclusion. It was evident that weak spelling, unusual appearance, inability to answer the phone and visual impairments were considered by disabled students as personal barriers to their inclusion. This could be interpreted as them taking a feminist position in which they questioned the adequacy of the social model for inclusion on a personal level, while recognising its value on a large scale (Morris, 1991; French, 1993; Crow, 1996). I did not, however, interpret this as post social model thinking because the disabled students articulated and attributed much more significance to social than personal barriers to their inclusion. Also, I regarded these personal barriers as socially constructed 'impairment effects' (Tremain, 2002) and one tutor confirmed this view when he stated that these are only impairments because we run our lives in disabling ways for these students. Another respondent similarly added that disabled students are disabled because of the expectation of the world in relation to that impairment.

Other post-social model perspectives were evident in the study as two disabled students did question the value attributed to paid work in current British society Galvin (2006) and others demonstrated awareness of complex multiple identities (Ferguson, 2003; Shakespeare, 2006). I also found that a range of understandings of key concepts like 'inclusion' and 'employability' were evident. Even though these findings could be argued to support a post-structural perspective on disability I argue that where there were diverse views around defining and understanding concepts the resulting confusion gave rise to opportunities for ignoring or subverting legislation and policy. As such, a post-structural interpretation was evident in my data but I found that such a perspective was more likely to offer opportunities for oppression amongst disabled students.

I found that my view that the social model needs to be more rigorously understood and applied was corroborated further in each of the sections of my findings and while the social model was evident in policy and legislation it clearly was not implemented

effectively at university and, more significantly, work settings. Until this effective and rigorous implementation of the social model is evident through training and adequate resourcing I maintain that this is the most significant issue emerging form this data.

As such, a range of perspectives on disability from all participants, including medical, feminist and post-structural views have been honestly and openly presented in chapters 6-8. Articulating all these diverse views from research participants ensured that no opportunity was taken to present biased data. Hence, although some confusing and diverse perspectives on models of disability were evident in the study, the most significant and prominent issue emerging from the data was a lack of knowledge, understanding and application of the principles of the social model. The theoretical implications of these diverse perspectives is further explored in 9.5.

In summary, I propose that the findings of this study do not support the revision or discarding of the social model of disability, rather its strengthening and more rigorous application in policy and practice. I conclude that the problems associated with knowledge, understanding and application of the social model of disability contributed to the continued exclusion of disabled students in both university and work contexts, but that exclusion was far more likely in work contexts. This problem makes a significant contribution to understanding some of the employment disadvantage problems experienced by disabled students and why so many of the positive aspects of inclusion and employability offered by the course were diluted in their effectiveness. In order to make sense of these assertions concerning the social model I now contextualise these arguments within the theoretical framework presented in chapter 4.

9.5 Theoretical Implications: the validity of the social model

The findings presented above clearly support the argument that the social model of disability, as understood by UPIAS (1976) and reflecting a 'materialistic' perspective (Thomas, 2004a), has contributed immensely to inclusion and employability for disabled people in the UK and, specifically to disabled students included in this research. The power that has been transferred into the hands of disabled people to fight for their rights

in education and employment has had profound and positive implications for the disabled students in this study. They have gained university places, been offered work-based placement opportunities to develop employability skills, and often reduced or eliminated the impact of any negative identities ascribed to them in their past. Even though I recognise that many problems and challenges arise when implementing social model policies and practices, I do not agree that reviewing or abandoning the social model is the solution to the employment disadvantage problem. Rather I recommend its strengthening and more rigorous application in policy and practice.

I found that many of the issues that arose in this study that resulted in exclusion and employment disadvantage were directly correlated with medical model thinking and practice and a lack of knowledge and application of social model philosophy. It was this philosophy that had resulted in the attributing of medical model values that left some students feeling negative about their own self-worth because of past experiences, that led to placement supervisors often being wary of taking on disabled students because of 'functional limitations' and attributed particularly stigmatising stereotypical behaviours to some impairment labels. The practical issues around labelling and categorisation, exclusionary curricula and poor attitudes to the inclusion of disabled students at university similarly arose from medical model thinking and this is verified by literature in the field (Borland and James, 1999; Runswicke-Cole, 2008). This study refutes any assertions that the medical model offers a more appropriate model of disability. Bury (2000) and Berthoud (2008) advocate a medical model approach to disability in which an interaction between impairment effects and social barriers is recognised in disadvantage, and that that impairment effects are more significant than social barriers. This thesis gives no credence to the medical model as it has been clearly demonstrated that many of the problems articulated by stakeholders in both university and work contexts emanate from such a medical model, while inclusionary practice is much more evident where social model ideas predominate.

This thesis also contests the feminist view that the social model is inappropriate and needing revision on the basis that it does not represent disabled people on a personal

level (Morris, 1996; Crow, 1996; Thomas, 2004a; 2004b; 2007).Thomas thinks disability should be re-defined so that some 'impairment effects' that are not socially imposed are recognised along with the 'socially engendered' negative impacts on 'their psych-emotional wellbeing' (Thomas, 1999:60). Peters (2000) emphasises that this is not like the medical perspective where impairment is associated with limitation and loss or viewed as a more significant barrier to inclusion than social restrictions, in fact, it can actually mean affirmation and celebration of impairment. This thesis has clearly shown that any focus on 'impairment effects' is likely to be risky as not all stakeholders interpret these effects in the same manner, and that it is more likely to result in negative identities and exclusionary practice than affirmation and celebration. The thesis, rather, bears out Oliver (1996a:39) who considers any such reinstatement of a causal link between impairment and disability unacceptable. I agree and contend that any focus on impairment is more likely to result in exclusionary practice. Disabled students' experiences in this study verified that such a focus on impairments may be safe at university but in work environments it was far more likely to raise fear and suspicion around inability to do the job well. Even worse, disabled students with mental health or other behaviour related impairment labels were often perceived as dangerous and a threat to the safety of others in the setting. Therefore, findings implied that an impairment focus should be avoided at all costs, especially in work environments.

This thesis has demonstrated a distinct problem with implementing inclusion at university and work settings that is related to the lack of a clear definition and understanding of key terms like disability, inclusion and employability which results in confused practical applications of inclusionary practice. Nevertheless, some criticism of the social model arises from poststructuralist writers in disability studies who challenge the way in which it distinguishes between impairment and disability, arguing that deconstructing such terms would be a more appropriate way forward. They advocate that other terms like employability should be similarly deconstructed in relation to the value attributed to work in society (Shakespeare and Watson, 2001; Shakespeare, 2006; Galvin, 2006). I argue that any deconstruction of these terms will result in further definitional confusion and

subsequently produce more challenges to the practical implication of inclusionary principles in both university and especially work settings. This danger has been summed up in relation to definitional confusion around the term inclusion:

> The reality is not simply that inclusion means different things to different people, but rather that inclusion may end up meaning everything and nothing at the same time (Armstrong et al, 2010:29).

Thus, I propose that the social model is an appropriate framework for reducing exclusion in higher education and work settings. The thesis has shown that in many ways it has contributed to eliminating many of the worst attitudes and policies that excluded disabled students from higher education and paid employment and ensured that they can enter such arenas on a level playing field with their non-disabled peers. However, I view the social model as a rather blunt political tool, rather than a refined theory. As a political tool it has enabled disabled people to speak for themselves in raising issues, fighting for rights and promoting inclusion and has made an enormous dent in the employment disadvantage problem. However, I acknowledge that in many ways it is only chipping away at the problems and there is much work left to do, so that reducing the employment disadvantage problem is very much an on - going process. Such a conclusion confirms the assertion by Oliver (1996b) that we do not need a new model of disability but we need to more effectively implement the social model and allow it to continue the work it has only just begun because:

> ...our child – the social model – is not yet grown up and if we turn her out into the world too soon, we do so at our peril (Oliver, 1996:32).

