



Being a primary school special educational needs co-ordinator: perceptions and experiences

SHARPE, Sheila Margaret

Available from the Sheffield Hallam University Research Archive (SHURA) at:

<http://shura.shu.ac.uk/27332/>

A Sheffield Hallam University thesis

This thesis is protected by copyright which belongs to the author.

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the author.

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given.

Please visit <http://shura.shu.ac.uk/27332/> and <http://shura.shu.ac.uk/information.html> for further details about copyright and re-use permissions.

SHEFFIELD HALLAM UNIVERSITY

**Being a Primary School Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator:
Perceptions and Experiences**

Sheila Margaret Sharpe

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
Sheffield Hallam University
for the degree of Doctorate in Education

March 2020

Abstract

This study explores participants' interpretations of their experiences and perceptions of what it means to be a SENCo as they engage with the demands of their role within an ever-changing educational climate. It highlights the continued complexities of the execution of the role, the implication of austerity cuts and the challenges encountered through the implementation of government policy.

The enquiry is a small-scale qualitative study, conducted within an interpretivist paradigm using a narrative approach for data collection with a thematic approach to the analysis. It draws on the experiences and perceptions of six primary Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENcos) who completed the Post Graduate Certificate in Special Educational Needs Coordination, at a Northern University.

The narrative approach enabled the SENcos to share their experiences and the use of drawings gave some immediate insight into their perceptions of the role. The study highlights the perceived impact on the SENCo role of a myriad of constituent elements and makes use of the metaphor of plate spinner to illustrate the complexity of the role. Data reveals tensions in managing government policy in relation to inclusion, special educational needs and performance with additional tensions arising from providing services that government policy has severely cut. Findings reveal that SENcos see a need to take a strategic lead on inclusion and to upskill staff to enable a greater share of the responsibility for the teaching of children with the label of 'needs'. The study indicates that SENcos are keenly aware of their role to empower parents, staff and children, but within limits. The data reveals that the SENCo role has taken on a new dimension of supporting children and families through a social work mode.

My contribution to new knowledge is in presenting new insights informing the role of the SENCo by providing a wider understanding of the continued challenges and frustrations of the role. The findings have a wider application for the contribution of knowledge towards a greater understanding of the concept of empowerment and identity. New knowledge in relation to the SENcos' perception of empowerment and the emergence of a social role due to the blurring of boundaries between education and social work will lead to a greater understanding of the role. In particular, to those who appoint SENcos, those who inhabit the role, those with whom SENcos work, those who train SENcos and will in turn impact on the teaching and learning of children with the label of needs.

.

.

Acknowledgements

This is an opportunity to sincerely thank the support given to me by my tutors, friends and family. Firstly, I would not have finished this thesis without the continued support over the years of three superb tutors. Dr Rebecca Mallett has supported me from the beginning. Her patience, clear guidance and fortitude are to be admired and I will be forever grateful for the clarity of her feedback. Dr Jonathan Wainwright never failed in his positive encouragement and helpful advice. Professor Michael Coldwell has latterly given me the benefit of his clear thinking and wisdom.

I could not have accomplished this study without the generosity of the participant SENCOs who willingly agreed to take part, freely giving their time to share personal perceptions and experiences of the SENCO role. My appreciation and gratitude for your contribution to this study are boundless.

I would also like to warmly thank my colleagues, friends and family for their continued help, positive support and interest in this extended project. My partner, Andrew deserves a medal. He has honed his cooking skills and found his talent in watercolours whilst I've been in the study. You are a gem!

Lastly, I dedicate this study to my mum who lived with us for the last four years of her life whilst I was engaged in the study but never saw its completion. This one is for you mum. Thank you for everything.

Thank-you all.

Contents

Title page

Abstract	ii
-----------------	-----------

Acknowledgements	iii
-------------------------	------------

Table of contents	iv
--------------------------	-----------

Abbreviations	ix
----------------------	-----------

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	My story: and a rationale for the study	1
1.3	The aim of the study	8
1.4	Outline of the thesis	11

Chapter 2 – Literature Review Part 1

Historical context to the development of SEN and the SENCo role

2.1	Introduction	14
2.2	Historical development of SEN and the SENCO role	15
2.2.1	The growth of Special Schools	16
2.2.2	1981 and 1988 Education Acts	17
2.2.3	SEN legislation in the early 1990s	21
2.2.4	Labour government SEN policies 1997-2010	22
2.2.5.	Competing discourses of standards, performativity and inclusion	24
2.2.6	Perspectives of Inclusion	25
2.2.7	The Coalition Government 2010-2015	28
2.2.8	Incorporating safeguarding and disability 2015-2019	29

2.3	Models of disability	31
2.3.1	Medical model of disability	31
2.3.2	Social model of disability	34
2.3.3	Disability rights-based model	36
2.3.4	The Capability Approach	37
2.3.5	The Affirmative Model	40
2.3.6	The effect of models on SENCo's work	41
2.4	Summary	42

Chapter 2 Literature Review Part 2

2.4.1	Introduction	44
2.5	The contested role of the SENCo	45
2.6	Professional Identity	45
2.7	Varying contextual demands on the role and multiple responsibilities	49
2.8	The SENCo's role in leading inclusion	55
2.9	Empowerment and the SENCo role	60
2.10	Social justice dimensions of the SENCo role	64
2.11	Metaphors for the SENCo role	66
2.12	Culture of care and social welfare	70
2.13	Summary	75

Chapter 3 Methodology, methods and analytical framework

3.1	Introduction	78
3.2	Philosophical approach	79
3.2.1	Epistemology	82
3.3	Developing a methodology	84
3.3.1	An interpretivist approach	86

3.3.2	Narrative approach	89
3.3.3	Narrative studies with teachers	90
3.4	Methods	93
3.4.1	The data collection process described	96
3.4.2	The data collection	98
3.4.3	Drawing task	99
3.4.4	Focus groups	102
3.4.5	Semi-structured narrative interview	104
3.5	Ethical consideration, anonymity and positionality	107
3.5.1	Positionality	111
3.5.2	Insider-researcher	112
3.6	Sampling	116
3.6.1	The research participants	119
3.6.2	Introducing the six research participants	120
3.6.3	Vignettes of the SENCo participants	122
3.7	Choosing an analytical framework	126
3.7.1	An overview of the analytical research process	129
3.7.2	Demonstration of process of extracting data from drawings.	133
3.7.3	Matching themes from drawings with those from focus group and interview	135
3.7.4	Emergence of organised categories	137
3.8	The use of metaphors	143
3.9	Summary	144

Chapter 4 SENCo as Plate Spinner

4.1	Introduction	146
4.2	Becoming a Plate Spinner: jumped pushed or chosen?	147
4.2.1.	Knowledge of policy and SEND	157
4.2.2	Pedagogy	161
4.2.3	Approaches to leadership	164
4.2.4	Accountability	167
4.3.	Liaising and facilitating and networking	171
4.4	Restrictors of time, paperwork and causes of tension	177
4.5	Summary	181

Chapter 5 SENCo as Empowerer?

5.1	Introduction	183
5.2	Empowerment of parents	184
5.3	Empowerment of children	194
5.3.1	Different strategies for pupil participation	194
5.4	Empowerment of Staff	200
5.4.1	Empowerment of staff thorough professional development	201
5.5	Summary of empowerment of parents, children and staff	208

Chapter 6 SENCo as social worker, carer, and counsellor.

6.1	Introduction	212
6.2	SEnCo as Social Worker	213
6.3	SEnCos commitment to social justice	219
6.4	Conflict and dilemmas experienced when principles oppose practice.	222
6.5	The SENCo as carer	229
6.6	SEnCo as Counsellor	236
6.7	Summary	239

Chapter 7 Conclusion

7.1	Introduction	241
7.2	Addressing the research question	241
7.2.1	SENCoS' perceptions of what it means to be a primary school SENCo.	244
7.2.2	What experiences and personal history influence how primary school SENCoS perceive their role?	248
7.3	Claims to knowledge and implications for professional practice	250
7.4	Implications for future policy and practice	252
7.5	Reflections on the research process	255
7.6	Limitations of this research	256
7.7	Implications for further research	256
7.8	Personal reflections	257
References		258-287
List of appendices		288
List of tables		288
List of Figures		288
Abbreviations and Glossary		ix

Abbreviations and Glossary

ADHD Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder

ASD Autistic Spectrum Disorder

CAMHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

CDP Continuous Professional Development

DCSF Department for Children, Schools and Families

DES Department for Education and Science

DfE Department for Education

DfEE Department for Education and Employment

DfES Department for Education and Skills

DoH Department of Health

EHCP Education and Health Care Plan

LA Local Authority

LEA Local Education Authority

MAST Multi-agency support team

NAHT National Association of Head Teachers

NC National Curriculum

SATs Statutory Assessment Tests

SEBD Social, emotional and behavioural difficulties

SEN Special Educational Needs

SENCo Special Educational Needs Coordinator

SEN CoP Special Educational Needs Code Of Practice

SEND Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

SEND CoP Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice

Abbreviations used for transcripts of participants:

AI Ava individual interview

Jl Jess individual interview

AFG Ava focus group

LI Lily individual interview

GI Gill individual interview

RI Rob individual interview

GFG Gill focus group

RFG Rob focus group

ZI Zara individual interview

Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

Throughout my career, I have been closely involved in teaching children labelled as having 'needs' and have witnessed multiple changes in pedagogical thinking which have resulted in a variety of terminology and educational practice.

What follows in this introduction is a narrative of significant events in my teaching career which have informed my thinking and practice and helped to explain the rationale for this study. This is followed by an account of the aim of the enquiry with a brief description of the current educational context. The introduction finishes with an outline of the chapters of the study.

1.2 My story: and the rationale for the study

Early in my career, I was employed in a northern city as a peripatetic 'remedial teacher'. Then, the term 'remedial' was used for pupils in mainstream schools who were thought to be 'slow learners', a term used for those children who required extra tuition and more time to develop their reading skills or to assimilate new concepts. The term special educational needs at that time was reserved for those children in special schools (Bines, 1993).

I taught in two middle schools, dividing my working week between the two, working in rooms that were unfavourable to teaching. In one school the Remedial Room was located in the bowels of the school, at the base of a high-rise city centre complex of flats. It was a small space with windows so high that the only available views were the concrete walls and walkways of the flats

above. The room was hot and smelly on sunny days and freezing in the winter. It was located out of earshot from other classrooms positioned on the levels above, but we made sure that we were not entirely out of mind. The team, with whom I worked, had the label of Remedial Team. We provided additional reading and basic skills for the children labelled 'slow learners', withdrawing groups of children from their classes to attend the sessions. I taught daily groups of phonics for those labelled 'slow readers' and devised other activities for the development of children's 'self-esteem'. The other school's Remedial Room had a slightly better location but was still not a desirable teaching room. Similarly, I taught withdrawal groups extra reading, phonics and catch-up on anything required. The groups were predominantly populated with boys who preferred to talk on subjects of interest, rather than write or decode. The segregation of children into withdrawal groups for catch up teaching, placed in the most inhospitable areas in school, was in common with remedial education at that time. It was of low status, taught in the margins of the school, with an assortment of provision (Bines, 1993). It was acceptable to use terms such as 'slow learners' and to talk about remedial teaching as corrective. I subscribed to this role believing that the withdrawal of pupils into small groups was a beneficial way of supporting their learning but began to question the use of the label of 'slow learner'. I felt it limited teachers' perceptions of the child, and as teachers, we should be more aware of the child's overall strengths rather than their perceived limitations. At that point in my career, I had no knowledge or understanding of the social model of disability (defined in Section 2.3) but I began to recognise that the system of remedial education in mainstream schooling was failing those children labelled 'slow learners'.

When I moved to another authority to work as a language and literacy advisory teacher, I worked alongside teachers, special needs teachers and other professionals, developing reading materials and encouraging the use of different strategies for teaching of literacy. In this post, I collaborated with many special needs teachers who generated great enthusiasm for the support of children with labelled needs, but who found the limitations of their role frustrating. I had many conversations with teachers in schools about the universal use of the materials that our team devised and supplied for the encouragement and support of reading and language. In some schools, the materials were restricted to those who had labelled needs and yet the materials were designed to have universal appeal. It was the compartmentalisation of children with needs that the special needs teachers and I found frustrating. Some schools turned the whole of Key Stage1 (ages 4-7) over to the use of the reading materials which supported particular reading schemes, but other schools just used the materials as the 'remedial scheme support'. This perpetuation of an 'us and them' dichotomy troubled me. The positioning of children with needs as 'others', as described by Corbett (1996) and Oliver (2004). It seemed to me to be a delineation of the children. My view of the teaching of children with the label of needs was becoming more inclusive as I began to question the positioning of children with the label of needs

After a maternity break and time spent working part-time in nurseries, I returned to primary teaching to be appointed as SENCo in a primary school; 'prior experiences in SEN would be useful' said the advert. The role of SENCo was formalised by the government in 1994 and my appointment as SENCo

coincided with the publication of the National Standards for Special Educational Needs Coordinators (1998) where the core purpose of the role was set out.

The SENCo with the support of the head teacher and governing body takes responsibility for the day to day operation of provisions made by the school for the pupils with SEN and provides professional guidance in the areas of SEN in order to secure high-quality teaching and the effective use of resources to bring about improved standards of achievement for all pupils. (TTA,1998, p.5)

I welcomed the use of phrases such as 'high-quality teaching', 'effective use of resources' and in particular the word 'all'. This signalled to me the move towards equity for children with the label of needs. A recognition of all children's entitlement to 'high-quality teaching' is a phrase still included in the most recent SEND Code of Practice (DfE, & DoH,2015,6.3, p.99).

My role as SENCo was mostly one of managing policy and provision for children within the school with the label of needs but also of trying to shift the emphasis of the role of the SENCo from working with children to working with staff (Shuttleworth, 2000). My appointment coincided with a change in the allocation of local authority funding, whereby monies were paid directly to the school. Previously monies were reserved for children specifically identified as needing an individual Statement of Educational Need. The new way of funding allowed authorities to allocate monies to the school for the support of children on a stage preceding the Statement of Need. Successful funding involved a very bureaucratic system of application but could result in gaining resources which could be used to develop a more inclusive whole-school approach for the support of children with the label of needs. The new system had advantages over the old approach of ring-fencing money to the individual because it allowed

for a widening of the perspective of staff towards educational difficulties (Ainscow, 1994). However, this system depended on a diagnostic assessment which secured a label of need and so labelling was seen as desirable because it could bring much-needed resources.

The reorganisation of funding was particularly useful for finding pathways through the complexity of SEN support. I was able to set up small projects in the school which benefitted a wider range of children and promoted a more reflexive approach from the staff towards differentiation. I was aware of the necessity of working with other professionals and their input was vital to the support of children and their families.

It was at this time too that the government brought in new documentation, which promoted advice for different approaches to teaching and learning. Accelerated learning was promoted by the government document Excellence for All Children in Schools (DfEE, 1997, p39):

we want to see more examples of accelerated learning based on the latest understanding of how people learn

These new approaches influenced my own thinking about children's learning. I introduced staff to accelerated learning principles to help develop new thinking and to question our existing practice and ways of improving the teaching and learning in the school. It was sometime later that some of the theories of multiple intelligences began to be more rigorously critiqued, for example, the multiple intelligence work of Garner (1993) has been heavily criticised (Visser, Ashton & Vernon, 2006; Waterhouse, 2006). It was an example of a government diktat that we slavishly implemented, before questioning the

substance of the research, but it did result in more holistic and positive thinking about children's learning.