Notwithstanding these achievements at a practical level, the model is a blunt tool which has not been theorised adequately, so that it is regarded by many writers as conceptually flawed. As such, it needs to be developed theoretically to reflect current developments so that a 'contemporary political economy of disability' which explores the current and ever-

changing socio-economic relationships in which disabled people are located is established (Roulstone, 2000 in Thomas, 2004b:39). I propose that the reason the 'materialist' social model has been so successful is that it accords with the current dominant 'social inclusion' agenda (Dyson, 2001) in which the focus is on outcomes related to disabled people contributing to the economy and society, especially through paid work. In this understanding and application of inclusion 'social inclusion' can only be achieved if the social barriers to its accomplishment are removed. As such the 'materialist' social model sits comfortably with such an interpretation of inclusion. Alongside this understanding of inclusion it is clear that understandings and definitions of employability as equating with gaining and maintaining paid employment also fit well with a 'materialist' social model in which social barriers to such employability are removed in order to ensure disabled people are employable. The university in this study has clearly moved to such a definition of employability in its most recent employability framework (2010). However if a different definition of inclusion was applied then disabled students would be located in a different set of socio-economic relationships. For example it was clear in chapter 3 that without clear understanding and definition of inclusion it becomes meaningless and irrelevant and as such extremely difficult to implement. If the post-structural approach to deconstructing the term is taken on board a similar definitional confusion would result in major difficulties for implementing inclusionary practice.

Therefore if areas of socio-economical transformation take place in which key concepts like inclusion and employability are re-defined and applied differently that may limit or enhance the effectiveness of the social model as originally conceived in materialist terms. Some clear examples of change are already evident in The Equality Act (2010) which takes on board a 'broad' definition of inclusion so that disabled students, though specifically identified as a protected group, come under a broad law which embraces a wide group of 'diverse' people. This makes it more difficult for them to challenge oppressive barriers and fight for political rights as a specific and separate 'disabled' group, a key aspect of the social model's success to date. However, it also ensures that disabled people are protected in law against discrimination. As such there are examples

within this study of where the social model needs to respond theoretically to changing socio-economic associations and this will become more apparent as more changes take place.

There is an issue around the fact that no theory of impairment is evident in the social model, only a theory of disability. Many writers from feminist and social model traditions (Abberley, 1996; Thomas, 2004a; 2004b; 2007) perceive the development of a theory of impairment as an essential way forward. The main impairment issue emerging in this research related to mental health impairment labels and impairments associated with behavioural 'problems'. Students with these labels appeared more excluded, feared and stigmatised than students with other impairment labels. Beresford (2000) and Thomas (2004a; 2004b) confirm the need for more research in this area. However, any theorisation of the interplay between the social and biological, particularly in relation to diverse impairment labels, is likely to reinforce, rather than eliminate the deep exclusion often experienced by such students. Thomas has come up with the idea of theorising 'impairment effects' as separate from disability affects and this may be a way forward in maintaining the distinction between the terms, retaining a break in the causal link between impairment and disability and theorising impairment. She argues that:

> The point here is that in this social relational proposition, disability and impairment are inextricably linked and interactive: disability is social inclusion on the grounds of impairment. Impairment does not cause disability, certainly not, but it is the raw material on which disability works. It is the embodied socio-biological substance –socially marked as unacceptable bodily deviation –that mediates the social relationships in question. The particular character of the impairment plays a crucial role in shaping the forms and degrees of disablism encountered...It follows that the theorisation of disability requires the theorisation of impairment, but in what directions? (Thomas, 2004b:44)

If such a theory could achieve as much in driving the inclusion agenda forward as the social model has done it would be welcome. However, it is unlikely to wield the profound strength of a collective disabled voice against oppressive educational and employment policy and practice that the social model has brought to bear.

Thus, I conclude that in order to ensure more effective practice for including disabled students in university and work settings the social model is an appropriate, though crude tool, which works well at the current time and in the contemporary British political, social and economic climate. It is certainly not perfect and needs to be refined theoretically but the suggestions for a new or revised model from medical, feminist and post-structural writers in disability studies do not appear, in my view, to offer a better, sharper tool for reducing exclusion in these settings. As such, I propose strengthening the knowledge, understanding and application of social model principles, so that this effective political tool can continue to do the work it has so far achieved in eliminating oppression. The next section articulates some possible practical solutions to the employment disadvantage problem that emerged from the study.

9.6 Practical application: ways forward for reducing employment disadvantage

On the basis of the findings above I have concluded that the course could improve work-related and work-based aspects of provision so that it more effectively reflects social model thinking, and subsequently enhances disabled students' inclusion and employability. These recommendations can only apply to the case in question but may well be useful areas for research for other similar courses and institutions. Significantly, all the stakeholders' ideas for a more inclusionary focus related to strengthening social model practice.

Firstly, the placement supervisors, Head of Partnership and academic tutors raised the issue of lack of knowledge and training in disability issues as a key challenge to inclusive practice, especially in work-based contexts where knowledge was less evident. They all regarded sharing knowledge through training opportunities and more regular liaison as a major aspect of effective inclusion which was missing in their experiences. The data confirmed on many occasions that this lack of knowledge often resulted in more exclusionary practices and negative perceptions of disabled students. As these negative perceptions were more likely to be perpetuated in work contexts this was an important factor contributing to employment disadvantage for disabled students, but one that could

be reduced with some well thought through knowledge sharing and liaison opportunities. This is backed up by much of the research and literature reviewed in chapter 3 (Borland and James, 1999; Corbett, 2001; Holloway, 2001; Thomas et al, 2002; Shevlin et al, 2004; Hodkinson, 2010). This knowledge sharing was particularly relevant for disabled students with mental health and behaviour related impairments, who appeared to be most excluded on the basis of ill-informed fears about the effects of their impairments in some environments, especially work settings. Beresford (2002) and Thomas (2007) have similarly emphasised the need for more research and knowledge around mental health issues.

Thus, my first recommendation is that staff knowledge and understanding of policies and guidance related to disabled students is increased through a specific development programme. This programme should be led by the Disability Support Team, academic staff and disabled students who seem to be most aware of these issues. Within this programme issues around disability should also be addressed to avoid staff resorting to the Internet to gain any required information about disability issues. There should be specific time set aside at least once a year for training and knowledge sharing between all stakeholders and academic tutors should visit placement settings regularly, holding meetings with placement supervisors. This knowledge sharing and liaison would raise awareness of social model thinking and reduce the differential knowledge of disability amongst stakeholders. It is crucial that the necessary resources are made available if this recommendation is to be effected successfully.

My second recommendation relates to the fact that all stakeholders commented on the fact that disabled students did not have an adequate voice in planning and evaluating the work-related aspects of their course and this was a clear gap in social model practice at university and in work placements. Without the disabled student voice in planning the curricula and teaching approaches then it was inevitable that inappropriate curricula, pedagogy and assessments would continue unchallenged while non-disabled academics made all the decisions. This was further complicated because disabled students had few opportunities for evaluating their course or influencing developments so that

exclusionary practices were perpetuated without question. This recommendation is corroborated by Fuller et al (2004) and Tinklin et al, (2003:12) who state that:

> Until institutions consult their disabled students directly they will remain ignorant of the difficulties and barriers faced by disabled students as they go about their daily business.

Hence, this very overt omission of social model practice should be addressed if employment disadvantage is to be reduced. I recommend that disabled students should be given a strong voice in course development, including re-validation meetings and course meetings where their inclusion and employability are discussed. Disabled students should also be involved in evaluating both work-related and work-based aspects of their course and clear processes used to enable their feedback to inform future curricular, pedagogical and assessment developments. This could be done by extending the current Staff-Student Committee system to include a Disability Forum.

Thirdly, it was evident in the study that many stakeholders felt that they were trying to be inclusive in exclusionary environments as any positive elements of inclusionary policy and practice were impeded by structural barriers that were hard to overcome. Because the learning contract system perpetuated a deficit approach, disabled students' impairments continued to be the focus of 'blame' for lack of achievement and the result was that traditional exclusionary curricular, assessment and pedagogy had not been challenged. This problem was further compounded by the necessary adaptations to learning, teaching and assessment for disabled students which often led to them being perceived as being given unfair advantages or threatening academic standards. This was a major structural issue which needed addressing at university, rather than course level.