In my time as a primary school SENCo, I was successful in bidding for extra money that allowed for a range of different support initiatives to be set up. I learnt to work with outside agencies such as speech therapists, family therapist, behaviour therapists, autistic outreach workers, dyslexia support teachers and educational psychologists with specific expertise to widen our inhouse support of children with labelled needs. This deepened my professional knowledge and gave me the experience of working with specific professional teams in the support of children's emotional, cognitive, physical and language development. It countered any feelings of isolation I experienced at the beginning of my tenure as SENCo.

As a primary school SENCo, I developed my knowledge and professional understanding of the role. I learnt to have a variety of approaches with staff and parents. I began to assimilate Conlow's (1991) advice that style of management should not depend on my own personality but on the needs of colleagues. I was not always successful in my aims and continued to encounter resistance from some colleagues to my plan to make the understanding of learning needs a whole school policy, discovering that enthusiasm may be infectious but changing attitudes can be a long process.

Later in my career, after joining the staff in the Primary and Early Years Education Department at a university, I have been involved in reshaping and teaching the special needs and inclusion courses for undergraduates and postgraduates.

In 2008, when the government deemed that all SENCos had to be qualified and were obliged to attend and pass a postgraduate master's level course, I was involved in designing and teaching the Post Graduate SENCo Certificate course at the university. Over the past ten years, whilst working with SENCos on the course, I have been made aware, again, of the complexities and differing nature of the role. SENCos highlight the multiple pressures, for instance, the changing focuses of the role towards partnership with parents and the changing notions of inclusion and special educational needs and disabilities.

All of these experiences have given me a deepening insight and contributed to extending my understanding of the primary school SENCo role. I have an historical perspective of special educational needs because I have first and second-hand experiences of the changes over the years of the different government initiatives which have sought to maintain, control and influence the support of children with the label of needs. I have some understanding of the challenges of supporting children's different learning needs within a system that does not readily accommodate children who learn differently. This insider's knowledge of what the job used to entail made me want to explore what it means to be a primary school SENCo in the current educational landscape.

1.3 The aim of the study

My lived experience has covered many dimensions of changing government policy and changing thinking about inclusion and the teaching of children with the label of needs. Due to this accumulation of experiences, I was keen to investigate how a group of primary school SENCos accommodate the role, exploring the key meanings of what it is to be a primary school SENCo today.

At the time of writing (2016-2019) we have been living through a period of austerity, a term given to the UK government response to the 2008 global recession and financial crisis. Local authorities have managed the reductions in government funding mainly by reducing spending on staffing costs. Many local authorities tried to protect spending on statutory services such as adult and social care but there is 'significant variation' between authorities (National Audit Office (2014,p.17).

There have been dramatic changes in the expectations and structures of the education system over the last 30 years and special educational needs is positioned very differently since my experiences as a remedial teacher. There has been an enormous amount of documentation and legislation that has guided, influenced and controlled the working of teachers to ensure practice meets expectation (discussed in Chapter 2). There has been legislation for state education in the form of several Education Acts including those in 1981, 1988, 1994, 1996, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2010, 2014, (HM Government) alongside the publication of National Curriculum documents in 1988, 1995,1999, 2008, 2014

This is complemented by a myriad of policy documents placing demands on how teachers carry out their roles. It has been argued that the demands of current practice have produced conflicting working circumstances for primary SENCos such as an academic performance-driven policy as against inclusion (Ball, 2003; Oliver & Barnes, 2012). In addition to this, there has been a steady supply of Special Educational Needs Codes of Practice, supplying guidance and statutory requirements, 1994, 2001, 2014 and further revision in 2015. Furthermore, there have been increased measures of accountability and checks on children and teachers' performance. This is the background context forming the educational climate in which SENCos work.

The substantive aim of this study is to explore what it means to be a SENCo by assembling the perceptions and experiences of a group of primary school SENCos in such a way as to recognise the complexities of the SENCo role in a changing environment. New knowledge of the current perception of the primary SENCo role and of the changes and challenges which have occurred since previous studies compiled over the years (Kearns, 2005; Layton 2005; Cole, 2005a; MacKenzie, 2007; Pearson and Ralph, 2007; Hallett & Hallett, 2010; Norwich, 2010; Peterson, 2010; Glazzard, 2014, a & b; Weddell, 2015; Maher & Vickerman, 2018 as discussed in Chapter 2) will, I suggest, extend knowledge of the current primary school SENCo role, deepening insight and raising further awareness of the current challenges in the support and management of children with the label of needs.

Previous SENCo studies have revealed that SENCos work in a very wide range of contexts with the role interpreted in a variety of ways. I argue that the role continues to evolve within the context of austerity and fragmentation of schooling, with particular reference to SENCos' perception of their own identity and approaches to empowerment. Additionally, the study provides evidence of how the SENCo role has taken on a role more akin to a social worker. I suggest that insights into perceptions of current primary school SENCos provide valuable understanding of the complexities and issues of the SENCo role which are important to primary school SENCos in their current situations. This will inform school practitioners and those who wish to be primary SENCos, those who train SENCos and those children and families who are supported by primary SENCos. The findings also have a wider application by building knowledge to support a greater understanding of the concept of empowerment and identity.

Based on the study's rationale, the research aim is **to explore the perceptions and experiences of primary school SENCos.**

To achieve the aim, the enquiry draws on the experiences of six SENCos from the primary phase of teaching, who all achieved the PG SENCo Certificate in SEN Co-ordination through studying at a northern university. The study focuses on the participants' interpretation of what it means to be a primary school SENCo, as they engage in the demands of the role in their setting. The research draws on an interpretivist paradigm of knowledge generation (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011; Bryman, 2016) that employs the qualitative

approach of narrative (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013; Bryman, 2016), for the collection of data.

An adaptive approach is employed to generate a conceptual framework that is derived from a range of theorisation drawn from the literature. This incorporates thinking and concepts developed from a wide range of previous research including that on the SENCo role, models of disability, empowerment, identity, and social working which when woven together, formulate a picture of what the role entails. An adaptive approach is an unfolding process creating an interplay of theory integrated with the data. Layder (2012) suggests that in this way, orienting concepts can be critically interrogated throughout the research process and concerns about forcing data into predetermined categories can be allayed. An adaptive approach enhances the interpretation of data with thick description (Geertz, 1973), and can add conceptual density to the analysis contributing to the development of conclusions and recommendations arising from the study (Layder, 2012).

A thematic approach is utilised for the interpretation of the data (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Bold, 2012).

1.4 Outline of the thesis

The thesis consists of seven chapters. Following the introduction, Chapter 2 Part 1 focuses on the literature surrounding the historical development of special educational needs in the UK. This section provides an account of the historical development of special educational needs and the SENCo role. It outlines the legislation which shaped the development of SEN and the growth of the SENCo role. The competing discourse of standards, performativity and

inclusion are identified and discussed. The disability models of medical, social disability rights, capability and affirmative models are explored.

The second part of the Literature Review focuses on the contested role of the SENCo. Introducing the concept of professional identity and moving onto the contextual demands and multiple responsibilities of the role. The SENCo's role in leading inclusion is explored along with the concept of empowerment and dimensions of social justice. The use of metaphor for the role is investigated, followed by a discussion of the culture of care and social welfare element of the teacher's role.

Chapter 3 explains the methodological approaches for the study, justifying the choice of epistemological and ontological approach. The chapter provides an account of the research methods and the process of data collection. ethical concerns are identified and addressed. A thematic approach to the analysis of the data is presented and discussed. An explanation of the use of metaphors draws the chapter to a close.

Chapter 4, 5 and 6 present and discuss the findings from the data

Chapter 4 opens with an exploration of how SENCos in the study became SENCos. It then moves to a consideration of the constituent parts of the SENCo role which have emerged from the data. Chapter 5 considers the claim by the primary SENCos that they empower parents, children and staff. The data are discussed in relation to the literature and conclusions presented.

Chapter 6 presents findings from the data suggesting that primary SENCos are now crossing boundaries from education into social work. The data informing this chapter are explored and discussed.

Chapter 7 draws together the key findings of the study bringing together the research aim, the research questions and the findings, making explicit the knowledge claims that have arisen and their implications for the development of practice and future policy with consideration of implications for the future role of a primary SENCo. I reflect on the research process and discuss the limitations of the study along with the implications for future research. I conclude with personal reflections of the research process linking to my own learning journey.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review Part 1

Historical context to the development of SEN and the SENCo role

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the historical contexts of the developments in policy and legislation relating to the growth and development of SEN and inclusion from 1944. The way in which the concept of special educational needs is perceived has consequences for its historical development and the underpinning social and educational values of the educational system. The models of disability which inform the legislation and policy are examined in order to aid understanding of the underlying assumptions in policy and how the conceptualisation of the SENCo role has been defined and positioned over the years.

There follows an analysis of the significant legislation affecting the development of special education in the UK role. Wearmouth (2016) suggests that within the historical context are recurring themes of,

- 1 Whether to segregate, integrate or fully include.
- 2 Should the curriculum be the same or different for those labelled as different?
- 3 How to categorise those who are labelled as 'different'

Using these three themes as a framework I examine the relevant legislation and policy affecting the growth of special educational needs policy from 1944 onwards.

2.2 Historical development of SEN and the SENCO role

The 1944 Education Act is significant because it marks the beginning of the integration into the state system of children who had previously been educated in private institutions, under the jurisdiction of health services. It was a policy of integration, but it was only partial integration. The 1944 Education Act was a landmark in many ways. It initiated the tripartite system of technical, secondary and grammar schools with entry by selection using the 11+ assessment tests. It also brought significant changes in the way education was managed for those children and young people who had previously been considered too difficult to be included in mainstream education. This legislation was termed 'education for all' because it was decisive in widening the franchise of state schools, but the Act was also significant in singling out and bestowing categories of labels on those children who, it was thought, required different or special treatment (Armstrong, 2003). Clark, Dyson, Millward and Skidmore (1997), argue that the educational system derived from the 1944 Act did more to promote societal divisions than social inclusion because so many groups of children continued to be educated in special schools. Armstrong (2003, p.81) suggests that it created a fourth strand of education in a separate special school system for children who could not be 'managed' in mainstream schools.

As a result of the 1944 Act, Local Educational Authorities (LEA) had to secure provision for children who were described as 'suffering from a disability of mind or body' by providing either special schools or 'special educational treatment' (Education Act 1944 34/1). LEAs determined, using a medical diagnosis, which children required particular special treatment in school. There were eleven possible categories of impairment which could be assigned. These were,

delicate, diabetic, educationally subnormal, epileptic, maladjusted, blind, partially sighted, deaf, partially deaf, physically handicapped and those with speech defects. Although the 1944 Education Act signalled changes in the organisation of mainstream schooling the regulations still required children who were blind, deaf, epileptic, physically handicapped and children with speech defects to be educated in special school. Others from the above categories could attend mainstream schools if there was 'adequate provision' (1944 Education Act, 33/1)

2.2.1 The growth of Special Schools

There are opposing ideological views on the growth and purpose of special schools. Tomlinson (2017) suggests that the special school system has been used both as an instrument of segregation and also as part of an inclusive paradigm. Wearmouth (2016) and Cole (2005b) maintain that the special school system provides services that are designed to help and support children and young people who are so vulnerable that they need both the protection of individual care and support of their educational needs. Children in special schools are seen as having very specific difficulties and needs, with a view that special institutions are best placed to deal with them (Croll & Moses 2000). Slee (2011) however, contends that special schools exist because of the failure of mainstream schools to educate all children. Tomlinson (2017) and Fulcher (1989), reinforce this view by maintaining that children outside the realms of the norm were removed from mainstream because they were the ones not contributing to raising standards. Within this perspective, special schools are seen as politically oppressive and either used as a way of controlling those that

could not be managed (Armstrong,2003) or the deviants in society (Tomlinson, 2017).

It was the Warnock Committee (1978) which presented the idea of provision for special educational needs as a 'continuum' allowing both mainstream and special schools to cater for the needs of children, but there was not a great deal of collusion between the two and as a result, a system of both integration and segregation remains as policy (Tomlinson, 2017). Whatever the view held of special schools, they remain within the educational system providing 'a continuum of provision to match the continuum of need' (Mittler 2000, p186). Cole (2005b) maintains that special schools still have an important part to play within the education system but suggests they too need to reflect on their own views of inclusion.

2.2.2 1981 and 1988 Education Acts

The 1981 Education Act abolished the categories of handicap that until then had been used to link educational provision and resources to needs (Armstrong,2003). The new generic term 'special educational needs' (SEN) was devised by Warnock (1978) and embedded into the 1981 Education Act. The Act defines a child as having special educational needs 'if he has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for him' (1981 Education Act). Further clarification was made by saying this will be the case where a child,

Has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of his age; [or] he has a disability which either prevents or hinders him from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided in schools. (Armstrong, 2003, p.61).

Warnock (1978) might have believed that the single category of special educational needs is better than many, yet, Thomas & Loxley, (2001) argue, that it did nothing to remove the identification and labelling of need which resulted in notions of deficit and disadvantage.

This also introduced the concept of the 20% which marked a greater integration into mainstream for those children labelled as SEN. This meant that mainstream schools could be supporting up to 20% of the schools' population who were deemed to have a variety of mild learning difficulties and disabilities labelled as special educational need (Tomlinson, 2017; Armstrong, 2003). This integration came with three caveats. Children could only be admitted if their needs could be accommodated; that these needs did not interfere with the education of other children and thirdly if the costs incurred could be justified and not considered to be an inefficient use of resources (Rieser, 2006). Trying to integrate children with the label of needs into a largely unchanged system (Glazzard, 2013) consequently generated the notion that children with needs are problematic.

Children with the label of SEN were integrated on the basis that they could obtain a Statement of Special Educational Needs but, the 1981 Education Act made no provision for additional funding to be allocated to local education authorities (Glazzard, Hughes, Netherwood, Neve & Stokoe, 2010). Tribunals were set up to adjudicate disputes by parents who fought for their entitlement of funding from cash strapped LEAs. In later years Warnock (2005, p.27) confessed to her instigation of the process of statementing as 'being not a very

bright idea'. Nevertheless, it reinforced the principle of integration (Wearmouth, 2016) and the idea of statementing, that has now morphed into Education and Health Care Plans.

Children with special educational needs were integrated into mainstream but, on the premise that they would have to fit into the existing system (Frederickson & Cline, 2009) Integration is often understood to mean that 'the child needs to become like the majority; conceal difficulties; learn to fit in' (Corbett,1996,p.22). This can be difficult when the given labels designate difference even when replaced by the supposedly softer term of learning disabilities and special educational needs (Norwich,2010).

Corbett (1996) and Hodge and Runswick-Cole, (2008) argue that the term 'special educational needs' continues to remain shrouded with notions of disability and deficit. The very phrase 'special needs' conjures up uncomfortable imagery. When deconstructed, special does not mean special in a congratulatory way at all, in fact, Corbett (1996, p.3) claims that it has quite the opposite effect implying 'dependency, inadequacy and unworthiness'. Glazzard (2016, p.35) maintains that 'need' implies a deficit within a socially constructed norm' whilst Wearmouth (2016, p21) argues that not acknowledging difference or need can be 'counterproductive to the learning needs of the student'. She suggests that conforming to the official defined terms of need, required when engaged in the formal processes of support for a child, is the best way to protect a child experiencing difficulties in a mainstream school. Conversely, Tomlinson (2017) contends that special educational needs are a by-product of a failing system which does not recognise either diversity or socially constructed children's needs (Thomas & Loxley,2001). These contrasting views merely

highlight the divergence of opinion which reflects the complexity of the concept of special educational needs.

The 1980s brought the introduction of government legislation procuring 'top-down' controlling mechanisms for education (Coles & Hancock, 2002; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009). The 1988 Education Reform Act spawned the first National Curriculum. This scripted curriculum, which teachers were obliged to follow, had both strengths and limitations. It was positive in giving schools in England, Wales and Northern Ireland a standardised curriculum to follow, but the scripted nature of it meant that teachers lost some of their ability to exercise their professional judgements (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009). The new National Curriculum (1988) was also accompanied by Standard Assessment Tasks (SATs) which gave rise to schools' league tables becoming a measure of a school's success (Glazzard, et al 2010). Consequently, the late 1980s and early 1990s saw the rise of a competitive market with schools facing rigorous surveillance in the form of Ofsted inspections. The SATs tests results for children aged 7 and 11 and the Ofsted reports became accessible and judgements could be made about the worth of a school's educational provision through the performance of the children (Cole 2005b). Those schools with a higher proportion of children with the label of needs felt penalised because the focus continued to be on the individual's performance rather than looking at the more social and environmental factors that contribute to the identification of needs (Glazzard, 2016).

2.2.3 SEN legislation in the early 1990s

The 1990s saw the formalisation of the role of the SENCo, which had previously been carried out by 'specialist teachers' or sometimes teacher assistants (Crowther, Dyson, & Millward, 2001, p.86). The 1993 Education Act introduced a statutory Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (DfEE, 1994) and, significantly, the role of the SENCo was established. Initially, the SENCo's role was to both oversee and support staff working with children with the label of needs and to complete the administrative paperwork assigned to the role. The Code of Practice (DfEE, 1994) remained geared to the identification of need, labelling children, and defining and maintaining intervention programmes. Critics of the 1993 Act (Fulcher, 1989; Thomas & Vaughan, 2004; Barton, 2006) saw the reforms as further evidence of restricting and confining children with a label of SEN, arguing that the 1993 Education Act continued to set apart the children with the label of SEN. Corbett, (1996) supporting this view, argues that the use of the term SEN helps to legitimise a response which accepts that certain groups of pupils are marginalised by educational policy and practice. Whilst Barton, (2006, p.83) maintains that the system of special educational needs is justified based on being 'in their interests, of meeting their needs.'

2.2.4 Labour government SEN policies 1997-2010

Inclusion was a key element of the Labour government's education and social policy after 1997 (Corbett, 1996). The Excellence for All Children, Meeting Special Educational Needs (DfEE, 1997) Green Paper set out the government's inclusive vision of high expectations for all, quality first teaching for all, partnership with parents and professional development in special educational needs for all teachers. The SEN Code of Practice (DfES, 2001) and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (HMSO, 2001) sought to convey a clearer notion of entitlement for children with the label of SEN making it clear to parents that they had a right to a mainstream place for their child (Wearmouth, 2009). The SEN Code of Practice (DfES, 2001) attempted to move away from the previous SEN Code of Practice of identification and labelling (DfEE, 1994). The Every Child Matters (DfES, 2004b) policy document clearly stated the ideology that every child did matter.

The Labour Government's strategy for improving the SEN management and provision Removing Barriers to Achievement (RBA) (DfES, 2004) summarised four main areas for improvement,

- early intervention
- removing barriers to learning
- raising expectations and achievement
- delivering improvements in partnerships

These identified areas relate clearly to the SENCo role (Layton, 2005) and had significant implications for the management of the role. The DfES (2004) RBA strategy identified a 'pivotal role of coordinating provision across school' for

SENCoS (DfES, 2004, p 58. 3.14) with the proposed recommendations of the RBA strategy stating:

We want to see the SENCo as a key member of the senior leadership team, able to influence the development of policies for whole school improvement (DfES,2004, p58 3.14)

This mandate for SENCoS of one of leading change was not yet possible for many SENCoS who did not have the power or the status in school to do this effectively (Layton 2005). It was also difficult for SENCoS to work in a system based on two different philosophies, one requiring early identification and the other the removal of barriers to learning. In many schools, the SENCo's role was to be primarily responsible for those children with the label of needs.

Critics of the policy for inclusion (Leathwood & Hayton, 2002; Benjamin, 2002; Dyson, 2003; Armstrong, 2005; Lloyd, 2008;) agree that there was confusion with the seemingly contradictory approach made worse by the emphasis on achievement in the 'standards agenda' which 'narrowed and subverted schools' commitment to inclusion (Ainscow, Booth & Dyson, 2006, p.300).

Schools found it difficult to embrace both inclusion and equal educational opportunity when children were placed in schools which encouraged participation in a competitive race towards standards of achievement (Fulcher 1989). This emphasis on achievement and productivity termed 'performativity' by Lyotard (1984) and then by Ball (2003, p.216), was a policy of the Labour Government which Ball (2003) claimed to be a diversional aim to achieve an economic rather than a social aim. Hodkinson (2010) supports this view and argues that although the Labour Government lauded inclusion (as a way to ensure that the education system offered opportunities for all children to reach

full potential), there was an underlying economic motive. Ball (2003), described teachers as working in a performative climate where they were required to drive all children towards high levels of performance, adding that this expectation creates both tensions and dilemmas when teachers feel that their teaching is only being reflected in the light of performance and productivity. Glazzard (2016) emphasises the potential emotional cost expended to achieve measured performance when much of what goes into teaching is not measurable in quantitative terms. Glazzard (2013) argues that when the focus is continually on improving school performance and meeting targets in schools, developing caring relationships with pupils appears to have no place. Adding that pushing children towards targets that they are unlikely to meet it only serves to compound their sense of failure.

2.2.5. Competing discourses of standards, performativity and inclusion

'Removing Barriers to Achievement' (DfES,2004), was presented ostensibly to address the issues of inclusion and provision of SEN in mainstream schools. Lloyd (2008, p.225) argues that the underpinning inclusive concepts of this document were based on an economic premise with a simplistic notion that 'inclusion itself had the 'potential to address issues of disadvantage and to remove barriers created by social deprivation'. Schools were being used to address both social and economic issues in society. There was a political belief that the inclusion of children labelled as SEN would result in an increased economic contribution of those same children as adults (Lloyd, 2008).

2.2.6 Perspectives of inclusion

The Labour Government's view of inclusion re practice was to put the responsibility firmly in the hands of the school (and the teachers), to provide the desired quality of experience and participation. As the document Removing Barriers to Achievement (DfES, 2004, p.12) states,

Inclusion is about much more than the type of schools that children attend. It is about the quality of their experience; how they are helped to learn, achieve and participate fully in the life of the school. But we know the reality does not always match this,

Peters, Johnstone and Ferguson (2005) contend that the problem with the term 'inclusion' is that it means different things to different people. Inclusive education is based on the principle of education for *all* regardless of any perceived difference (Florian 2008). This was difficult when, within school and under the terms of the SEN Code of Practice (DfES,2004), children continued to be labelled as different. Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden, (2000); Sikes, Lawson and Parker, (2007) and Thomas and Loxley, (2001) argue that problems occur because of the variations in the way inclusion is interpreted. Both Clough, (2000) and Glazzard (2016) suggest that inclusion is a fluid concept without fixed parameters whilst Booth, Ainscow, Black-Hawkins, Vaughan & Shaw (2000,p.12) add that in their view 'inclusion is a never-ending process' and attempt to clarify the confusion by stating;

Inclusion is *not* another name for special educational needs.
Inclusion is seen to involve the identification and minimising of barriers to learning and participation and the maximising of resources to support learning and participation.

Sikes, Lawson and Parker's (2007, p.11) study suggests schools found it difficult to translate the politicised government view of inclusion into practice. Reporting that 'the cultivation of a competitive ethos both within and between schools was seen as preventing mainstream schools from being welcoming for some children' Further, Lloyd (2008, p.228) argues that there was nowhere, in the imposed strategy of inclusion, that recognised that the school system itself was a barrier with its 'rigid norm and standard related measures'.

Azzopardi (2009, p.21) argues that 'inclusive education' is now a politicised term becoming little more than an overused cliché and 'a politically correct term that is used for speeches and policymakers to silence all woes'. As a result, the meaning of inclusion has become muddled (Rosen-Webb, 2011). It may mean one thing to politicians in terms of economic and social reform but something entirely different to a SENCo struggling to implement the practicalities of inclusion based on theories of traditional perspectives of special needs (Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2009). Roaf (1998) argues that inclusion concerns questions of rights rather than needs, however, the political premise of special education is grounded in needs which, as Glazzard (2016) and Wearmouth (2016) contend, is counterproductive to the concept of inclusion. Need implies deficit.

This concept further discussed in Section 2.8 of the literature review.

With the introduction of the 2004 SEN Code of Practice (DfES), SENCos experienced a shift of expectation. They retained the responsibility of overseeing the provision for children with needs but there was now an emphasis on teachers, rather than SENCos, to collectively share the

responsibility for children with needs (Armstrong, 2005; Leathwood & Hayton, 2002). It was widely acknowledged that 'all teachers are teachers of SEN' (DfEE, 1999; DfES, 2004; House of Commons, 2006; Lamb, 2009) but not readily put into practice (Ekins, 2012). The DCSF (2008a) guide to personalised learning was designed to guide teachers towards high-quality teaching for all pupils introducing the term 'quality first teaching' (QFT). This set out a long checklist of criteria for quality teaching, mostly prefaced with the word high, for example. highly focused, high demands of pupils, high levels of interaction for all pupils, high-quality questioning, high expectations. The term quality first teaching has been seen as aspirational for all teachers and carried forward into the most recent SEND Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015, 6.37, p.99).

There is an additional expectation that SENCOs are able to strategically lead staff into high-quality inclusive teaching practices (DfE & DoH), but this is dependent on whether or not SENCOs are part of the senior leadership team (Weddell, 2004; Layton, 2005; Hallett & Hallett, 2010; Tissot, 2013). Weddell (2004, p.105) reported that in some schools SENCOs were developing 'wider roles such as inclusion manager or learning support coordinator but in others, the role was specifically directed at pupil identification of need'. A recommendation was made by the House of Commons' Education and Skills Select Committee (2006) for SENCOs be members of the senior leadership team (SLT), an indication of the perceived importance of formal leadership and managerial status. This was not made a statutory requirement, and the desirability of this recommendation has been a matter of recurrent debate (Morewood 2008; Oldham & Radford, 2011; Tissot, 2013; Dobson & Douglas, 2018).

2.2.7 The Coalition Government 2010-2015

The *Green Paper, 'Support and Aspiration a new approach to special education and disability* (DfE, 2011) set out the UK Coalition vision for future special needs provision which included a pledge to 'remove the bias to inclusion'

DfE, 2011, p.5) This was first put forward in a Cabinet Office paper (2010):

We believe the most vulnerable children deserve the highest quality of care. We will improve the diagnostic assessment for school children, prevent the unnecessary closure of special schools and remove the bias towards inclusion.

Critics of the policy (Runswick-Cole, 2011; Glazzard, 2013) questioned the right of the Coalition government to claim that there had been a bias towards inclusion, when there was so much contradiction about inclusion as to what it means and purports to achieve (Armstrong, 2005; Graham & Slee, 2007). However, there was little evidence to show that inclusion had ever been achieved (Runswick-Cole, 2011), therefore claiming bias was perhaps unfounded.

Much of what was proposed in the Support and Aspiration document (DfE, 2011) emerged in the new SEND Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015) It represented a definite shift in thinking and direction, away from the 'every child matters' ideology (DfES, 2003) towards an emphasis on achievement, concerned mainly with progress in literacy and numeracy rather than holistic development (Morewood, 2012).

2.2.8 Incorporating safeguarding and disability 2015-2019

The revised SEND Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015) required schools and other educational institutions, along with the existing local authorities, to take account of the UK government's apparent commitment to inclusive education and the progressive removal of barriers to learning and participation in mainstream education (DfE & DoH, 2015). Various documentation, for example, Children and Families Act (2014) and SEND CoP (DfE & DoH, 2015) set out the legal obligations that schools, early years' providers, post-16 institutions and others, have towards those children and young people with disabilities and those with the label of special educational needs. The SEND CoP (DfE & DoH, 2015) added disability into the title and extended coverage to 0-25 years old. The Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2018) statutory guidance on inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children legislates for developing interagency and partnership working to ensure that children who are vulnerable receive care and support from health, social and educational services they need. This legislative guidance focused on the vulnerable child but many children on the at-risk register also had the label of SEN and consequently, the role of Safeguarding Office often fell to the SENCo (Goepel, Childerhouse & Sharpe, 2015).

Schools, early years' settings and other educational establishments are obliged to implement the principles of equality of opportunity and inclusion, which underpin these documents, to ensure that there is a high-quality provision to meet the needs of all children in their setting. Burch's (2017) critique of the SENDCoP (DfE & DoH, 2015), argues that it has a more powerful and political thrust than simply guidance, suggesting that the policy for SEND was written 'in

accordance with economic concerns of the country' (Burch, 2017 p.1). She further argues that the SEND documentation continues to be a controlling force for the different or deviant members of the community, shaping the behaviours of children and young people in order to fulfil governmental aspirational aims for society, rather than fulfilling the 'unique aspirations and ambitions of the children and young people' (Burch, 2017, p.1). Tomlinson (2017, p.25) argues an historical belief permeates that children are born with the 'potential to be very able, average, less able or disabled and have to be treated differently and unequally'. It may be conducive of a wider political intent to keep and perpetuate the stratification in society. However, Goodley and Runswick-Cole (2016) recognise the radical potential of disability, 'suggesting that those labelled as different or deviant can become a powerful political force 'to trouble, reshape and re-fashion traditional conceptions' (p.2).

This section has chartered the history of special educational needs provision from 1944 to 2019 illustrating that special educational needs provision, now morphed with inclusion, has a contradictory and sometimes confusing existence. Dunne (2009) saw the competing frameworks in which SENCos manage their support of children as confusing and without a clear direction. SENCos are seen to be working within a construct of inclusion based on the social model of disability, whilst operating within a traditional framework of special educational needs, based on the medical model. This has been further overlaid with the additional strategies of achievement linked to performativity (Ball, 2003). This confusion of discourses presents challenges for the role of SENCo and for the settings in which it operates.

The following section gives a more detailed explanation of the models of disability and the thinking which has underpinned the historical development of SEND in England.

2.3 Models of disability

The literature on special educational needs refers to a variety of models which conceptualise special needs in different ways. This section will examine some of the models, exploring their relevance to this work.

2.3.1 Medical model of disability

The medical model of disability applies to where a person is identified as having a medical condition/s which hinders their ability to function (Goepel, Childerhouse & Sharpe, 2015). Treatments and strategies employed to the person are intended to cure or ameliorate the disability (Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2009)

The medical model can seem to perpetuate the notion that people with special needs are somehow inadequate and deficient (Runswick-Cole, 2011; Hjärne and Sälljö, 2012; Glazzard, 2013) and are therefore unable to participate and contribute to family or community life (Oliver & Barnes, 2012). Mittler (2000) considers the medical model to be a negative, deficit model where the identifiable need is seen as a 'defect' in the child who can then be labelled and 'treated' accordingly. Oliver and Barnes, (2012, p.138) claim that the medical model 'legitimises and perpetuates exclusionary policies and practices' by emphasising difference as a deficit (which can be made good by an intervention). Shakespeare (2000) argues that when using the medical model to

examine disability it is seen as something which can be mourned or pitied. It has been argued (Burch,2017) that the use of the medical model is perpetuated because of the requirements of the SEND Code of Practice (DfE& DoH, 2015) to diagnose a child's needs before asking for specialist help. Arguments for the use of the medical model e.g. Lauchlan & Boyle, (2007) and Wearmouth, (2016) suggest that medical diagnosis is the best way of procuring support for a child in school who is experiencing difficulties.