I recommend that the university review work-related curricula, in consultation with disabled students. Any new curricular, pedagogical and assessment arrangements should include all students and staff being involved in disability and equality awareness including the placement supervisors. Thus a more appropriate curriculum needs to be

established with what Goodley, (2011) and Giroux, (2003) call 'critical pedagogy', so that an inclusive curriculum matches an inclusive ideology. This would involve Jarman's (2008) idea of putting Disability Studies on the curriculum for all students, not just those following Disability Studies degrees. It would also involve lecturers, partnership staff and placement supervisors promoting fresh relationships between students and staff through new understandings of inclusionary principles and ideals. This would be about 'conscientisation', that is all stakeholders gaining deeper knowledge and awareness of the social realities that mould their experiences, exposing oppressive and exclusionary practice (Darder, 2009). Such an approach would reduce the need for learning contracts and their outdated deficit focus and offer opportunities for a renewed positive approach to disability at course and university level. Even though this would involve an enormous structural change, which is beyond the remit of the course in this case, future research opportunities are evident here. Clearly the appropriate resources need to be made available for all these recommendations; something that the findings showed has hindered many developments to date.

Finally, the fact that the work-related and work-based aspects of the course were having many positive effects in relation to employability and inclusion in employment contexts for disabled students, led me to believe that this aspect of the course was not only favoured by students, but also making a significant positive contribution to the inclusion and employability of disabled students, thus concurring with Brennan and Little, (2006). This aspect of study was valued by all the stakeholders and recognised as a significant contributor to linking theory and practice. Therefore, the university needs to maintain and develop this focus on the course, ensuring appropriate excellent quality work-based placements for disabled students in a range of settings. The university should celebrate this positive contribution of the course in marketing and highlight the significant contribution it makes to inclusion and employability for disabled students. Clearly there is a need to reflect on the issues raised and other recommendations for a more effective approach, but work-related learning and work-based placements are an excellent vehicle for enhancing disabled student employability, including their self - esteem. They are an

important tool for sharing social model thinking between university and work contexts and stakeholders and thus contributing to removing misunderstandings that play a part in the continued oppression of disabled people in higher education and work contexts. The following section suggests some areas of further research that would extend knowledge around these debates and considers some recent and current developments which may become significant for including disabled students in higher education and employment.

9.7 Future issues and research
9.7(i) Future issues

Any future research on inclusion higher education and employment will need to reflect current and ongoing developments at national and institutional level. A recent statement by the United Kingdom coalition Government articulated the need to solve the 'problem of inclusion' and 'remove the bias towards inclusion' (DfE, 2011:20). However, this research has demonstrated that in many ways the philosophy of inclusion has not yet been adequately worked out in practice in both higher education and employment institutions so any move away from the focus on inclusion would be highly detrimental to disabled students in the future. Runswicke-Cole (2011:117) has begun to explore this agenda and contends that '...is it time to end the bias towards inclusion? No, it is time to *try* inclusion'. Clearly if the current Government continues to pursue this agenda it will profoundly impact on disabled students' inclusion in higher education and employment in the future.

Further issues are emerging around changes and cuts to disabled people's benefits (Welfare Reform Act, 2012). Any future research will need to focus on the impact of such changes in relation to disabled students entering and progressing in higher education and employment. In addition to these changes the impact of the massive increase in university tuition fees which will begin to affect students from September 2012 is as yet unknown. Thus, it is yet to be seen what the impact of large student debts will have on disabled students who may also experience changes to their benefits.

In relation to the future of the social model Williams-Findlay (2011:776) is concerned that the Government's so called 'inclusive' approach to disability assessments has opened the back door to medical assessments and individualised approaches and is more about reducing the numbers of people labelled as disabled and consequently cutting costs. He argues that:

> In disability academic circles in the UK there has been little or no appraisal of the practical implications of post-social model discourses in relation to disabled assessment and medicine.

He adds further concerns about economically active disabled people who may be particularly at risk in a weak jobs market but not perceived as 'deserving poor'. Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC) view the current 'attacks' on disabled people as related to a crisis in capitalism at national and global levels and they view the social model of disability as vital to constructing a new and diverse anti-capitalist movement (Williams-Findlay, 2011:778).

Hence it is clear that any further research related to disabled students will need to consider recent developments in philosophy and practice on many levels. Government agendas around benefits and disability assessments impact on the availability of the practical and financial support that disabled students need in order to succeed at university and in employment. Increased university debts and a weakened jobs market will inevitably compound these issues. Above all, the possibility of a move away from social model and inclusive values before the social model has achieved its full potential is a matter of major concern for the future of disabled students entering higher education and the employment market.

9.7 (ii) Future research

This research is limited in that it only addresses the issue on one course in one institution. Further research in a range of institutions with a wider range of disabled students would provide a more generalisable conclusion that could be more widely

applied to other university courses. For the university in this study it would be useful to extend the longitudinal focus of the research on this case to explore how the disabled students in the study experienced employment after leaving the course. It would be interesting to find out how the employability aspects of the course contributed positively to their careers and the kinds of issues they experienced in applying for and gaining jobs. This is possibly something that would have enhanced this research.

It would be useful to carry out follow-up research after some of the practical recommendations have been put into practice. For example, once stakeholder knowledge and understanding of the social model and disability has been enhanced through training and knowledge sharing, it would be interesting to find out how increased knowledge impacts on inclusionary practice and whether the varied student experiences in different contexts are reduced as a result of improved stakeholder knowledge. It would be helpful to explore how such increased knowledge and understanding impacts on negative identities, especially for students with mental health and behaviour related impairments. Similarly, once disabled students have been afforded a voice in the planning and evaluation of their courses it would be a valuable research study to analyse the impact of their voice in reducing exclusionary practice. In the longer term if more structural barriers at the university , especially learning contracts, were removed a study of how this impacts on learning , teaching and assessment approaches and perceptions of academic standards and equity would be worthwhile.

Finally it would have been beneficial to take a truly emancipatory approach to the research, affording the disabled students more control in the research process and more empowerment in any advancement of their own inclusion and employability. In this way a clearer social model approach to the research would have further enhanced the validity of the study. The most useful follow-up project would be an emancipatory study involving students who have completed the course and an exploration of their experiences of employment post degree. As such, the study located many positive aspects of inclusionary policy and practice in higher education and work placement contexts which were mainly related to social model philosophy. However, many aspects of policy and

practice were found to maintain a deficit approach which perpetuated medical model thinking and led to continued oppression and employment disadvantage for disabled students. Every attempt was made to give the disabled students voice in this research and to ensure positive good in relation to recommendations which will enhance inclusion and employability for disabled students.

9.8 Conclusion

This study originally set out with the aim of exploring the employment disadvantage problem which disabled students face as compared to their non-disabled peers and to suggest some avenues for lessening or eradicating this problem. I have argued that many of the factors contributing to the employment disadvantage problem were associated with the social model of disability being implemented in a disjointed, fractured and inconsistent manner within and across university and work contexts. Disabled students had to negotiate both these arenas, university and work as part of their work-related and work-based learning and consequently experienced a range of policy and practice which reflected all models of disability and subsequently confused the disabled students. It is argued that the higher education setting proved a less exclusionary environment for disabled students than work contexts and that this appeared to be related to a solid knowledge and understanding of the social model of disability amongst academic tutors which was often reflected in practice.