There are problems with the medical model. The negative belief that the fault lies within the child and the belief that an intervention will make good the deficit enabling a child to better fit society actually negates the effect of the environment.

Llewellyn and Hogan (2000) argue that the fault of the medical model is the absence of recognition of the barriers found in a society which does not readily accept difference and diversity. The medical model remains embedded in the fabric of the SEND Code of Practice (2015, DfE & DoH). There is a continued requirement for children to be assessed for specific needs if they have a 'significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age' (DfE & DoH, 2015 p.16). Children are diagnosed and labelled accordingly, and the interventions used are designed to 'normalise' them. (Farrell, 2004, p.68-69).

There is a body of literature (Slee, 1997; Norwich, 2010; Hodge, 2007; Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2008; Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Richards, 2014; Fisher, 2012; Runswick-Cole, 2011) which suggests that the impact of a medical diagnosis, with the subsequent labelling of impairment, gives rise to a deficit view of

difference which continues to permeate the education system. Hodge (2007) argues that labelling can underline difference, resulting in children being defined by their disability rather than their individuality. Ainscow and Miles (2008) contend that the identification and labelling of children with needs are discriminatory and can lead to poor expectations and consequent poor attainment.

Conversely, Lauchlan and Boyle (2007) stress the positive results of labelling, linked to a diagnosis, and contend that assessment and labelling allow parents and teachers to begin to understand the difficulties that the children experience. They also argue that acquiring a label, for a specific difficulty, can provide comfort to children and their parents to know that there is a recognised medical reason for their difficulties; importantly it also opens the gates to funding which is welcomed by both schools and families.

The current system of funding for the support of children with needs outside the norm continues to require the assessment and medical diagnosis of children (DfE & DOH, 2015). Funding may lead to more assistance in schools from outside agencies which can bring more awareness and a greater understanding of the child's experiences. But, as Hodge (2007) warns, once labels have been assigned it can happen that 'the label becomes more significant than the child' (Hodge, 2007, p.345). Richards (2014, p.29) reinforces this with the view that labels can be very powerful when selected and imposed by others and it 'can affect children's life experiences'.

In response to the limitations of the medical model alternatives have been developed, one of which is the social model of disability.

2.3.2 Social Model of disability

The social model of disability challenges the medical model with its focus on the interaction between the person and their environment, where consideration is given to the removal of the obstacles which are thought to create and maintain exclusion (Mittler, 2000; Oliver 1990). The main concern of the social model is justice and human dignity and it assumes that experiences of disability are attributable to barriers in society (Hodkinson, 2016; Oliver, 1990). The social model defines impairment (physical, cognitive, sensory, emotional) as distinct from disability (Oliver 1990) with the premise that disability is not a product of the individual, but that society is at fault through its oppressive, discriminating and disabling functions (Barnes, 1991; Oliver, 1990, 1996; Glazzard, 2016; Hodkinson, 2016).

Crow (1992, p.4) writing from a personal perspective, suggests that the social model 'is key to dismantling the traditional conception of impairment as 'personal tragedy' and the oppression it bequeaths'. Suggesting that the social model has played a central role in 'determining disabled people's self-worth, collective identity and political organisation'.

Within the social model, the connection between impairment, which causes a reduced function and the experience of disability, is dependent on environmental, social and cultural factors. This does not mean that impairment causes disability, but it is a 'biological precondition' for that particular oppression.

Oliver (1996, p.38) argues that 'the social model is not an attempt to deal with the personal restrictions of impairment but with the social barriers of disability'.

Reindal (2008) maintains that disability is a role imposed on people with impairments to strengthen dominant social relations which require conformity. The social model recognises the imbalance of power in relationships between people with and without impairments throughout society. It emphasises the discriminatory nature of societal attitudes, actions, culture, policies and institutional practices, which have been identified as forming a barrier to total participation in society.

Oliver (1996) contends that one of the issues with the social model is that it does not appear to address the personal restrictions of individual impairment, but emphasises the social barriers of disabilities. Impairment may be static, yet disability can dramatically ease or worsen with changes to environment or activity. The proponents of the social model consistently reject the concept of normality as a norm for policymaking, for schools in particular and for society in general because it is discriminatory, oppressive, and a hindrance to inclusion (Crow, 1992).

It was the social model that informed the move towards more inclusive practices that became embodied in legislation and policy, brought in by the Labour Government, after 1997. This model influenced the National Curriculum (DfEE, 1999; DfES, 2004d) which required schools to ensure that education provision was inclusive for all children. This was significant to the beginning of organisational changes to pupils' learning based on the social model and considered to be an important development in provision by the government and advocates for those with disabilities (Morgan, 2012). Effectively it was a political

move by the government to begin structural changes within education to make it more equitable and more responsive to diversity (Glazzard, 2016). Booth et al (2000) suggested that there was much to be done to reduce barriers formed by discriminatory attitudes and institutionalised practices. It is widely acknowledged that the political intention did not meet with reality (Oliver, 2013).

Oliver (1996) recognises that the change in emphasis from the medical model to the social model is full of complexities acknowledging that the social model does not address all the barriers faced by disabled people, who as a result of their physical, sensory, cognitive, social or emotional abilities, remain different. Disability, therefore, remains a social problem to be eradicated by societal change (Goodley, 2006).

2.3.3 The disability rights-based model

This model is based on the legal rights and entitlement laid down in law rights, for example, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (1946) including legal rights embodied in national laws and civil rights which appear in a nation's constitution.

In the UK, where we have no constitution, civil rights are found in the general law, such as the Equality Act 2010 which gives an individual the right not to be discriminated against on the grounds of disability (Visser & Stokes, 2003). The rights-based model uses the framework provided by acts of parliament and policies for inclusion. As Visser and Stokes (2003) point out, legislation may guide in a direction of inclusion but cannot change a culture on its own.

Jones and Welch (2010) describe ways that a rights-based dynamic can change a way of viewing and understanding children's experiences. The use of a rights-based model may initiate and support a change of perceptions of entitlements for children with the label of SEN. It instigates a move from the focus of 'needs' to a more positive holistic support of children, as is their right.

The models of disability previously discussed are those found embedded in the current SEND Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015). However, Norwich, (1993 p.20) argues that the social and the individual medical model 'are not exclusive alternatives between which causal accounts are chosen' continuing that 'individual difficulty versus the organisational inflexibility is a false causal opposition'. Pfeiffer (2001), notes that many disability scholars recognise that no single model can totally explain disability. The next section describes alternative conceptualisations of impairment and disability that have developed as a result of the dichotomy between the individual medical and social models (Robeyns, 2009).

2.3.4 The Capability Approach

The Capability Approach, developed by Sen (1985) with further philosophical considerations proposed by Nussbaum and Glover (1995), is described as a broad normative framework for the evaluating and assessing inequality (Terzi, 2005, p.445). It is an approach which overcomes the duality between the individual medical and social models allowing for disability to be seen as inherently relational, being the combination of personal, social and circumstantial factors (Terzi, 2005). The capability approach allows for a broader understanding of impairment and disability providing a more egalitarian

perspective where entitlement does not depend on the causal origin of disability (Norwich, 2014).

What makes it different from other disability models is that it focuses on 'positive flourishing and opportunities' (Norwich, 2014 p.17). It is a model more concerned with a person's interests, than a person's actions or behaviours (Mitra, 2006) and allows for the pursuit of people's individual well-being which can facilitate their life-planning based on individual choice (Robeyns, 2009). Hughes (2010, p2) describes the capability approach as 'everyone becoming more able to become' with the focus on expanding human abilities to accomplish life.

According to Sen (1992), human beings are diverse in three fundamental ways:

1. There are differences with respect to personal characteristics such as gender, age, physical and mental abilities, talents, proneness to illness
2. Individuals are different with respect to external circumstances, such as inherited wealth and assets, environmental factors including climatic differences, and social and cultural arrangements (p.27–28).
3. Fundamentally, they are different in terms of their ability to convert resources into valued functionings (p.85).

Functionings and capabilities are the main concepts of the capability approach and within this model, disability is seen as deprivation or limitation in capability or 'functionings'. Capabilities do not have the everyday sense of 'ability' and instead refer to 'practical opportunities' (Mitra, 2006). The consideration of whether an individual with an impairment has a disability depends on whether their functionings or capabilities are restricted.

Sen (1985, p.12), clarifies capabilities as 'functionings' dependent on 'achievement of a person: what they manage to do or to be'. He further describes 'functioning' as related to human well-being, which transmits to a

person's achievement: How "well" are they "being"? Well-being is therefore concerned with 'functionings' what a person actually achieves either by being or doing; for example, 'beings' as well-fed or literate and capabilities, the genuine opportunities or freedoms to realise these functionings (Robeyns,2009).

Norwich (2014) further clarifies that capabilities are those 'functionings' that a person can choose to use or not to use with the focus on interests and not just actions.

The capability approach does contribute a new and useful perspective on disability by differentiating two levels of the problem: the capability level and the functioning level. There is no attempt to define disability, instead, Sen (1985) maintains that an impairment is a 'feature of the individual that may or may not lead to a disability.' Whether the individual is labelled as disabled depends on whether the impairment places restrictions on the individual's functionings (Mitra, 2006).

Terzi (2005) argues that the capability approach can provide a way out of the 'dilemma of difference' in special needs education. This refers to the unavoidable choices which SENCos have to make in identifying children's differences through assessing and labelling in order to provide a different education or stressing the 'sameness' of children by offering a common educational provision which runs the risk of not meeting children's specific needs (Terzi, 2005). The implications for using the capability approach to reframe a school's approach to special needs and inclusion apply to the 'opportunities that may be put in place for children to work towards valued and reasonable 'functionings' of their choosing through practices that are formed relationally' (Dalkilic & Vadeboncoeur, 2016, p.135).

As an approach, it has been used to rethink and develop educational policy (Robeyns, 2009) providing a complementary insight into the more established approaches.

2.3.5 The Affirmative Model

The affirmative model of disability is a non-tragic view of disability and impairment which has arisen in direct opposition to the dominant personal tragedy approach of disability and impairment (Cameron, 2010). It is a model which counters society's expectations of and response to people with impairments of 'evaluating people for what they are not, rather than for who they are' (Cameron, 2011, p.244). It is a disability orientation that advocates a positive self-image (McCormack & Collins, 2012) that takes into account descriptions by people with impairments of their experiences of being actively turned into disabled people (2011). Swain and French (2000) describe the affirmative model as encompassing:

positive social identities, both individual and collective, for disabled people grounded in the benefits of lifestyle and life experience of being impaired and disabled (p.569).

The non-tragic view of disability is not about 'the problem' of disability but about disability as a positive personal and collective identity, with people with a disability leading fulfilled and satisfying lives. In defining impairment as 'difference,' the affirmative model avoids making negative evaluative judgements in terms of 'loss', 'abnormality', or 'limitation' (Swain & French, 2000). Impairment is not something to be pitied or overlooked but acknowledged and included.

The affirmative model directly 'challenges the negative connotations typically associated' with disability making it a viable alternative to other models (McCormack & Collins, 2012, p.158). It is a model that has grown out of a group identity, through the Disabled People's Movement, drawings on experiences and written expressions of a shared understanding of the barriers encountered.

Impairment is seen as a characteristic of human difference rather than a limitation and disability seen as a loss of 'opportunities' which has some cross-over from the capability approach. Cameron (2010) saw disability as an invalidating role encountered by and imposed upon people with impairments in their dealings with everyday life. It has become a model of 'an affirmation and an avowal of the benefits of their life experiences' (McCormack & Collin 2012, p.158).

2.3.6 The effect of models on SENCos work

SENCos operate within the bounds of these models. Mittler (2000, p.3) advises that it is 'important not to polarise models', suggesting that although they have the appearance of being incompatible, they are in a 'state of constant and complex interaction'. For example, the SEND Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015) contains elements of the medical model, the social model and the disability rights models. There are elements of the medical model in the section pertaining to the identifying children and young people's needs (p.23). The social model underpins the focus on 'inclusive practice and removing barriers to learning' (p.25). The disability rights model within the SEND CoP (2015, DfE & DoH) is a reminder of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) and the Equality Act (2010). Mittler (2000) maintains

there are some aspects of each model that are relevant to the SENCos' role and that each model profoundly affects school's policy practice and attitudes. Dyson and Millwood's (2000) study recognised the dilemma SENCos face in trying to value pupils' differences and diversity whilst supporting pupils' individual needs. The alternative capability framework and the affirmative model have arisen in direct opposition to the polarising of the medical and social models and help to address the complexity of issues of disability and impairment.

What emerged from this study is the difficulty SENCos experience of operating within these conflicting discourses.

2.4 Summary

This chapter has briefly outlined the development of special educational needs policy and legislation from 1944 to 2019, indicating a government policy of segregation from 1944 moving to integration in the 1980s and then from 1997 towards the inclusion of children with the label of needs. I have suggested a contradiction in the implementation of policy, where 'education for all' may in actuality be education for some, and where the growth of special schools may be a symbol of a failing educational system or a genuine haven for the support and education of children with complex needs (Burch, 2017; Tomlinson, 2017; Wearmouth, 2016).

The SENCo role has been outlined and shown to have developed through policy. The first SEN Code of Practice (DfEE, 1994) was advisory rather than

statutory and been seen to progress into a statutory obligation (Pearson, Mitchell, & Rapti, 2015).

This historical outline of policy and SEN legislation gives some insight into the contradictions that have evolved within the historical context of SEN. Different models of disability, medical, social, disability rights, capability approach and the affirmative model of disabilities have been explored indicating the difficulties of working with alternative conceptual models of disability. The concept of inclusion is identified as a fluid concept, with multiple interpretations and without fixed parameters (Booth, Ainscow, Black-Hawkins, Vaughan & Shaw, 2000; Clough, 2000; Glazzard, 2016). This insight enables a greater understanding of the positioning of both the concept of SEND and the role of the SENCo and how this historical background may give context to the perceptions of those who enact the role.

What follows in the next section of this chapter is a critique of the literature relating to the developing conceptualisation of the role of the SENCo.

Chapter 2

Literature Review Part 2

2.4.1 Introduction

Part 1 of the Literature Review focused on the historical development of special educational needs legislation and policy in the English education system and the emergence of the SENCo role. What follows is a critique of the literature relevant to the developing conceptualisation of the SENCo role in the primary phase 4-11. This section explores, critiques and summarises literature relevant to the research aim which is to explore what it means to be a SENCo through the perceptions and experiences of those who carry out the role. It puts into perspective the existing literature surrounding the role of the SENCo and defines an overall context of the study (Hart, 2018).

In addition to the specific fields of the literature pertaining to special educational needs and inclusion, I have included an account of professional identity, leadership, social justice, empowerment and the concept of caring in teacher education. These bodies of knowledge have a relevance to the understanding of the role and their inclusion gives insight and a greater depth of understanding of the complexity of the SENCo role in UK primary schools.

2.5 The contested role of the SENCo

The SENCo role has been continuously guided and contained by government documentation and legislation giving what has been described as ‘practical advice and consistency of approach’ to the role (DfES, 2001, p.3). Such a plethora of documentation suggests that there is clarity of direction for the role from successive governments but, in reality, what has arisen are conflicting perceptions of what the role means (Morewood 2008). To begin this critique, I consider the concept of identity concerning the transition from teacher to SENCo which is relevant to participants expectations and perception of the role.

2.6 Professional Identity

Akkerman and Meijer (2011), in a study conceptualising teacher identity, maintain that identity is not fixed but can shift with time and context. Beauchamps and Thomas (2009) expand on the theme of identity, suggesting that there are other internal factors, such as emotion (Zembyas, 2003) and external factors, such as life experiences or changing contexts (Rogers & Scott, 2008; Sachs 2010). Taking on the professional identity, of a SENCo, means engaging in a series of transitions or ‘crossing of boundaries’ (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011, p.113). Engeström, Engeström and Kärkkäinen (1995, p.319) use the term ‘boundary-crossing’ to denote how professionals at work may need to ‘enter onto territory in which we are unfamiliar’ to ‘face the challenge of negotiating and combining ingredients from different contexts to achieve hybrid situations’. Furthermore, Akkerman and Bakker (2011, p.132) argue that ‘all learning involves boundaries’, citing in particular, the change from ‘novice to expert’. Pearson, Scott and Sugden (2011) assert that:

SENCOs do not simply need to acquire a body of knowledge and set of skills; they also need to 'become' SENCOs (p.52)

Creuss, Creuss, Boudreau, Snell, and Steinert (2014, p.1447) maintain that in joining a profession the individual must accept the core values of the profession and is not free to be selective over the obligations which result from them. I suggest that when SENCOs accept the responsibility of the role, they accept the core values that are established in the SEND Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015) and also the obligations that they have to children and their families, but can choose *how* they accomplish them.

Pearson, Scott and Sugden (2011) identify this change of role in terms of crossing boundaries from novice to SEN expert. Cole (2005a) sees it more in a sense of transition into the role. I argue, that at this point, their identity as a SENCO is not fixed but in line with Sachs' view (2010, p.154), that in times of change identity is 'negotiated open shifting and ambiguous, the result of culturally available meanings'. Identity, as regarded by constructionists, is not an individually attributable role but an 'emergent feature' of social interaction (West & Fenstermaker, 1993, p.152). SENCOs may believe that they are acting as individuals, with their own beliefs and values but as Wooffitt (2005, p.88) suggests in the context of analysing personal narratives the notion of 'true self' is discursively managed. So, as SENCOs take on their role, the premise is that they are being constituted by the knowledge they employ, by the institution where they teach, (by other individuals including fellow teachers) and children and by their perceptions of the role, which together constitute their identity as a SENCO.

Woolhouse (2015, p.134) drawing on Woods and Jeffery (2002, p.98-99) argues that the process of becoming a SENCo is easier when the new identity moves towards being an 'effective SENCo' which perhaps most accords with aspects of their own familiar and established identity as an 'experienced teacher'. Woolhouse (2015, p.139) also identifies an aspect of SENCo identity as 'caring warrior' and this is further discussed in the metaphor section of 3.7.

Researchers who focus on identity in the workplace e.g. (Collinson, 2003; Watson, 2008) have critiqued previous work on identity formation which advocates that identity is wholly shaped by the discourses which surround them. Watson (2008) argues that individuals are not passive against discursive pressures. He contends that identities are caught up in 'contradictions and struggles, tension, fragmentation, and discord' because subject positions are made available in several competing discourses' (p.124) thus arguing that identity formation is ongoing, rather than an achievement. Knights and McCabe (2003, p.1589) also add to this argument by suggesting there are 'competing bases of identification' indicating that identity can be a personal struggle towards their potential identity.

Connelly and Clandinin (1999, p.120) propose that an important aspect of identity is its narrative. Their research suggests that revealing aspects of the self are provided in the ways narrative and discourse are shaped. This lends insight into this study of SENCos, where narratives are used to obtain perceptions of what it means to be a SENCo. The narratives indicate SENCo experiences of changing contexts are brought to bear by changing policies and

expectations. It is through their narratives that we gain insight into their professional sense of identity as a SENCo (Glazzard, 2014a).

Rosen-Webb's (2011) study, in a secondary setting, explored the themes of SENCo identity, their perceptions of the role and their pathways to becoming SENCos. Her research findings have some generic issues that parallel with primary SENCos. Her evidence indicates that participants perceive a lack of clarity and conflict surrounding the role with a shift towards management, away from the specialist teaching role. These findings correlate with Kearns' (2005) and Ekins' (2012) studies suggesting that role conflict is a major barrier in the development of SENCo professional identity.

The transition into the SENCo role as 'expert' was identified in Cole's (2005a) study of (mostly) primary SENCos which indicated that 58% of the participants felt that the revised SEN Code of Practice (2004) assured that they were perceived as the 'lead professional' in SEND in their settings. Additionally, a number of participants commented that they act as a 'consultant' on matters related to SEND with a broader staff development role than previously.

Pearson and Ralph's (2007) research with SENCos reveals a mismatch between the SENCos' view of themselves and how others perceive their role in their settings. Their study revealed the SENCo's desire to maintain the 'specialist' aspect of their identity, however, the data collected indicated a perceived notion from colleagues in school, that SENCos were more involved with the teaching and learning of individuals or small groups rather than the co-ordination aspects of the role. Whether the SENCos are the perceived experts on matters of SEND or are the leaders of the drive towards inclusion, depends

very much on the context of the setting where SENCos are employed (Cole, 2005a).

Creuss et al (2014, p.1448) suggest that the way tensions and challenges are managed can reinforce competence and confidence in a professional role. As the professional 'plays the role' it becomes part of self and in doing so the 'individual moves from doing to being'. Pearson, Scott and Sugden (2011, p.52) describe this process as 'becoming SENCos'. Indicating that changing experiences, changing expectations and changing policy have been shown to impact on the formation of the role.

The factor that makes the biggest impact on the formation and perception of the role is the contextual demands. The following section investigates the reported impact of different contextual demands on the SENCo which have been highlighted in a number of studies e.g. (Kearns, 2005; Layton, 2005; Cole, 2005a; MacKenzie, 2007, Pearson & Ralph, 2007, Norwich, 2010, Peterson, 2010).

2.7 Varying contextual demands on the role and multiple responsibilities

The coordinating demands of the SENCo role hold a much wider brief now than when the SENCo role was first formalised in 1994 (Cole, 2005a). Then it was emerging as an administrative role dictated by the bureaucratic nature of the SEN Code of Practice (Gross, 2008), but now there is a more enhanced role both in national policy and at a local level in SENCo networks (Robertson, 2012). Studies of SENCos e.g.(Kearns, 2005; Layton 2005; Cole, 2005a; MacKenzie, 2007; Pearson and Ralph, 2007; Norwich, 2010; Peterson, 2010;

Weddell, 2015; Maher & Vickerman, 2018) highlight that SENCOs work in a wide range of contexts with the role interpreted in a variety of ways. Szwed (2007a) contends that the SENCO role cannot be generalised because there are differences in the time allocated for it, the status given to it and the resources available to support it. The differences in interpretation consequently give rise to different experiences of the role (Norwich, 2010). Peterson (2010, p.22, in Hallett & Hallett, 2010) states that 'the 21st century SENCO requires time, status and support to enable them to meet the demanding and challenging responsibilities'.

Szwed (2007a, p.97) argues 'that in reality, SENCOs carry out a wide range of roles depending on the circumstances within which they operate', maintaining that the SENCO role is pivotal in the life of the school. But this is dependent on whether or not the SENCOs are part of the Senior Leadership Team (Layton, 2005; Hallett & Hallett, 2010; Tissot, 2013).

Cole (2005a) Layton, (2005) and later Mackenzie (2007p.217) argue that 'research has pointed consistently to the breadth of the SENCO role with many feeling that they are being asked to do the impossible'. There has been a number of studies focusing on the demands of the SENCO role and how these demands are accommodated e.g. (Kearns, 2005; Layton 2005; Mackenzie 2007; Pearson & Ralph, 2007; Pearson, Scott & Sugden 2011). Pearson and Ralph, (2007) suggest that the SENCO role should be referred to, not in the singular, but as 'roles' of the SENCO because the role continues to display such wide variations in the way it is interpreted. Various early studies with SENCOs (Evans, Docking, Bentley and Evans, 1995; Lewis, Neill, & Campbell, 1996 and

Crowther, Dyson, Lin & Millward 1997), all note the barrier of time to the successful implementations of the role, and this requirement persists.

Studies by Cole (2005a), Pearson, Mitchel and Rapti (2015) and Maher and Vickerman (2018) indicate that, although there may be a named SENCo in each setting, that same person may also have other coordinating, leadership responsibilities or administrative duties alongside teaching responsibilities.

These continue to impact upon time available for the SENCo role. The result of a shortage of time also creates other challenges as Evans, Docking, Bentley and Evans (1995), Lewis, Neill, and Campbell (1996), Dyson, Lin and Millward (1997) report. These challenges are keeping abreast of the administration of paperwork with fewer opportunities to liaise with colleagues, parents and outside agencies, and difficulties in developing in-service training for colleagues. A report by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) Cabinet Office Regulatory Impact Unit (2004) offered over 30 recommendations to reduce bureaucratic policies, procedures, and practices to try and free up some time for SENCos. This report suggests a recognition of the bureaucratic demands made upon SENCos but was not implemented and so the challenges and conflict of being responsible for unclear, and at times conflicting government policies continued.

Crowther, Dyson and Millward (2001) replicated the 1997 study of Dyson, Lin and Millward's and again identified the same recurring themes but also significantly, highlighted that SENCos were beginning to experience increasing difficulties in managing the various dimensions of their role. SENCos reported that they were being asked to monitor and take responsibility for a far wider

pupil population than those first identified in the special educational needs categories delineated in the SEN Code of Practice (DfES,2001).

The next section focuses on the conflicting demands made upon SENCos and the responsibilities of adhering to government policy.

The expectation of SENCos as policy implementers puts them, I suggest, in the position of 'street-level bureaucrats' a term coined by Lipsky (1971) and emphasised by Hallett and Hallett (2010). These are government workers who find themselves in the front line of implementing top-down policy. Lipsky (1971, p.394) argues that street-level bureaucrats often find their difficulties exacerbated by:

uncertainties concerning expectations of performance with role expectations framed by peers, by bureaucratic reference groups, or by public expectations.

Curran (2019, p. 91) adds to the debate over SENCos as policy implementers suggesting that:

the outcomes of policy implementation can ultimately conflict with the underlying principles of the intended policy, despite the best of intentions by those seeking to implement it.

Hallett and Hallett (2010) comment on the nature of the role when SENCos are 'overwhelmed by what they see as procedural duty' (p.52) adopting behaviours that colleagues expect from the SENCo role. Layton's (2005) findings depict feelings of powerlessness and frustration in SENCos when trying to develop practice from conflicting policy guidance.

The call for a shared picture of what inclusion looks like emerged from Cole's (2005a) study which emphasised the difficulties and tensions that SENCos

experience in trying to manage conflicting expectations of inclusion. Cole (2005a) suggests that the SENCos interviewed in her study were wholly committed to their operational role of supporting the specific needs of children but were fearful of the expectation that they could simultaneously, and with little leadership power, drive through the government's view of inclusion.

Attfield and Williams (2003, p.30) on the contribution of leaders in special schools to the development of inclusive policies and practices highlight the difficulties of developing inclusive practice within conflicting contexts. They recommended to:

revisit definitions of inclusion and develop a shared picture of what inclusion looks like in different contexts, possibly recognising that the introduction of the concept of social inclusion in education may have widened the agenda with the corresponding impact on the understanding of terms

Warnock (2005, p39) also added to the critique of inclusive practice saying:

The concept of inclusion springs from hearts in the right place. Its meaning, however, is far from clear, and in practice, it often means that children are physically included but emotionally excluded...Inclusion should mean being involved in a common enterprise of learning, rather than being necessarily under the same roof

Warnock (2005) did try to further explain her reasoning for her arguments on inclusion (Warnock & Norwich, 2010) in what appeared to be a departure from her first definition of integration in 1981 (see Section 2.1.1).

What is evident is the conflicting interpretations of inclusion and the problematic nature of trying to define a concept that means different things to different people (Clough, 2000). Personal perspectives of inclusion are shaped by politicians, teachers, parents, people with disabilities and one's own

experiences (Glazzard, 2016). Norwich (2010, p.1000) when considering inclusion states, 'its definition and use are seriously problematic' particularly when the term 'inclusive' is used to refer to inclusive schools or inclusive society. The lack of clarity around the concept of inclusion also extends to differing views as to whether it is a process as Ainscow,(2005), Allan,(2003), and Nind, (2005), propose, which might be driven or led by the SENCo, or something which occurs when children with the label of needs are accepted into mainstream schooling.

Maher & Vickerman, (2018, p.15) suggest whatever view is taken, SENCos play an integral role in shaping an 'inclusive educational culture'. This expectation can be problematic for SENCos if they do not have the power and status to 'influence schools response capacity' (Weddell,2015 p.120). Hallett & Hallett, (2010), Rosen-Webb (2011), and Oldham and Radford, (2011), question the emphasis on the SENCo role of promoting whole school inclusion, over their specialist knowledge of SEN issues. As Rosen-Webb (2011) commented, this contradiction of role only serves to 'muddy the waters' (p.160) of the role of the SENCo.

The concern for the contradictory nature of competing policies has been raised in studies by Clough and Nutbrown (2004), Cole (2005a) and Glazzard, (2014b). The responsibility of driving through a government inclusion agenda as well as being responsible for children with the label of SEN means working with competing ideologies. SEN based on the medical model (see Section 2.2.1.) and inclusion based on fairness, justice and equal opportunity (Maher & Vickerman, 2018) add to the challenging nature of the SENCo role.

In the last ten years, the issue of leadership has been prominent in the dialogue around the SENCo role and there is now a substantial body of research which discusses the need to 'reconceptualize and reconfigure the role so that SENCos become enablers as agents of change within the context of inclusion' e.g. (Laisidou and Stevenson, 2014, p.788). This next section discusses some of the SENCo research that has been conducted in the field of leadership and management.

2.8 The SENCos role in leading inclusion

Weddell (2015) maintains that the capacity and commitment to leading inclusion is a difficult one to sustain alongside responsibility for SEN itself, which was the original focus for the SENCo. A role that Crisp, Lewis, and Robertson (2006, p. 601), described as 'a minority group of teachers working with an undervalued minority group of pupils'. The expectations of the role within settings rely very much on the school culture. This is underlined by Kugelmass and Ainscow (2004) who report that the values and attitudes held by school staff, in terms of the acceptance of, commitment to and celebration of difference, relate to the extent to which students are actually enabled to participate in schools. Booth Ainscow, Black-Hawkins, Vaughan, and Shaw (2000) maintain that genuine participation can only take place when all pupils are recognised, accepted and valued for themselves. Dyson, (1993); Hallett & Hallett, (2010), Fitzgerald and Radcliffe, (2017) recognise the challenges that SENCos face when trying to bring about whole school changes in practice whilst working alongside colleagues who may conceptualise inclusion differently. This is reinforced by Muijs et al, (2010, p.156), researching on leading inclusion under pressure, who

suggest that 'personal visions, staff capacities, and backgrounds and biographies may influence views and approaches to social inclusion'.

Ainscow and Sandhill (2010) assert that one of the crucial elements in moving schools towards more inclusive practice is the SENCo. There are various studies of SENCos in leadership roles, which report on ways that SENCos might approach strategic leadership in their setting (Wenger, 1998; Layton, 2005; Ainscow, 2005; Szwed, 2007a; Ainscow & Sandhill, 2010; Hallet & Hallett; Pearson, 2010; Tissot, 2013; Weddell 2015).