The case is made that while the new policies associated with social model thinking advanced inclusion and employability they often provided a veneer for much deep rooted exclusionary and oppressive practice, especially in work contexts. This was the ultimate in discriminatory practice as disabled students were presented with an illusion of inclusion and social model rhetoric that was not consistently manifested in practice. Relics of medical model practice were still evident in both contexts. Hence understanding and application of models of disability were blurred and confused in such a way as to be even more exclusionary than direct discrimination. This was 'hidden' rather than 'overt' discrimination because it was hiding behind a philosophy and policies

that espoused a social model philosophy and, as such, it was more difficult to locate and challenge covert discrimination than direct overt discrimination. I believe the university and work settings were putting the new wine of social model thinking and policy into the old wineskins of medical model thinking and practices, negative and stereotypical attitudes and exclusionary structural environments. Therefore the old wineskins were cracking and breaking and much of the new wine of inclusionary philosophy was lost.

I conclude that it is essential that new wineskins are provided in which the new wine can flourish, that is that the social model is fully and completely implemented. This can only be achieved by strengthening social model knowledge and practice, rather than revising or abandoning the model. I recognise the social model as a powerful, though blunt political tool that has not been adequately theorised, but is still having a profound and positive effect on deriving inclusion forward in legislation, policy and practice. Making changes at this point would mean abandoning it before it has accomplished all it can achieve. I agree with Oliver that it would be perilous to jettison the model too soon.

> We do have a hammer in the Disability Movement...If properly used, the social model of disability could become the hammer of justice and freedom for disabled people 'all over the land' (Oliver, 1996b:13).

9.9 Reflexive end note

I have learned during this study that exploring models of disability is a very complicated task because inclusion, identity and employment are complex issues, for which there are not necessarily clear answers. I do feel that the study has made a useful contribution to knowledge about these work-related opportunities on the course and given me an opportunity to reflect on how improvements can be made to make the course reflect social model thinking. In completing this study I changed my own position with regard to my philosophy on disability and impairment. Although I began with an adherence to social model thinking I was supportive of a compensatory interactive approach where I saw both impairment effects and social barriers combining to exclude disabled people

from education and work. However, the disabled identity theme made me realise that negative identities are social constructions, as are impairment effects. I came to a strong social model position where I believe we should avoid being impairment specific at all costs because the risk of impairments being used negatively in relation to stigma, prejudice and exclusion is too great. I now hold that the social model has much work left to do in order to ensure inclusion in university and work-based contexts.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Summary of research participants

STUDENT participants
2005-2008 Cohort A of disabled students
Idris Male student
Billy Male student
Katherine Female student
Karl Male student
Ren Female student
2006-2009 Cohort B of disabled students
Chantelle Female student
Sandra Female student
Sharon Female student
2007-2010 Cohort C of disabled students
Rhian Female student
Jacob Male student
Tracey Female student
Doreen Female student
Hannah Female student

2008-2011 Cohort D of disabled students

Manuel Male student

2009-2012 Cohort E of disabled students

John Male student

Lucy Female student

TUTOR participants

Rachel an academic tutor and Course Leader

James an academic tutor and module tutor

Rose an academic tutor and placement tutor

Claire an academic tutor and Course Leader

PLACEMENT SUPERVISOR participants

Angela a placement supervisor in a mainstream secondary school

George a placement supervisor in a local charity

Carol a placement supervisor in a mainstream primary school

Paula a placement supervisor in a special school for 5-19 year old students

PARTNERSHIP participant

Lee the Head of Partnership

APPENDIX 2: RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS AND RESEARCH TOOLS MAPPING TABLE

STUDENTS 2005-2008 COHORT GROUP A	STUDENTS 2006-2009 COHORT GROUP B	STUDENTS 2007-2010 COHORT GROUP C	STUDENTS 2008-2011 COHORT GROUP D	STUDENTS 2009-2012 COHORT GROUP E	ACADEMIC TUTOR, PLACEMENT SUPERVISOR and PARTNERSHIP INTERVIEWS	OBSERVATION OF PLACEMEN[T] PREPARATION SESSION
Focus Group Meeting May 2006 Billy; Idris; Katherine; Karl; Ren (Total student cohort 5)	Focus Group Meeting May 2007 Chantelle; Sandra; Sharon (Total student cohort 3)	First Focus Group meeting May 2008 Rhian; Jacob; Tracey; Doreen; Hannah (Total student cohort 5)	No Focus Group Meeting held Manuel (Total student cohort 1)	No Focus Group Meeting held John; Lucy (Total student cohort 2)	**ACDEMIC TUTORS** One interview held in July-September 2010 with Rachel; James; Rose; Claire (Total academic tutor staff participants 4)	One observation of module tutors teaching a placement preparation lecture took place in January 201[0] with cohort E. Both module tutors were part of the academic tutor sample interviewed in July-September 2010. Students who responded within t[he] observed lecture are identified as X; Z and Q
First Interviews July 2006	First Interviews July 2007	First Interviews July 2008	Interview October 2010	Interviews October 2010	**PLACEMENT SUPERVISOR INTERVIEWS** One interview held with 4 placement supervisors who had supervised disabled students in the cohort Sept-Oct 2010 Angela; George; Carol; Paula (Total placement supervisor participants 4)	
Second Interviews November 2007	Second Interviews November 2008	Second Interviews November 2009			**PARTNERSHIP INTERVIEW** One interview with the Head of Partnership Lee July 2010 (Total Head of Partnership participant1)	

APPENDIX 3: a-c Tables of key themes, questions and data gathering methods

App.3 (a): Table of key themes, questions and data gathering methods theme 1. Inclusion of disabled students in higher education

Key themes emerging Inclusive Education	Key questions related to themes	Methods used to collect data
1. Definitions and understandings of the social model and inclusive education	1(i) How do disabled students/placement tutors/Partnership Team/ placement supervisors understand the term inclusive education (ii) Why is inclusive education perceived to be important? (iii) To what extent are students/placement tutors/Partnership Team/placement supervisors aware of the social model?	Interviews with students/tutors/Head of Partnership and placement supervisors. Focus groups with students. Observation of placement preparation session.
2. Practical curriculum and pedagogical applications of inclusive education	2(i) How do academic tutors and placement supervisors apply inclusive education in context (e.g. What legislation, regulatory frameworks and guidance do they apply? 2(ii) How do staff /supervisors view their responsibility to disabled students on placement	Analysis of key relevant documents; interviews with disabled students/tutors/Head of Partnership and placement supervisors. Observation of placement preparation session.
3. Issues and tensions related to inclusive education	3(i) What tensions arise around inclusive education in higher education? Why?	Interviews with disabled students/tutors/Head of Partnership and placement supervisors. Observation of placement preparation session
4. Barriers to inclusion in work-related placements	4(i) What personal and social barriers do disabled students experience on work related placements	Focus groups and Interviews with disabled students/tutors/Head of Partnership and placement supervisors.
5. Quality assurance and the student voice	5(i) How is quality assurance applied to work related placements for disabled students? 5(ii) To what extent is the disabled student voice heard in these quality assurance procedures? 5(iii) How do staff know, understand and train in meeting the needs of disabled students on placement?	5(i) Analysis of key documents and interviews with tutors and Head of Partnership 5(ii) Interviews with tutors, Head of Partnership and disabled students 5(iii) Interviews with tutors, Head of Partnership and placement supervisors
6. Ways forward	6(i) How can improvements be made so that work-related placements for disabled students are more inclusive?	Interviews with disabled students/tutors/Head of Partnership and placement supervisors.