Szwed's (2007a) study emphasised the problematic nature of the role revealing the extensive variations of responsibility and differences in power, status, and influence across different settings. Although a small study, Szwed's (2007a) findings suggest that when SENCos are on the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) they can adopt a 'pivotal' strategic and consultative role, as recommended by (DfES, 2004, p.58). This view is reinforced by Lindqvist, Nilholm, Almqvist and Wetso's (2011, p.144) Swedish study, where SENCos are viewed to have a 'pivotal role in leading change towards more inclusive practices'. However, when not on the SLT, Lindqvist et al (2011) suggest SENCos were only operating at a coordinating and systems management level. Tissot (2013) supports the findings of Szwed (2007a), reiterating that not all SENCos are members of the SLT, although it continues to be a recommendation. Some SENCos see the role as a pathway to senior management and an opportunity to develop their leadership skills, but this opportunity is not uniformly the case (Weddell 2008; Pearson 2010). Cole's (2005a) findings corroborate others, that without the support of the headteachers and SLT, SENCos are 'at best working

in difficult circumstances', but when given support, status and power the role is 'one that could change the lives of an increasing number of children' (Cole, 2005a, p.304). This argument is also taken up by Layton (2005, p.57) stating that the 'core purpose of the SENCo is to lead staff in creating conditions that favour the participation and learning of all pupils'.

Other literature which focuses on the SENCo in a leadership role (Robertson & Cowne, 2005; Fitzgerald & Radford, 2017) supports the notion of giving SENCos more positional power. This is a term related to a form of leadership that is characterised by 'goal-setting, visioning and motivating' colleagues (Dimmock 2003, p.33). Tissot (2013 p.12) argues that the lack of SENCos on leadership teams is 'stifling the vision of the role as well as its implementation in practice'. This suggests that SENCos are restricted in implementing a strategic vision of SEND and inclusion by not having the power to take the strategic lead. Further, she condemns the fact that SENCos are kept immersed in paperwork when they could 'contribute strategically and have the influence that comes with a leadership role' (p.12). Membership on the SLT has never been made a statutory requirement and continues to be a bone of contention amongst the SENCo community (Morewood,2008; Weddell, 2008; Tissot,2013). When the regulations for the newly appointed SENCos were first drafted in 2008, (DCSF) and revised in 2014, (NCTL, DfE) the emphasis is not just on professional knowledge and understanding of the legislative context for SEND, but also 'the expertise and capabilities... to lead and coordinate provision effectively' (NCTL, DfE 2014, p.5).

As part of the National SENCo Award for SEN, Coordination SENCos are required to demonstrate an ability to work strategically with senior colleagues and governors to:

- Advise on and influence the strategic development of a person-centred and inclusive ethos, policies, priorities, and practices
 - Promote a whole school culture of high expectations and best practice in teaching and learning to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities
- Point 5 (NCTL, DfE 2014, p.5)

Pearson, Mitchell and Rapti (2015) point out that these learning outcomes indicate the conceptual ambiguity in the requirements of the SENCo role. On the one hand, the learning outcomes are suggesting a leadership role, influencing whole school culture, practices and pedagogy, promoting school-wide inclusion whilst on the other, the implication is of a more advisory role suggesting elements of both positional and relational leadership. An interpretation of relational leadership is given by Gunter (2006, p.263) describing it as 'being concerned with productive social and socialising relationships where the approach is not so much about controlling but more about how the leader is connected in their own and others' learning'. Layton (2005) argues for the development of the SENCo role along these lines suggesting that inclusion can be achieved when school heads, governors and senior managers share a commitment to shared values and assumptions 'which can only be achieved through learning together' (p.59).

A similar commitment to collaborative learning as a way SENCos can bring about change towards more inclusive practice is also argued by Hallett and Hallett (2010), Morewood (2012) and Fitzgerald and Radford (2017) suggesting that a cycle of continuous professional growth embedded into school practice,

can facilitate a whole school approach towards the inclusion of diverse learners. Further Morewood (2012) contends that support for professional growth for SENCos can be obtained through support groups such as the SENCo Forum (Weddell, 2015) which was first set up in 1995 as a pilot and 'represents a very economical form of professional development' (p.3). The SENCo Forum provides a network which gives immediate contact with other SENCos working in similar circumstances who can provide help and support in problem-solving situations. Mackenzie's (2012) study found that local SENCo networks were seen as particularly important in combatting the feeling of isolation within the role.

Ainscow & Sandhill, (2010) and Hallett and Hallett, (2010) argue for the development of 'processes of social learning' (Ainscow & Sandhill, 2010 p. 404) within settings to form communities of practice (Wenger,1998). This process provides a whole school strategy for developing shared meanings in a move towards creating an inclusive school culture. It is a way of working which is designed to develop a collective understanding arrived at by joint discussion. Lave and Wenger's (1991) 'communities of practice' follow two complementary processes, one of participation which consists of shared negotiation and the other reification, which is to produce concrete representations of their practices in the form of documentation, such as a school development plan or behaviour policy, giving staff guidelines of practice (Ainscow,2005).

Hargreaves (2004) is quick to point out that a move towards inclusive practice, requires:

reform processes that engage teachers' knowledge and commitment are more likely to increase teachers' professional involvement in school improvement and reduce the anger and anxiety (p 306).

Cole,(2005a); Layton, (2005); Weddell, (2006); and Fitzgerald and Radford, (2017) maintain that to engage teachers' knowledge and commitment, SENCOs need to be strategically placed within the school's management structure with enough status and power to enable them to empower colleagues. The emphasis on the importance of SENCOs as members of the SLT, in order to be effective leaders of change, is recognised in studies by (Cole,2005,b, Szwed, 2007a & 2007b; Rosen-Webb,2011; Weddell, 2015; Fitzgerald & Radford,2017), but Hallett & Hallett, (2010) argue that a position in the SLT is not sufficient to change practice per se and for some SENCOs gaining power is a struggle.

The next section considers the literature which discusses how SENCOs can use and devolve power to staff and other stakeholders to induce a more collective sense of authority and ownership in decision making.

2.9 Empowerment and the SENCO role

Morewood (2012), saw it as important for SENCOs to raise their professional capital (meaning developing professional confidence and competence through quality experiences, Hargreaves & Fullan, 2013). Once this is achieved Morewood (2012) advocates that the role of the SENCOs is then to empower others. This is in line with Muijs and Harris (2003) who maintain that the

perceived significance of the leadership position, contributes to the empowerment process.

According to Avidov-Ungar, Friedman & Olshtain, (2014) empowerment is a complex concept. For example, empowerment can be interpreted as a transition from helplessness to a feeling of capability during which there is a feeling of an ability to cope with the effects of the environment (Irwin, 1996; Bogler & Somech, 2004). Whilst another definition of empowerment suggests it is a process of personal development, acquired through circumstances that allow people to achieve greater control of their lives, either independently or through others (Muijs & Harris, 2003; Hargreaves, 2004). For SENCos, the process of empowerment enables stakeholders to become more closely involved in making decisions themselves. For parents and children, empowerment enables a greater sense of independence and agency, and for staff more independence in decision making, which can lead to distributed leadership (an approach that advocates a shared responsibility as opposed to a top-down traditional approach to leadership). Hallett and Hallett (2010) suggest that a distributed model of SEN Co-ordination leadership can best serve a whole school approach.

According to Bierstedt (1970, p.158) power is a complicated phenomenon formed of a 'synthesis of force and authority'. Sarason (2011, p210) maintains that:

The problem of change is the problem of power and the problem with power is how to wield it in a way that allows others to identify with it to gain a sense of ownership of the process and goals of change.

This quote encapsulates the difficulties that come with gaining power and indicates some of the problems SENCOs experience as leaders once power has been gained. Muijs and Harris, (2003) suggest that the hierarchical organisational structure of English schools can create difficulties for SENCOs, because of the necessity to achieve a position that ensures that they have some positional power before they can exert any influence in the empowerment of others. As discussed earlier, there are studies (Morewood 2008; Weddell, 2008; Tissot, 2013) which repeatedly suggest that there is a strong case for SENCOs to be part of the Senior Leadership Team. However other studies of effective leadership (Harris, 2002; Day & Harris, 2003; Muijs & Harris, 2003; Hallett & Hallett, 2010) indicate that the authority to lead may not necessarily have to be with the SLT but can be dispersed amongst empowered others in the setting, in a more distributed leadership model. This form of leadership allows more participation in decision making than a top-down approach. Morewood, (2008) and Hallett and Hallett (2010) argue the case for distributed leadership, quoting the National College for School Leadership, (NCSL, 2006) that the 'potential influence from distributed leadership is up to three times higher than that reported for an individual leader (NCSL, 2006, p12) suggesting that having a SENCO in the SLT does not necessarily mean that they can 'empower all staff to take responsibility for diverse groups of learners' (Hallett & Hallett, 2010 p57). Again, emphasising the view that leadership can be an integrated, relational and a shared activity (Cunliffe, 2009), which can be facilitated by SENCOs through the development of social learning (Ainscow & Sandhill, 2010; Hallett & Hallett, 2010). This way of working puts SENCOs in the role of 'leadership for learning' which Demster (2009, p29) suggests is a

deliberately shared leadership of vision building, people development, organisational structuring and management of teaching and learning.

Bogler (2005) argues that the growth of empowerment comes through having delegated authority which supports the growth of confidence and overall self-satisfaction but Muijs and Harris (2003) suggest that teachers should have a choice of the roles they wish to take on with the full support of the SLT to carry them out. Studies of teacher empowerment (Rice & Schneidner, 1994; Marks & Louis, 1997; Muijs and Harris, 2003; Yin, Lee, Jin & Zhang, 2013) positively link empowerment to enhanced teacher self-esteem, stronger staff relationships, increased teacher knowledge of pedagogy, and, in some cases, enhanced pupil achievement.

Avidov-Ungar, Friedman and Olshtain (2014), devised a model of empowerment which claims that it is 'hierarchical with different stages of intensity' (p.714) rather than linear, as previous studies (Irwin, 1996; Morgan, 1989; Shor, 1992) suggest. The first is only limited empowerment, the second rewarding and the third is change enhancing. Although this model was first devised by Avidov-Unger et al, (2014) with teachers in mind I have found it to be useful in exploring empowerment of both parents and children. In the case of level 1, it is termed limited acceptance of power but in this study, I see it more as a limitation of how much power the SENCos are prepared to endow, particularly in the case of parents and children. Level 2 refers more to a greater acceptance and motivation to contribute to the school as an organisation (Avidov-Unger et al, 2014 p.714). The third level is where the ambitious are fully immersed in the structure of the school and actively engage in making an

impact on the organisation and their careers. The use of empowerment by the SENCos and an analysis of the variations of empowerment directed towards the different groups of stakeholders with whom SENCos closely work is further discussed in Chapter 7, SENCo as Empowerer which forms part of the findings for this study.

The following section concerns social justice and ethical issues within education and the effect, this has on SENCos' approach to the role. Research into leadership has not been restricted to the operational and strategic dimensions but has also included the more critical dimensions of leadership associated with the values of equity and social justice (Bates 2006; Cabron-McCabe and McCarthy, 2005)

2.10. Social justice dimensions of the SENCo role

Morewood (2012) argues that growth in SENCos' professional capital (Section 2.9) will also strengthen the SENCo's position in gaining understanding and commitment to the values and pedagogical underpinnings of inclusion. SENCos in Maher and Vickerman's (2017, p. 22) study report that they took on the role to work with pupils with SEN, in order 'to increase the educational attainment and life chances of those pupils with a label of SEND'. Their findings suggest that SENCos' values and beliefs are underpinned by ideologies of inclusion, fairness, social justice and equality of opportunity. Layton (2005) claims that the moral purpose of effective SENCo leadership draws on the moral purpose within the community and this effectively sustains teachers' motivation to 'effect changes in the lives and aspirations of *all* pupils they teach' (p.58).

Morewood (2012, p.76) suggests that SENCOs should be 'empowered in raising the social capital of those who are in positions of alleged weakness'. (Social capital being interpreted as the connections within and between social networks (Hallett & Hallett, p.54,2010)).

Researchers (Goldstein, 1995, Brantlinger,1997; Dyson and Kozleski, 2008) suggest there is a high expectation from governments for teachers and particularly SENCOs to drive through transformative whole school changes. The expectation is that teachers in school will be the policy implementers for changes related to inclusion which will assist in transforming society into being more equitable. Teachers and SENCOs are all too frequently expected to be the social engineers of society and there is evidence (Ainscow 2010; Sutton Trust,2015) to show that teachers do make a difference to student's social and academic outcomes, but what is contested is the *extent* to which teachers can make a difference (Francis, Mills & Lupton, 2017).

There is a political argument for a stronger approach from SENCOs to combat the inequalities that undermine the inclusive education approach (Liasidou & Svensson, 2014). Consequently, SENCOs are caught in the crossfire of debates about the leadership responsibilities in school settings and the wider 'debates about standards, equity and entitlement' (Liasidou & Svensson 2014, p.788). It remains the SENCOs responsibility to negotiate a course that best fits the needs of the children in their settings.

Researchers studying the professional development of teachers and SENCOs have found the use of metaphors invaluable in giving a real insight into how the role is perceived by those who carry it out (Pearson, Scott & Sugden, 2011).

The next section focuses on the various metaphors which have been used to describe the SENCo role and the insight they give to the perception of the experience of the SENCo role.

2.11. Metaphors for the SENCo role

A seminal study by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) found that 'a large part of self-understanding is the search for appropriate metaphors that make sense of our lives' (p.233). A metaphor is a part of personal meaning-making and whether it is an object or a drawing or a role, it can provide a useful insight through the representation it conveys, allowing a more complete picture of how participants view their experiences (Thomas & Beauchamp, 2011).

There have been several studies with teachers and SENCos using metaphors (Martinez, Saulea & Huber, 2001; Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2005; Kearns 2005; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2011; Ekins, 2012; Woolhouse, 2015; Mackenzie, 2018). Kearns' (2005) study of SENCos in Northern Ireland, focusing on the outcomes of SENCos' narrative accounts, which reveal the 'diversity of contexts, constraints and dilemmas' (p.134) of the role. Kearns (2005) identified five main role types based on models previously used by Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) of differing styles of working. These role types were given metaphors indicative of how SENCos perform their work, forming a typography of the SENCo role. Kearns (2005, p.139) used metaphors of arbitrator, rescuer, auditor, collaborator, and expert and were described in the following way:

1. 'arbitrator'- focuses on negotiating, rationalising and monitoring the use of SEN resources. The delegation of SEN responsibility throughout the school is managed in a way to maintain their access to the experience

and knowledge of other teachers. Arbitrators are concerned by the 'anxieties and demands of teachers and parents and aspire to raise their confidence in the school (Kearns p.138).

2. 'rescuer'- described as having a strong empathy for pupils with needs and are aware of their enthusiasm they may create need and demand. Hallett and Hallett (2010) suggest this typology of a rescuer is benevolent in its approach. Tomlinson (1982) termed it 'benevolent humanitarianism' (1982, p.5). Rescuers focus on supporting pupils with learning difficulties and planning appropriate programmes. There is a strong moral framework in this approach, but it is also underpinned by an expectation that certain children, due to home or social background are likely to be at risk.
3. 'auditor' - enjoys a more statistical way of working and procedures for the identification and assessment of children. It indicates the accountability side of the role along with the bureaucratic procedural elements which MacKenzie (2007) and Hallett and Hallett (2010) suggest leads to work overload and anxiety. A concentration on audit agenda and targets suggest little time for a wider approach to inclusion.
4. 'collaborator' – enjoys a collaborative, democratic approach with face to face meetings. This type focuses on staff development and curriculum development for the inclusion of children with diverse needs in mainstream classes. This way of working encapsulates an integrated, relational and shared way of working (Cunliffe,2009) a community of practice (Wenger, 1998) moving towards an inclusive school culture.

5. 'expert' - has additional specialist qualifications and use them to contribute to training courses. They see themselves as more autonomous and specialists than many other SENCos.

These metaphors are of value for reflecting on the wide range of approaches to the SENCo role and how each SENCo may personally identify and perceive their approach. It allows for a better understanding of what the SENCo role means and it exemplifies the multiple expectations of the role, for example, Kearns (2005, p.141) suggests that an approach might be taken in the style of 'the auditor' and focus on identification and assessment of needs, recognising the legal processes open to parents and the need for the school to make effective use of resources. Whilst other SENCos may see their role as the 'expert' and within this model expect to have a more strategic role involving school development. Those SENCos who see their role as working with individuals and small groups as a key aspect of the role are working in the 'rescuers' mode. There were SENCos in Kearns' (2005) study who did not see themselves as definitively one particular category but saw themselves with elements of one or two of the metaphors, for example, part rescuer and part collaborator. Kearns (2005, p.1) argues that these metaphors exemplify the way that some SENCos remain confined to the role as perceived within the school context. Some SENCos, Kearns (2005, p.145) reported, embraced a wide range of roles 'but the majority tended to adopt a restrictive focus' which he suggests accounts for the lack of exposure to school leadership.

Other authors Ekins (2012) and Woolhouse (2015) and Mackenzie, (2012) have also found metaphors used to describe the SENCo role. Ekins (2012, p.71)

suggests that when the focus of the SENCo is purely on the SEN element of the role, which is more aligned to assessment, intervention, monitoring and reviewing, the common metaphors which are used to describe the role are:

- juggler
- expected expert
- counsellor
- plate spinner

Mackenzie's (2012) study of the emotional cost of SEN work, found that participants also used metaphors of plate spinning, juggling and 'a bit of a roller coaster' (p.1078) to describe how they managed their jobs, believing that this was a particular feature of SEN work. The use of these metaphors highlights the complex and emotionally demanding nature of their role. Ekins (2012) claims that when the focus of the SENCo role shifts towards the duties and responsibilities of a more collective inclusive role, the metaphors change to:

- facilitator
- enabler
- supporter

Interestingly some of these metaphors mentioned are also used by the SENCos in this study to describe perceived aspects of their work. Although perhaps it may falsely create a demarcation of the variation of the SENCo role, the use of these different metaphors gives an insight into how SENCos may perceive the role.

Woolhouse's (2015) study, using SENCo narratives to investigate the practice and experiences of SENCos, also used metaphor. She identifies the construction of the 'caring warrior' metaphor for those SENCos who see themselves as 'battling against people's prejudice' (p.141) within a system

which they regard as unjust for pupils with the label of SEND. She argued against the use of male-female binary models which suggest that many SENCos in primary education are female because it is ostensibly a caring role. Her research interrogated the framing of the SENCo identity as caring and feminised and concluded that the role goes beyond this specific categorisation. She argues that it is more realistic to invite 'committed individuals to construct professional identities such as an effective SENCo which suits them and their local contexts' (Woolhouse 2015, p.145) rather than trying to fulfil rigid expectations of the role.

The ethic of care, manifesting in the caring role that Woolhouse (2015) refers to, is an ideological concern for many primary teachers (Webb & Vulliamy, 2002). Hargreaves (1998, p.835) saw teaching as being 'charged with 'positive emotion'. Caring is seen as a commitment to the child and the experiences that they have in school (Vogt, 2002). In the next section, I focus on the caring role of the SENCo and how closely it has become aligned with social care and what this may mean to the role of the SENCo.

2.12 Culture of care and social welfare

Research focusing on the emotional cost of teaching emphasises the importance that teachers place on care and commitment (Nias, 1999, Barber, 2002; O'Connor, 2008; Mackenzie, 2012). The ethic of care stresses the importance of relationships, with obvious links to the emotional aspect of life. SENCos have a responsibility towards the children with the label of needs and therefore their approach is very person-centred, resulting in a relational role with

the children and their families. Nias (1999) notes that the relational aspect of an ethic of care should be a fundamental characteristic of anyone working with children and young people. Mackenzie (2012, p.1080) argues that many SENCos bring a deep sense of emotional commitment to the role which Dobson and Douglas (2018 p.4) maintain can demonstrate their 'passion and caring and alter their internal state by expressing their own emotional experiences through their work'.

Kearns, (2005) and Liasidou and Svensson, (2012) note that SENCos are often very committed to the pupils identified with needs, which results in them spending a great deal of time and effort working with the pupils, families and external agencies. This reflects the inherent value of the role relating to the relationships that the SENCo develops with pupils, parents, colleagues, and external agencies. Kearns, (2005); Cole, (2005a); and Cowne, (2005) have highlighted how much SENCos identify their role through relationships with others, instead of through other mechanisms such as the subject taught. Cole (2005a) argues that for some teachers their commitment relates to the subject area for which they are responsible, rather than individual pupils but the SENCo is often the only member of teaching staff that can see a more holistic view of the child (Jones, 2004).

The concept of 'caring' relates to discourses on nature, altruism, ethics, and mothering (Vogt,2002). The caring aspect of teaching has been attributed to female teachers to demonstrate how women approach decision making from their experiences of relationships and responsibilities, rather than from abstract notions of rights and rules (Gilligan,1993). As suggested in previous section Woolhouse (2015) argues that the SENCo role should not be generalised and

categorised in such a stereotypical, gendered way. This study is not exploring the issues of gender-related to the SENCos ethic of care but suffice to say that historically primary teaching has been seen as a predominantly feminised profession. DfE statistics (2018, Gov.UK) suggest that 76% of primary school teachers are female. Pullen and Simpson (2009) argue that this brings challenges to men and when they do display the required feminine approach their sexuality becomes questioned (Evans, 2002; Sargent, 2001).

Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) stress that the caring aspect of teaching is 'often highly valued by those entering the profession' (p180) and teachers take pride in demonstrating that they are caring teachers (O'Connor, 2008). A model of caring drawn up by Vogt (2002), suggests that caring can be seen along a continuum of vocalised commitment, caring as developing relationships, caring as parenting and caring as maintaining physical well-being. Vogt (2002, p.258) suggests that a caring teacher is one who is 'approachable and interested in the personal situation of the children', and their role is in creating an ethos where all children feel happy, secure and valued within a classroom is essential if they are to learn. A sense of well-being is viewed as a prerequisite for creating conditions in which children are predisposed to learn, leading to opportunities for all pupils to achieve (Webb & Vulliamy, 2002). But this can only be achieved through the creation and maintenance of positive and supportive relationships, reflecting key principles of the ethic of care (Vogt, 2002).

Marks (2001) advises that caring should not be synonymous with pity and advocates less caring and more equal rights for children with the label of SEND. She argues for a move 'beyond teaching basic self-care skills to teach about

self-determination and self-advocacy' (p.80). Armstrong (2003) noted an altruistic motive where many children within special schools received 'care' from the school setting but were often denied any educational opportunities because they were deemed to be unnecessary for that particular group of children. In this respect caring has to be more than having the right attitude and the ability to empathise with others; direct action is also required (Dyson,1997). Caring might start from an ideal altruistic notion of what is best for children with the label of needs, but this also needs to be strengthened by non-judgemental staff who are responsive to the needs of others (Sevenhuijsen, 2003).

Webb and Vulliamy (2002) reported that social work demands on teachers were more prevalent in areas of economic and social deprivation but were noticeable in all 15 schools of their study. Their study revealed that in areas where social services were being increasingly overstretched, families turned to schools for help. This is comparable to studies by Nias (1999) who found that teachers have a strong feeling of responsibility for children who have difficult home circumstances. Behind the altruistic sense of care are motives that imply a perceived moral obligation of giving children and families, seen as disadvantaged, a helping hand (Gilligan & Attanucci,1998).

The social work dimension of the teachers' role was explored by Webb and Vulliamy, (2002) and their findings suggest that in many cases teachers, SENCos and headteachers provide a listening ear to parents' problems who come to seek advice on a range of issues from 'supporting children with emotional and behavioural problems, child protection issues, and working with other agencies in relation to these and other issues '(p.165). With the shift in

the educational rationale for more parental involvement (DfE & DoH, 2015), SENCos can be aware of the kinds of family issues as presented in Webb and Vulliamy's (2002) study where SENCos were revealed to consider it of vital importance to be readily accessible to parents.

This kind of support and contact indicates some boundary crossing (Engeström, Engeström, and Kärkäinen, 1995) into the realms of social work. Clark (2006) reports that social work targets life skills, family functioning and personal relationships and is best known for when 'children do not receive satisfactory parenting, when dependent adults need help beyond what the family is able to offer, and when young people and adults pursue activities that offend legal and moral standards of the community' (p.78). Clark (2006, p.82) maintains that social work has close parallels to teaching, both bringing 'professional involvement across the spectrum of activities from the 'routine to the moral or life forming'. Both teaching and social work professions bring similar values to the role (Banks, 2008), such as the ethics of care which focus on caring relationships, family responsibility, and challenging disadvantage. The similarities of the roles suggest that is not difficult for SENCos to move boundaries from the focus on the child in school to the child in the family. The consequence of a shift in boundaries to not only support the child but also the family makes great emotional demands on the SENCo which Mackenzie (2012) recognised.

At the time of Webb and Vulliamy's, (2002) study, teachers were very sympathetic to social workers in view of their workload pressures and these pressures do not seem to have diminished. There is evidence to suggest from

my study that there is a dimension of social work creeping into the SENCos role.

2.13 Summary

The literature chapters firstly describe the history, policy and different disability models and approaches that shape current practice surrounding the growth of SEND and secondly present studies of the SENCo role to further explain its complexity. The literature brings insight into how the current perspectives of SEND have arisen and how these perspectives shape SENCos practice today (Macleod, 2006).

This chapter has brought together a variety of research with SENCos that gives insight into the developing conceptualisation of the role of SENCo and sheds light on what it is like to be a SENCo. The literature review demonstrates that SENCos carry out their role in diverse settings, with considerable variations in interpretation. SENCos' work varies according to factors of the context, the size, and construct of the setting, time allocation, competing discourses of standards of performativity and inclusion, membership of the Senior Leadership Team, styles of leadership employed and whether or not SENCos have other responsibilities. A typology of metaphors (Kearns 2005; Ekins, 2012; Woolhouse 2015, Mackenzie, 2012) has been used to describe the complexities of the role and the way SENCos approach it, leading evidence to the notion that the role is difficult to generalise (Szwed, 2007a&b). This use of metaphor as a typology of the SENCo role is shown to be a useful tool to use to analyse the range of expectations of the role.

Mackenzie (2012, p.1080) concludes from her study, that to work in SEN one has to be resilient, to be able to cope with isolation and the frustrations and expectations of colleagues 'to be able to face the demands of the complex needs of pupils and the distress caused by pupil illness, with the ability to plate-spin and ball-juggle in a time of constant policy change'.

The literature chapters have been instrumental in the formation of the research questions. Theories and perspectives of identity (Zembylas, 2003; Beauchamps & Thomas, 2009) and the influences of life experiences or changing contexts (Rogers & Scott, 2008; Sachs 2010) have informed my thinking. Crowther, Dyson and Millward (2001) identified recurring themes from SENCo research highlighting the increasing difficulties in managing the various dimensions of the role with Szwed (2007a) maintaining that the SENCo role cannot be generalised.

Norwich (2010) and Peterson (2010) state that different interpretations of the role give rise to different experiences. Whilst there is a suggestion from Pearson, Scott and Sugden, (2011) that the process of becoming a SENCo is shaped by how SENCos perceptions are generated. Rosen-Webb (2011) took up this theme in her research with SENCos in secondary schools and this influenced my desire to obtain SENCo perceptions of the role in the primary phase.

I pose two research questions to address this aim:

1. How is the role of the SENCo perceived by those who hold the position in primary settings?
2. What experiences and personal history influence how SENCos perceive their role?

The literature has informed the aim of this research and given rise to the research questions which are to seek out the current perceptions, views, beliefs and experiences of a group of primary SENCos bringing a greater depth of understanding of the meaning of the SENCo role.

Chapter Three

Methodology, methods and analytical framework

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the choices made in the construction of the research design in order to address the research aim which is to explore what it means to be a SENCo through the perceptions and experiences of those who carry out the role. There are two research questions (Section 2.13):

- 1: How is the role of the SENCo perceived by those who hold the position in primary settings?
- 2: What experiences and personal history influence how SENCos perceive their role?

The chapter starts with an explanation and justification of the research design beginning with a discussion of my philosophical and my epistemological stance which informs the research paradigm. This is followed by a consideration of the methodological approach for the research design and an explanation and discussion of the choice of methods used to collect the data. The sections on methods used, which include a drawing task, focus group and semi-structured narrative interview, precede the section on ethics which contains an explanation of steps taken to protect the anonymity of the participants and confirm the integrity of the research. Following this, the process of sampling is discussed and the participant SENCos are introduced. There is then a discussion and justification of the analytical framework with sections which focus on the identification of themes from the data and the categories through which

chapters are organised. The penultimate section is a justification of my use of metaphors in this study to define data chapters which leads into the final summary.

3.2 Philosophical Approach

Bryman (2016) proposes that choices for a research approach involve certain assumptions that researchers make about the nature of knowledge and by what methods, that knowledge can be obtained. Crotty (2003) maintains that theories about what constitutes researchable reality (ontology) and what might represent knowledge or evidence of a phenomenon (epistemology) are essential elements of the research process.

Bryman (2016, p.693) suggests ontology is 'a theory of the nature of social entities' whilst Crotty (2003, p.10) goes further to explain that it is concerned with 'what kind of world we are investigating with the nature of existence and the structure of reality'. Guba and Lincoln (1998, p.83) argue that ontology addresses the questions of, 'What is the nature of reality?' or 'What is there that can be known?' My understanding of the nature of ontology is linked with Stainton-Rogers (2006, p.79) explanation that 'ontology is about the nature of the world, what it consists of, what entities operate within it and how they inter-relate to one another'. In research terms, ontology governs our perceptions of the world and what truth claims may be made within a research study.

This study is about SENCo's perception of their role through their experiences of it. What they feel and think about it and what, in their view, constitutes the role. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011, p.5) advocate that researchers need to identify their view of social reality by considering whether their belief is external to individuals, (a positivist approach), or the product of individuals' consciousness (constructivist) because these different theoretical positions set the stage for the overall construct of the study.

I decided this study's approach is more in line with a constructivist viewpoint rather than a positivist or realist because I was relying on the SENCo's to actively construct their perception of the role and it would be personal to them, but acknowledging that 'researchers' own accounts of the social world are constructions' (Bryman, 2016, p.29).

There are alternative positions such as versions of realism which is a more subtle objectivist position than that of positivism (Bryman, 2016). But in considering the choices of a constructivist or a positivist ontological stance, I did not feel that a positivist stance, where the social entities can be considered objective and have a reality external to social actors (Bryman 2016), was appropriate for a study where I sought perceptions of the SENCo role. I followed the arguments of Habermas (1972) and Horkheimer (1972) who critiqued the positivist scientific approach as negating the very aspects that 'make humans human' (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p.151). If regarding research through a positivist lens means that the world is viewed objectively and 'characteristic of the natural sciences' as Flick (2014, p.7) suggests, then I judged a positivist position did not fit my thinking for this study, particularly, if by

application of methods of the natural sciences, hypotheses were to be generated and tested (Bryman, 2016). This was not my intention. I will not be constructing a hypothesis or collecting facts about the role of the SENCo only perceptions personal to the SENCo participants.