App. 3 (b) :Table of key themes, questions and data gathering methods theme 2.
Disability and Employment

Key themes emerging on employability and disability	Key questions on employability and disability	Methods used to collect data
1. The purpose and benefits of paid employment	1(i) How do different stakeholders perceive the benefits of paid employment for disabled people? 1(ii) Are these any different than those for non-disabled people?	Focus groups and interviews with disabled students/tutors/Head of Partnership and placement supervisors.
2. What personal and social barriers to employment exist for disabled people?	2(i) What barriers have disabled students experienced on work-related placements and in work experience? 2(ii) How are barriers to gaining and maintaining employment perceived by other stakeholders?	2(i) Focus groups and Interviews with disabled students 2(ii) Interviews with tutors and Head of Partnership, and interviews with placement supervisors
3. Definitions and understandings of employability	3(i) How do different stakeholders interpret employability? 3(ii) Why do different stakeholders define the term differently?	3(i) Placement, university, and course documentation. Focus groups and interviews with students/tutors/Head of Partnership and placement supervisors. 3(ii) Interviews with tutors and placement supervisors
4. The contribution of work-related placements to employability	4 (I) How do the current work related placements contribute to employability? 4(ii) How can the current work related placements be changed to more effectively enhance employability for disabled students?	Focus groups and interviews with disabled students/tutors/Head of Partnership and placement supervisors..
5. The course/university response to changing policy in relation to disabled students	5(i) How do tutors and the Partnership Team respond to policies related to disabled students in practice? 5(iii) Do stakeholders understand the social model?	Interviews with students, tutors, Head of Partnership and placement supervisors..
6. Ways forward	6 (I) How can improvements be made so that work related placements are more effective in enhancing employability for disabled students?	Interviews with disabled students/ tutors/Head of Partnership and placement supervisors.

App. 3 (c) :Table of key themes, questions and data gathering methods theme 3. Disabled Identity

Key themes emerging on disabled identity	Key questions on employability and disability	Methods used to collect data
1 How is disabled identity established?	1(i) How do different stakeholders perceive disabled identity? 1(ii) What experiences in the past and present impact on disabled identity? 1 (iii) How do disabled students feel about their own identity and how others perceive them?	1(i) Focus groups and interviews with disabled students; interviews with tutors, placement supervisors and Head of Partnership 1 (ii) Focus groups with students; interviews with tutors and placement supervisors; observation of placement session 1(iii)Focus groups and interviews with disabled students; observation of placement session
2. Negative and positive identities	2(i) In what ways can disabled identity be positive? 2(ii) What are the challenges and negative consequences of disabled identity? 2(iii) Do some disabled identities carry more negative connotations than others in relation to the stigma attached to them? 2(iv) Has the social model contributed to positive disabled identity?	2 (i)-(iv) Focus groups with students, interviews with students, placement supervisors, Head of Partnership and tutors; observation of placement session
3. Transforming identities	3(i) To what extent can negative identities be transformed? 3(ii) Is it more difficult to change negative identities in specific contexts? 3(iii) Can inclusion in education and employment transform negative identities?	3(i) Focus groups and interviews with students; interviews with tutors and placement supervisors 3(ii)Focus groups with students; interviews with students, tutors, Head of Partnership and placement supervisors 3(iii)Focus groups with students interviews with students' tutors, Head of Partnership and placement supervisors
4.The benefits and challenges associated with disclosure of disabled identity	4(i)What benefits are obtained when disclosing disabled identity? 4(ii)What are the drawbacks of disclosing disabled identity?	4(i)-4(ii)Interviews with disabled students, tutors, Head of Partnership and placement supervisors. Observation of placement session

APPENDIX 4: Chronological outline of study

Fig. 3 CHRONOLOGY OF RESEARCH: The main stages of the research are listed below

DATE	Main Focus of Research
January-March 2006	Completion of RF1
May 2006	Approval of research by research sub-committee.
	Developed research design
	Began literature review and continued throughout
	Identified the first cohort of disabled students (Cohort A)
	Negotiated access to first cohort of disabled student participants (Cohort A)
	Completed ethical protocols with cohort A of disabled students
	First focus group meetings with cohort A disabled students
June 2006	Drafted interview schedule for cohort A based on issues from first focus group meetings with the cohort
July 2006	First Interviews with disabled students in cohort A
February 2007	Identified the second cohort of disabled students (cohort B)
	Completed ethical protocols with cohort B disabled students
	Negotiated access to cohort B students

May 2007	Focus groups with cohort B disabled students
	Negotiated access to and completed ethical protocols with third cohort (group C) disabled students
July 2007	First interviews with cohort B
November 2007	Second interviews with cohort A
May 2008	Identified the third cohort of disabled students (cohort C)
	Completed ethical protocols with cohort C disabled students
	Negotiated access to cohort C students
	Focus group meeting cohort C disabled students
July 2008	First interviews cohort C disabled students
November 2008	Second interviews cohort B
May 2009	Identified the fourth cohort of disabled students (cohort D)
	Negotiated access and completed ethical protocols with fourth group (cohort D) disabled students
November 2009	Second Interviews cohort C
October 2010	First (only) interview with cohort D disabled students
March 2010	Identified sample of academic tutors
	Negotiated access to academic tutor sample
	Conducted ethical protocols with academic tutor sample

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	Drafted Interview questions for academic tutors
July –September 2010	Interviews conducted with academic tutors
July 2010	Negotiated access to Head of Partnership
	Completed ethical protocols with Head of Partnership
	Completed interview with Head of Partnership
September 2010	Identified sample of placement supervisors
	Negotiated access to placement supervisors
	Completed ethical protocols with placement supervisors
October 2010	Identified fifth group of disabled students (cohort E)
	Negotiated access to cohort E
	Completed ethical protocols with cohort E
	First (only) interview disabled students cohort E
September –October 2010	Interviews with selected placement supervisors
January 2011	Observations of placement preparation lecture involving and E and two module tutors
2006-2010 (throughout)	Analysis of interview , focus group and observation data

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APPENDIX 5: Research focus group questions

1. Is the prospect of finding paid employment an important factor in your decision to do this degree?

2. If yes, why is paid employment so significant in our society?

3. What knowledge/skills do you think make you employable?

4. What are the main barriers to becoming employable?

5. Did any aspects of the placement experience increase your employability?

6. To what extent was the placement experience inclusive?

7. What attitudes to disabled students are evident in college?

8. What attitudes to disabled students are evident at your placement?

9. How do you understand the term disability?

APPENDIX 6: First semi-structured interview questions to students in response to first focus group meeting

These questions were devised in response to the first focus group meetings and arose out of responses in that meeting. The initial draft questions were checked with my supervisors and revised into the current format.

Q1 Theme: The main reasons for selecting a degree with a specific focus on Disability Studies

- What are your three most significant reasons for doing the degree?
- What are your main expectations from the degree?
- How do you define 'career' and 'vocation' and is there a difference?
- How do you define 'theory' and 'practice'? Should we link theory and practice? Why?
- Why do some students feel that employment gives them an opportunity to 'prove themselves'?
- Who do you think they need to 'prove' themselves to?
- Is it important to be able to relate the degree to your own personal experiences of impairment or impairment in family and friends?
- How can you relate the degree to your own experiences?

Q2 Theme: The significance of paid employment in our society

- To what extent does 'quality of life' equate with having paid employment?
- When does it become worthwhile for individuals on benefits to work?
- How does paid employment contribute to independence/ self-worth?
- Define 'independence' and describe 'quality of life'.
- To what extent are you aware of being affected by media representations of employment?
- What jobs are you aware of that may be a possible career path for you? What careers advice have you sought or are you aware of?
- Who/what is most powerful in establishing the significance of employment? Does this cause you concern?
- What is a 'work ethic'? Can you have this work ethic without being driven by money? How?
- What steps have the Government made to make employment opportunities more equitable?

Q3 Theme: The knowledge/skills do that make you individuals employable

- How would you define 'employability'?
- Rank the knowledge/ skills that make you employable in order of importance
- To what extent can these knowledge and skills be developed through work placements and HE?
- Do individuals with impairments bring unique and specific skills to employers?
- Do you bring any unique or specific skills? What are they?
- Do you think that individuals with impairments need more or different skills for employment than non-impaired individuals?

Q4 Theme: The main barriers to employability

- What is a barrier, how would you define it?
- What 'types' of barriers are there, (e.g. physical/ attitudinal/ organisational?)
- Rank the barriers in order of the most prevalent
- What negative/positive perceptions have you encountered in relation to employability for individuals with impairments at HE and placement?
- How significant is 'how you look' or 'attractiveness' as a barrier? Does this impact on some people more than others?
- Can work experience or HE help overcome any of these barriers? How?
- Would you need any support systems or flexibility in an employment situation in order to enable you? If yes what types of support would you need? To what extent were these support systems and flexibility available in your HE institution and in your first placement?
- Can work experience or HE reinforce any of these barriers? How? Have you experienced any examples?
- If you have experienced any barriers at university or in your placement how have you overcome or confronted them?
- How could you be enabled to search and apply for a job?
- To what extent did the first year's experience at placement demonstrate that HE institutions and employers are responding to disability and equality legislation?

Q5 Theme: Aspects of the placement experience that increase employability

- Prioritise aspects of placement that contributed most to employability

- What aspects of placement did not contribute to employability?

- What specific knowledge/skills did you gain?

- Did the first placement confirm or challenge your career aspirations?

- How could the first placement of the degree be improved in order to contribute more to employability?

- How do you envisage the second work placement (i) building on this knowledge and skills and (ii) introducing and developing new/ different knowledge and skills?
- Is it fair to say that some people cannot do aspects of some jobs because of their impairment (e.g. their own limitations or the impact that the impairment may have on other employees)
- Does awareness of your own limitations increase employability?

Q6: Theme: The inclusiveness of the placement institution

- How do you define 'inclusion'?

- What do you know about legislation/documentation on inclusion?

- Did you experience different attitudes towards inclusion in your placement/ at university? If yes, what were they?

- To what extent do school/university practices in relation to inclusion reflect legislation and or documentation?

- Would you be tempted to try and 'hide' impairment in order to avoid being excluded in university or a work situation?

- What aspects of the HE/placement experience could change to become more inclusive? How?
- In what ways do 'people' contribute most towards inclusion?

APPENDIX 7: Semi-structured Interview questions for second interview with students

1. To what extent did the second year Placement extend/develop your knowledge and skills beyond what you learned in the first year placement?

2. Are there some aspects of the placement that frustrated you or caused you to feel that you had not made progress?

3. Are you more employable now than you were one year ago?

4. Have you discovered/identified particular strengths?

5. Have you discovered/identified particular weaknesses?

6. Are you clearer about your career path than you were one year ago?

7. Have you sought or been given any careers advice this year?

8. Have you searched or applied for any jobs this year? Were you successful?

9. Have you experienced any barriers at university or placement this year that have impacted on your development?

10. How could the second placement be improved to contribute to employability?

11. How do you envisage the third year placement building on current knowledge and skills/developing new knowledge and skills?

APPENDIX 8: Semi-structured interview questions with academic tutors

A. Questions on Employment and Employability for disabled people

1. What barriers prevent disabled people from gaining and maintaining paid employment?
2. Why are disabled people less likely to be in paid employment than their non-disabled counterparts?
3. What are the main benefits of paid employment for disabled people?
4. How do you define employability? What skills/characteristics /knowledge contribute to definitions of employability?
5. How do work-based learning and placements contribute to employability for disabled students?
6. How can employability for disabled students be increased on the current placement and wbl curriculum.

B. Questions on Inclusive Education

1. How would you define inclusive education?
2. Why is inclusive education perceived to be important (moral, philosophical, legal, research arguments)
3. How do you apply inclusive education with disabled students on the placement aspect of the course (e.g legislation, guidance and regulatory frameworks?)

C. Questions on Models of Disability and Disability in HE

1. What do you know about the social model of disability?
2. What social barriers exist for disabled students on placement?
3. What impairment related barriers do students experience on placement?
4. What value do you attach to disabled identity/labels?
5. Would disabled student failure to disclose cause complications?
6. How do you as tutor view your responsibility to disabled students on placements?
7. How do you meet the needs of disabled students on placement?
8. Do some staff find difficulties meeting the needs of disabled students on placement? Why?
9. How is quality assured for disabled students on placement?
10. How is the disabled student voice heard on placement issues?
11. How do staff know, understand, train in meeting the needs of disabled students on placement?

12. How can we move forward to improve inclusion and employability of our disabled Education Studies students?

APPENDIX 9: Semi-structured interview questions with the Head of Partnership

1. What are the key issues for Partnership organising placements for disabled students?

2. Who are the key people involved in decisions?

3. How does Partnership plan for to disabled students on placements?

4. How does this relate to university policy?

5. What barriers do disabled students experience on placement?

6. Do you know anything about models of disability?

7. What social barriers exist for disabled students on placement?

8. What impairment related barriers do students experience on placement?

9. How do institutions and supervisors meet the needs of disabled students on placement?

10. Why do some institutions/supervisors find difficulties meeting the needs of disabled students on placement?

11. How is quality assured for disabled students on placement?

12. How is the disabled student voice heard about placement?

13. How do staff know, understand, train in meeting the needs of disabled students on placement?

APPENDIX 10: Semi-structured interview questions with placement supervisors

A. Questions on Employment and Employability for disabled people

1. What barriers prevent disabled people from gaining and maintaining paid employment?
2. Why are disabled people less likely to be in paid employment than their non-disabled counterparts?
3. What are the main benefits of paid employment for disabled people?
4. How do you define employability? What skills/characteristics /knowledge contribute to definitions of employability?
5. How do work-based learning and placements contribute to employability for disabled students?
6. How can employability for disabled students be increased on the current placement and wbl curriculum?

B Questions on Inclusive Education

1. How would you define inclusive education?
2. Why is inclusive education perceived to be important (moral, philosophical, legal, research arguments)
3. How do you apply inclusive education with disabled students on placement (e.g legislation, guidance and regulatory frameworks?)

C Questions on Models of Disability and Disability in HE

1. What do you know about the social model of disability?
2. What social barriers exist for disabled students on placement?
3. What impairment related barriers do students experience on placement?
4. What value do you attach to disabled identity/labels?
5. Would disabled student failure to disclose cause complications?
6. How do you as supervisor/ school view your responsibility to disabled students on placements?
7. How do you meet the needs of disabled students on placement?
8. Do some staff find difficulties meeting the needs of disabled students on placement? Why?
9. How is quality assured for disabled students on placement?
10. How do staff know, understand, train in meeting the needs of disabled students on placement?

11. How can we move forward to improve inclusion and employability of our disabled Education Studies students?

APPENDIX 11: Letter to participants and research participant information sheet

<div align="right">

Northern University
Shuttle Building
12 Bond St.

Tel. 0976 2987654
Mobile:

28th September 2007
</div>

Dear Lucy

Permission to undertake research

As part of my work on my PhD at Northern University I am conducting a research project. The main purpose of my research is to analyse the effectiveness of the work-based learning element of the Education Studies routes in preparing individuals with impairments for the workplace. I would like to examine and improve my own practice, allow opportunities for disabled students to have a voice in the research and allow them opportunities for raising awareness of issues around disability, inclusion and employability. I would be grateful if you would give your consent to taking part.

My data collection methods will include focus groups, interviews, observations, audio recordings of the students (and where appropriate facilitators) in lecture and work placement situations, diary recordings and field notes.

I guarantee that I will observe good ethical conduct throughout. I promise that I will not reveal the name of the students, facilitators, or any other individuals involved without their prior consent. I will also ensure the anonymity of the university or placement institutions. If you wish I will keep you informed of progress at regular intervals.

I would be grateful if you could sign and return the Research Participant Consent Form enclosed at your earliest convenience.

I also enclose a copy of my Research Participant Information Sheet for your files.

Yours sincerely,

John Thomas (principal lecturer in education).

Research participant information sheet

Nature of research

I am responsible for work-based learning and work placements in the Education Studies Degrees at Northern University and I want to improve our practice in this area. Specifically, I intend to examine the role of work-based learning and placements in preparing disabled students for the work place and employment. I adopt the social model of disability and consequently I intend to use a participatory approach to the research. This means allowing research participants a 'voice' in the research. This will empower the researcher and research participants so that solutions to problems may be related to practical, political and consciousness raising issues.

Purpose of the research

I am conducting this research as part of a PhD. The purpose of the research is to examine the work-based learning and work placement element of the Education Studies degrees in order to establish key issues for effective practice. The specific focus is on disabled students so that I wish to explore a range of issues including practical, teaching, institutional, attitudinal, financial, social and political influences on practice. As the work progresses other issues may emerge or the focus may narrow into a small number of areas that become significant.

Types of research activities

Data will be collected in a variety of ways. I will observe individuals in university lectures and placement situations. Sometimes this may involve audio tape recordings. I may wish to interview individuals or groups of individuals. I may keep diary recordings and field notes.

Participant involvement and time demands

Most of the research will be done during timetabled university sessions and work placements. Observations will not make any extra time demands on research participants. Some time will be required for interviews, but I will ensure that this is kept to a minimum and if it becomes too demanding on any individual I will negotiate a more appropriate schedule. The research will cover the full three years of the degree course.

Name of Researcher: John Thomas

Signature:...

If there are any aspects of this information that you do not understand or that need further explanation please contact John Thomas on email at

APPENDIX 12: Research participant consent form

Project title: Emloyability, Disability and Work-based Learning in Higher Education

Researcher's name: John Thomas

Supervisor's name: Dr. Jane and Dr. Ann

- I have read the research participant information sheet and the nature and purpose of the research project has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part in the project

- 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 I may be audio taped during interviews or observations

- I understand that the information gathered in the research project may be published but that my personal results will remain confidential and I will not be identified in any published material without my prior consent

- I understand that data will be stored in hard and electronic form at Northern University. This data will include any audiotapes and videotapes. I understand that I may have access to the data that concerns me if I give adequate notice (normally one week) to the researcher.

- I understand that I may contact the researcher or supervisor if I require further information about the research, and that I may contact the Research Director at Northern University if I wish to raise any issues relating to my involvement in the research.

Signed..(research participant)

Print Name.. **Date** ....

Contact Details

Researcher: John Thomas Tel.000000000000 email

Postgraduate Research Tutor at Northern University: Dr. Peter . Tel. 0000000000

APPENDIX 13: University disability statement

Policies and legislation

The Disabled Student Support Team (DSST) starts from the premise that each student defines his or her own disability. Our role is to explain what support is available and to facilitate the delivery of that support. We use the UCAS disability categories for organisational purposes.

Role of Disabled Student Support Team

The Disabled Student Support Team aims to ensure that the University is compliant with its legal responsibility not to discriminate against disabled students by failing to make reasonable adjustments. It achieves this primarily through the provision of learning contracts and the delivery of specialist services for disabled students. We also play a key role in raising awareness about the need to anticipate the needs of disabled students and we promote the development of Inclusive Practice (IP). The Disabled Student Support Team is separated into two teams (see structure diagram) and includes a wide variety of roles. Please see the 'contacts' page for more detail about the team roles.

The University's Approach to Disability

There are currently two main approaches to defining disability

- the social model of disability recognises that a person may be restricted or disadvantaged by the environments in which they spend their time. Restriction and disadvantage are therefore imposed upon disabled people and can, with appropriate action, be alleviated
- the medical model of disability focuses on a person's condition or illness and how to improve or cure it

The University adopts the social model of disability and accepts that disability is socially created. Responsibility lies with the University to identify barriers and obstacles which exist within the institution and work towards removing them whenever reasonably possible. We aim to provide the support services, equipment and physical adaptations which remove barriers and obstacles, and facilitate inclusion into the university and access to all facilities and services.

In keeping with the Equality Act (2010) students are encouraged to disclose their disabilities as this will help us meet the requirements Sheffield Hallam is committed to the principles of inclusion and equal opportunities and therfore welcomes applications from disabled students.

The Autism Centre

APPENDIX 14: University Equality and Diversity Statement

[D]

Commitment to equality and diversity

The University is committed to the principle of fostering a culture and environment where individual difference is appreciated and respected, ensuring equitable and fair treatment for all.

Our aim is to bring equality and diversity to the heart of the University ensuring all potential and current staff, students and other stakeholders are treated fairly, and are not discriminated against on grounds of sex, marital status, gender reassignment, racial group, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, socio-economic background, family circumstances, or any other irrelevant distinction

Membership of equality and diversity organisations

██████████████ is a member of Athena SWAN, Disabled Go and Two Ticks. These organisations champion equality and have set benchmarks for employers in achieving equality in the workplace. The University is currently working towards an Athena SWAN Bronze Award.

██████████████ *is not responsible for the content of external websites*

Getting involved, forums for students and staff

Contact the diversity team

printable version
e-mail to a friend

SEARCH

Equality and Diversity

Committed to achieving equality and valuing diversity

- ▶ **Introduction**
- ▶ **Latest News**
- ▶ **Equality & Diversity Statement**
- ▶ **Leadership, Support & Expertise**
- ▶ **University Policies and Plans**
- ▶ **Age**
- ▶ **Bullying & Harrassment**
- ▶ **Disability & Employment**
- ▶ **E-Learning**
- **Exit Questionaire**
- ▶ **Gender Equality**
- ▶ **Language**
- ▶ **Race Equality**
- ▶ **Recruitment**
- ▶ **Religion & Beliefs**
- ▶ **Sexual Orientation**
- ▶ **Transsexual Guidance**
- ▶ **Impact Assessments**
- ▶ **Programmes of Study**
- ▶ **Reports and Publications**
- ▶ **Staff Development**
- ▶ **Definitions**

Welcome from the Pro Vice-Chancellor

Welcome to ████████ University's Diversity and Equality website. I hope that you find it informative and stimulating and that it demonstrates the University's achievements and aspirations.

████████ is committed to becoming an inclusive and diverse institution which welcomes everyone who is interested in learning, whatever their background. In particular, we are keen that individuals from groups which have traditionally been under-represented in British higher education should join the University and succeed at all levels, as staff or students.

There is much to do if equality and diversity are to be embedded in all of the University's work. A start has been made and this website will enable you to see our progress.

Introduction to this site

This Equality and Diversity website is intended for:

- staff and students of ████████ who are interested in equality and diversity issues
- visitors, colleagues, clients and prospective students who wish to find out more about Sheffield Hallam and equality and diversity issues.

Following discussions with interested staff and students, it went live in May 2005

13/02/2006

APPENDIX 15: University Employability Strategy 2010-12

NORTHERN UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIETY

Education for Employability Strategy (e4e) 2010-2012

Introduction

Employability has been defined as *"a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy"* (Yorke, M. 2004). This definition implies the capacity of the University graduate to function effectively in whatever career they choose to follow – it is not just about the acquisition of a particular role or job. The Faculty of Development and Society is committed to supporting its students in their preparation for the world of work. In an increasingly competitive job market it is important that the Faculty provides structured opportunities for all of its students to enhance graduate level employability. This Faculty Education for Employability (e4e) Strategy has been developed in response to the:

- University Corporate Plan priorities, in particular the commitment to improving the student experience

- Restructuring of the Careers and Employment Service (in October 2010) and the formation of Quality Enhancement and Student Support (QUESS) within Student learning Services (SLS)

- Publication of the University Employability Statement (in August 2010,as required by HEFCE)

It is recognised that there is already extensive good practice in the area of graduate employability in the Faculty, but we now seek to draw this activity together and develop an education for employability strategy. Four key employability objectives have been identified and these provide a set of baseline expectations for all provision. By **September 2012** we will:

Objective 1.   **Ensure that all students have the opportunity to actively engage with credit bearing work-related learning as part of their studies:** Learning from the world of work can develop valuable transferable and practical skills and competences. Course teams will ensure that every student in the Faculty is provided with the opportunity to engage with work-related learning as part of their course. Where appropriate course teams will provide pre work related learning preparation activities (i.e. making applications) and opportunities to reflect upon this experience through PDP (see objective 4).[1] Such work-related learning opportunities may include[2]:
- o   linking study to a workplace in which the student is already employed e.g. on a part-time basis
- o   carrying out practice-related integrated placements
- o   enterprise-related, practical work-based or externally set projects

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[1] The type and level of support available from the University Careers and Employment Service will be outlined in a separate document

[2] This is not an exhaustive list. There are a wide variety of work-related learning activities in the Faculty such as placements, professional practice, voluntary and part-time work, consultancy projects, work shadowing, overseas work experience. These activities may be compulsory or voluntary, credit-bearing or extra-curricular, sourced by the University or by students, and of different timing and duration.

o   voluntary and community sector work
o   work and project simulation
o   short work-related experience and internships in the region and University

Objective 2.   **Embed core and discipline-specific employability 'skills' within the curriculum[3]:** A large number of our courses are already planned with input from employers, professional associations and/or practitioners, to ensure that the content and skills development meets the needs of future employers. Course teams will develop learning, teaching and assessment approaches that embed relevant generic and discipline-specific employability skills within module and course provision at all levels.[4] Core employability skills should include:
o   Communication skills
o   Information and communication technology
o   Team work
o   Problem solving
o   Analytical abilities
o   Commercial/sector awareness
o   Self directed learning and initiative

Objective 3.   **Provide all students with access to integrated career planning and preparation:** Career planning – the opportunities to understand and prepare, anticipate and practise, reflect and develop the necessary hands-on skills and experiences associated with 'job-readiness' – will be integral to all of our courses and programmes of study[5]. Working in partnership with the University's Careers and Employment Service, course teams will design and deliver career planning activities in the curriculum to all students, which will include:
o   opportunities to explore potential employment and further study options
o   the creation by all students of a high quality and easily maintained CV (or equivalent)
o   access to regular programmes of employer recruitment fairs
o   employer recruitment presentations and skills sessions
o   on-line careers materials and vacancy service (netWORK) via Careers Central (via shuspace)
o   discipline-specific activities integrated within course provision that develop appropriate and meaningful career management skills for students (including discipline-specific support & guidance on job seeking, application writing and interview practice)
o   arrangements for providing all students with a graduate leavers reference

Objective 4.   **Provide all students with access to personal development planning (PDP) resources:** PDP provides an important opportunity for students to reflect upon their experiences, expectations and achievements in a critical and structured way.[6] Course teams will ensure that all students are provided with the opportunity to engage with a PDP resource, incorporating the HE Achievement Record (HEAR). Course teams should seek to integrate the personal reflective elements of the career

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[3] Recognising that employability skills are learned in many contexts and through a range of experiences
[4] See, for example, the HEA Student Employability Profiles by discipline
http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/teachingandlearning/employability/employability
[5] And must be seen in conjunction with Objective 4, where students build professional development portfolios to take into employment.
[6] See Universities UK, SCOP et al, 2001

planning process (see Objective 3) within the development and implementation of PDP. Examples of how the University Careers and Employment Service and the Faculty E-Learning and Development Team can support course team to provide PDP include:

- o guidance on how to plan for personal and professional development
- o careers resources to support a career development thread within PDP
- o provision of structured resources and templates to support reflection and target setting
- o access to appropriate software and online tools to facilitate the production of electronic personal and professional development portfolios (e-pdp)

Implementing the Strategy – roles and responsibilities

The notes below explain the process and actions that staff need to take to meet the agreed e4e objectives. This may require modification to modules running or being planned to run from 2011/12 onwards. All courses will need to comply with the objectives by September 2012. Each Department will produce an Employability Implementation Plan to identify how the objectives are to be met.

- Where changes need to be made to existing modules, course and programme leaders should work with relevant QSME, LTA and Employability Leads
- For any new validation or revalidation, course design will need to incorporate the four objectives set out in this document

Specific responsibilities are outlined below:

Departments

Head of Department	• with the Head of LTA, identify appropriate 'Departmental Employability Lead' (by January 2011) • sign off Departmental Employability Implementation Plan • monitor progress of Implementation Plan, ensuring implementation within the agreed time frame • report progress on the implementation of the e4e strategy to the ADAD and Executive Dean of the Faculty
Departmental Employability Lead	• to coordinate the production of the departmental employability implementation plan • to work closely with Faculty e4e Champions to secure the four objectives set out in this policy
Course and Programme Lead	• develop a map of the curriculum in which objectives 1-4 are identified including continuity and progression • ensure that course design responds to and, where required, is developed and changed to adhere to relevant objectives set out in this strategy • liaise with link careers adviser on development of bespoke curriculum materials and activities
LTA Lead	• ensure the maintenance and enhancement of professional standards of teaching throughout the Department and develop initiatives in professional development to ensure the delivery of the e4e strategy • support course planning teams in developing course rationales and maps of the curriculum to meet the objectives • coordinate this support with the Faculty e4e champions and other support from central Departments (see below)
QSME Lead	• support course/programme leaders to ensure that any necessary validation, revalidation or minor modifications required are developed in order to achieve the relevant objectives within the time frames required by this

| | strategy |
| | • ensure headlines from Departmental Action Plans are mentioned in the Departmental AQR process |

Cross Cutting Faculty Leads

Head of LTA	• coordinate activity of the e4e Faculty Champions and Departmental Employability Leads
Faculty Course Approval Group (CAG)[7]	• produce a validation briefing document to advise course planning teams of the need to check that employability issues are covered in documentation/validation discussion • _____ Teaching Fellow for Curriculum Development, will work with _____ (TF for Employability) to offer bespoke support and guidance to Departments and Course Planning Teams to help map employability issues within the curriculum
Head of Student Experience	• ensure that Programme Leaders report back on progress of the e4e strategy at Programme Leaders group meetings
Faculty Business and Student Support Services.	• ensure that appropriate high quality administrative support is developed and in place to enable the increased numbers of students engaging with work related learning
Head of Student Support	• local student support teams ensure that high quality support is in place for students to engage with work related learning
e4e Faculty Champions	o promote and support the development of the four objectives of the strategy o develop and commission resources, guidance and offer focused and coordinated support to all Departments o support the identified Departmental Employability Lead in the production of the Departmental Employability Implementation Plans o where appropriate, work closely with course and programme teams, LTA and QSME Leads and other relevant staff in central Departments **e4e Faculty Champions** Objectives 1 and 2: _____ Objective 3. _____ Objectives 4: _____
Head of Markets and Recruitment	• establish a Faculty strategy for marketing and recruitment team • articulate the e4e offer on a Departmental basis and course basis • communicate current employability offer through better dissemination of our portfolio • develop stronger relationships with professional organisations (e.g. prize sponsors and work placement organisations) so as to include them in our course marketing • develop marketing collateral targeted on potential professional partners selling the benefits of working with D&S at SHU • provide staff supporting recruitment events with appropriate interpretations of employment data and offer to ensure consistency of information

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[7] The Course Approval Group is jointly chaired by the Head of QSME and Head of LTA and ensures that all new course proposals and revalidations articulate how they meet the requirements of Faculty and University QSME and LTA strategy.

APPENDIX 16: University definition of employability

Intranet : Telephone

Tuesday, July 27 2010

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framework   **Links**

Student and Academic Services

Academic Review

Employability Framework

1. Purpose of the Framework

The University Framework provides a definition of employability and outlines those features of a course which contribute to enhancing students' employability.

The Framework is intended to:

- ensure that University staff and students share a common understanding of employability
- enable Faculties to develop their own curriculum and support strategies appropriate to their portfolio of courses
- build on and extend existing good practice.

2. Key Feature

The Framework is underpinned by the following key features:

- the development of employability is focussed on student needs and should reflect the diversity of individual career and life paths
- good learning, teaching and assessment practice is the corner stone of employability development in students
- the encouragement of the transfer of learning on the course into employment and other lifestyle choices e.g. accredited learning from work through independent study, work placement etc.
- the framework builds on and integrates current and developing policies and strategies related to Key Skills, Learning from Work, Progress Files, Enterprise and Career Management.

3. A definition of employability

The definition published by the Employability Working Group (late 2002). This definition is non-restrictive, and encompasses a wide range of career and lifestyle choices.

> *Enabling students to acquire the knowledge, personal and professional skills and encouraging the attitudes that will support their future development.*

4. What employability means in practice

4.1 Enhancing employability from a student perspective has a number of elements