In contrast to a positivist approach, a constructivist ontology is one which focuses on the world as experienced and created by actors acknowledging that 'social phenomena and their meanings are 'continually being accomplished by social actors' (Bryman, 2016, p.29). Flick (2014) argues that a constructivist view of the formation of knowledge cannot be understood just with the portrayal of facts suggesting 'that the contents are continually constructed in a process of active production' (Flick 2014, p.77). He maintains that constructivist ontological knowledge is fashioned 'in the processes of social interchange' (Flick, 2014, p.78). Therefore, the ontological approach comes from a belief that the existence of the social world is indistinguishable from that experienced and understood by the actors within it. The researcher in a constructivist approach presents their own specific version rather than one that can be regarded as definitive (Bryman, 2016), with language and the dialogical relationships that occur in the process playing a central role. I recognise that this research presents a specific version of social reality, not one to be regarded as definitive (Bryman, 2016).

Once I had clarified my ontological stance, I considered the epistemological approach in relation to the study's aims

3.2.1. Epistemology

Basic questions in epistemology include, what counts as knowledge? How do we know what we know? How can we know it? and How can knowledge be certain? (Bryman, 2016). So, when studying a phenomenon that may create new knowledge it is important to know what counts as valid knowledge (Stainton-Rogers, 2006). Epistemology can, therefore, be thought of as a justification of knowledge (Bowleg, 2017).

As with different aspects of ontology, there are different perspectives on epistemology. Epistemology in the social sciences can also be problematic because there are contrasting views about what constitutes knowledge. Positivism epistemology 'affirms the importance of imitating the natural sciences' (Bryman, 2016, p.24) with knowledge gained objectively through facts. Conversely, constructivist epistemology has a different view of knowledge with three main elements. These are that knowledge is constructed, it is multiple rather than singular, and that there can never be one true knowledge (Stainton-Rogers, 2006).

Expanding on these three elements of constructivism with reference to my study, firstly that knowledge is constructed rather than discovered. This does not mean that the real world does not exist, but that knowledge obtained about it is a representation of the real world influenced by whoever is making that particular claim. It is governed by what they choose to say, how they may interpret their observations and what stories they tell about what they know. I felt that I could not simply discover SENCos' perceptions of their role. What I could gather was the SENCos' interpretation and construct of what the role

means to them through methods such as their drawings, conversation and narratives told to me. In constructivist terms, the meaning of what it is to be a SENCo is constructed in and through that interaction with me (Bryman 2016).

The second element of constructivist epistemology suggests knowledge is multiple rather than singular. In this study, SENCos are constructing their own perceptions of the role and because each may have different perceptions, one cannot say there is one true knowledge of the role. Stainton-Rogers (2006, p.81) suggests that 'knowledge is made real by human meaning-making'. I suggest that asking the question 'What does it mean to be a SENCo?' acts as a stimulus for SENCos to begin that process. The third element is in consideration of the relationship between knowledge and power. Knowledge is a means by which power is exercised. Those who create knowledge gain power. There is an acknowledgement of the implicit role of the researcher in the construction of any new knowledge and the impact of a researcher's philosophical stance in the overall claims. This study explores what it means to be a SENCo without laying claims to any discovery of the infinite truth of what the role means.

Given that the decisions for this study are governed by a constructivist ontology and constructivist epistemology I consider a positivist approach does not take account of the of participants interpretations of situations (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Willig (2003, p.3) suggests that 'positivists believe that it is possible to describe what is out there and to get it right'.

The research paradigm needs to complement the underpinning philosophical approach. The study is exploring the human experience of what it means to be a SENCo, through the eyes of the participants. What follows in the next section is a consideration of the possible approaches that would be appropriate for a study that explores participants' experiences and perceptions.

3.3 Developing a Methodology

Schwandt (2007, p.161) advises that the choice of methodology is shaped by the nature of the research project and the 'analysis of the assumptions, principles, and procedures in a particular approach to inquiry'. My decision for choosing the methodology rested on what is most appropriate for an enquiry which seeks to explore people's experiences and perceptions of their situations.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p.10) suggest that qualitative researchers think that they can get closer to 'the actor's perspective' through detailed interviewing and observation:

quantitative researchers are seldom able to capture their subject's perspective because they must rely on more remote, inferential empirical methods and materials.

I considered the advantages and disadvantages of both a quantitative and qualitative methodology. Bryman (2016) suggests that although the difference between qualitative and quantitative approaches to research may be oversimplified by thinking quantitative is applied more in the collection and analysis of data and qualitative is more concerned with words and experiences. This is not to say that it is an either-or decision because there are many

instances where qualitative and quantitative approaches have been used together (Flick, 2014). The main consideration in guiding the choice of methodology is whether the research aims require a certain kind of approach (Flick, 2014).

Since my research aim is to explore what it means to be a SENCo I consider the approach is more inclined towards qualitative research. I am seeking the perspectives of the participants rather than a deductive empirical investigation. I see quantitative data as being useful in generating overall themes and trends but not really accountable for people's experiences because it lacks the authentic participant-led voice (Mann & Stewart, 2000).

Qualitative research according to Flick (2014, p.90) 'is essentially subjective allowing participants to bring individual meanings to their routines'. In my view, this fits the aim of the study. I considered that quantitative methods of enquiry do not provide the appropriate means for understanding the individual's experiential precepts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013). Further strengthening my choice, Silverman (2005, p.10) confirms that qualitative studies have a strong tradition of focusing on the individual's point of view which 'prioritises the study of perceptions, meanings and emotions'. Further confirmation of my choice came from Flick (2014) stating that qualitative research is inherently multi-method and whatever the chosen theoretical approach might be, there are theoretical points of reference that exist which are identifiable as qualitative research. Those which I consider are related to this study are the study of subjective meanings and individual meaning-making.

The above criteria as suggested by Flick (2014, p.91) apply to this study. For example, the study seeks to uncover the participants' perception of what it means to be a SENCo, it explores the experiences and personal history which may influence how SENCos perceive their role and thirdly seeks to explore any shared perceptions of the role. Consequently, I considered a qualitative research approach as eminently suitable for this research study. In the next section, I consider the approaches that are appropriate for the research design.

3.3.1 An interpretivist approach

I considered that the possibilities for a research design for this study were naturalistic, qualitative interpretative approaches which have the distinguishing feature of being subjective rather than objective, concentrate on the direct experience of people in specific circumstances, and where researchers engage with the participants who define the social reality themselves (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011).

Interpretivism is an approach in the manner of Weber's 'Verstehen' which attempts an 'understanding' of social action in order to arrive at an explanation for its cause and effect (Bryman, 2016). I consider that interpretivism integrates well with a constructivist epistemology because the emphasis is on the participants and the meaning, they give to their experiences of the role of SENCo. The interpretivist approach is defined as attempting to understand 'the subjective world of human experience' (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p.17). Bryman (2016) explains interpretivism as a way of investigating which has a meaning for human beings as they 'act on the basis of the meanings that they

attribute to their acts and the acts of others' (p.27). A researcher using an interpretivist approach 'attempts an interpretative understanding of social action'. Further, Cohen, Manion and Morrison, (2011, p.17) suggest that because 'people interpret events, contexts and situations and act on the basis of those events', qualitative researchers can seek to make meaning of those experiences and phenomena, such as what it means to be a SENCo. By using an interpretivist approach, I suggest there cannot be a substantiated and 'correct' interpretation of events and this is a reminder that the data collected is the participants' own interpretations of what it means to be a SENCo in their particular setting. Their perceptions are drawn from their own history and experience. Sikes (2010, p.18) suggests that when stories are told people are continually making choices about what to put in and what to leave out, so the final compilation is entirely their own perceived view. The research questions ask for explanation and understanding through the telling of stories. As Bryman (2012) suggests, in adopting this stance, interpretation happens at more than one level. This thesis does not just 'lay bare' the participants' interpretation of their own world, but also provides my interpretation of that data.

The study has thus been defined as coming from a constructivist ontology and an interpretivist epistemology. The principles of interpretivism offer a holistic perspective of the person and appreciate the socially constructed meanings that arise from the standpoint of the person (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). The perception of the role of a SENCo is based on personal experiences. The language that participants use may emphasise certain aspects to create a

particular impression. As a researcher, I acknowledge and accept this, but equally concede that what is revealed in the data is my interpretation of it. Such an approach values the social construction of reality and within that approach, I am aware of the emphasis on 'the value-laden nature of inquiry' (Denzin & Lincoln 2013, p.16). In recognising that research cannot be value-free the recommendation from Bryman (2016, p.35) is to be restrained and self-reflective.

Werstz, Charmaz, McMullen, Josselson, Anderson, and McSpadden, (2011, p. 81) have argued that the 'primary method for the study of lived experience is 'description, interpretation and understanding,' which are all qualitative procedures within an interpretive paradigm. I judged that the approach of interpretivism, which gives emphasis to the subjective meaning of social action, is one that is eminently suitable for the ontological and epistemological framework for this study.

To summarise, the enquiry is conducted within an interpretivist paradigm of knowledge generation that draws upon a qualitative approach for the collection and analysis of data.

The next step was to decide what specific research strategy could be employed which complements the qualitative, interpretivist approach.

3.3.2 Narrative Approach

Since the 1970s a large body of knowledge about narrative has been generated as evidenced by the work collected in volumes by Geertz (1973), Brice-Heath (1983), Clandinin and Connelly (1990), Hatch and Wisniewski (1995), Tierney and Lincoln (1997) and Plummer (1995; 2001) amongst others, which has increased the understanding of narrative and its contribution to educational research. Glazzard (2014a), suggested that narrative is rooted in an epistemological perspective which gives value to people's own perspectives and interpretations as valid forms of knowledge. This gave me encouragement in my belief and understanding that narrative is an appropriate method to use with this study.

Bruner (1987) drew attention to the study of human lives through narratives. He explained the effectiveness of using narrative as a research method because 'we organise our experience and our memory of human happenings mainly in the form of narrative-stories, excuses, myths, reasons for doing and not doing' (Bruner, 1991 p.4) I became aware that narrative would enable me to gain, what Lawson, Parker and Sikes (2006, p.57) described as 'privileged insight' into how the SENCos made sense of their world.

The previous use of narrative methodologies with teachers, for example, Clandinin and Connelly (2000), Johnson (2004) and Rodriguez and Hallman (2013) revealed the positive use of narrative in exploring the significance of both past and present experiences to teachers' lives.

3.3.3 Narrative Studies with Teachers

Both Elbaz (1990) and Cortazzi (1993) claim that storytelling comes naturally to teachers and they regularly play this role both in the classroom and in the staff room. Cortazzi (1993) identified a very high number of stories describing classroom incidents and teachers' experiences from his own research where "naturally occurring narratives" (p.19) indicated how easily teachers revert to using story throughout interviews and discussions when in dialogue with researchers. Elbaz (1990) and Cortazzi (1993) also claimed that telling of stories could be beneficial for participants in research because the story told can make sense of an event and the experiences contained within it.

Early educational narrative studies support the development of narrative as a field of enquiry and as a result, we now have a methodology for carrying out narrative research specifically in a school context. Clandinin and Connelly (1990 p.10) state:

the principle attraction of narrative method is its capacity to render life experiences, both personal and social, in relevant and meaningful ways

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) provide a definitive account of the methodology of narrative enquiry, drawing on their experience and that of graduate researchers studying teaching in classroom settings. Their work, in conjunction with a selection of previous narrative studies of teachers and their personal understandings, influenced this enquiry. These other studies included, for example, the work of Bussis, Chittenden, and Amarel (1976) who undertook an interview study of American teachers' understandings of curriculum, while

Mackay and Marland (1978) carried out a study of teachers' interactive teaching. These early teachers' studies of the 1970s brought attention to the narrative form of research which provided a glimpse of how it was possible to understand teaching from the inside:

Narrative inquiry is a way of understanding experience. It is collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places and in social interaction with milieus. (Mackay & Marland, 1978 p.71)

The early researchers also revealed that the understanding of the individual cannot be fully realised without simultaneous consideration of context (Mackay & Marland, 1978). Park (2012 p.142) when using narrative interview with some success with teachers, commented:

its use means to arrive at a greater understanding of teaching and learning and to probe their experiences for how dominant ideologies manifest themselves in their lives and the lives of others.

This view is also supported by Reissman (2008) suggesting that narratives are situated within particular interactions and also within social, cultural and institutional discourses which should not be ignored in the interpretation. It also made me aware of the part that a researcher plays in building and reporting the narrative. As a researcher, it is not just a matter of accomplishing the capture of the authentic experiences of those being studied to enable meaning to be drawn from it, but it also requires acknowledgement of the influences that may impact on the narrative. Macdonnell (1986) implies that the telling of the narrative to the researcher may impact on the construct of the narrative at that

time. Goodson (2001, p.139) states that the capturing of a narrative enables the researcher to locate the story within 'changing patterns of time and space'. The contextual implications are ever-present in narrative enquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The context of time and place may make a difference as individuals can be influenced by different settings and situations over time (Bold, 2012). For example, in the context of a focus group, a story retold in a university room may be differently presented to the researcher in their own setting.

My intention was to elicit a narrative episode of personal experience from the participants of their perceptions in the role of SENCo. Reissman (2008) suggests that:

respondents narrativize particular experiences in their lives, often where there has been a breach between ideal and real, self and society (p.3).

I hoped that how the narratives were told would reveal details and choices made, allowing for real insight into the SENCos' perceptions of the role (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008). It was for these reasons that I considered narrative as an eminently suitable as a research strategy for this study.

Although a narrative approach was used for the method of collecting the overall dataset, a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was applied to both the drawings and interview data. Chosen due to its reported suitability for various types of data, (Reissman, 2008). According to Reissman (2008, p.58), 'in thematic narrative analysis, the emphasis is on the told, the 'content of speech' of events and perceptions to which the language refers. A thematic approach

focuses on the 'whats' of the stories (rather than the structure) and seeks to identify common elements in order to theorise across the dataset (Riessman, 2008). The thematic analysis involved the use of Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step model, seeking to identify core narrative elements associated with each theme. This is further described section 3.7.1.

3.4 Methods

The study aims to explore the meaning of the role of SENCo using my two research questions:

1. How is the role of the SENCo perceived by those who hold the position in primary school settings?
2. What experiences and personal history influence how SENCos perceive their role?

The study focused on a group of six SENCos purposefully chosen from cohorts who had completed the PG SENCo Certificate in Special Educational Needs Co-ordination in a Northern University (Section 3.6).

I considered the methods available to me for collecting data for a study that is qualitative and interpretive in approach, with a constructivist epistemology and a narrative research strategy and these are listed below.

Table 3.1

Possible methods for data gathering		
Method	Pros	Cons
<p><i>Interview</i></p> <p><i>Semi-structured</i></p> <p>Structured</p> <p>Unstructured</p>	<p><i>Interactive -allows interviewer to pursue relevant themes linked to research aim.</i></p> <p><i>Structured yet flexible</i></p> <p>No flexibility</p> <p>Useful to explore ideas of participants</p>	<p><i>Time-consuming to arrange, to do and to collate and transcribe</i></p> <p><i>Dependent on the response of the interviewee</i></p> <p>No chance to deviate</p> <p>May not get the answers to the research aim (Bryman,2016)</p>
<p><i>Focus group</i></p>	<p><i>Interactive. Good for gaining different perspectives or examining shared understandings.</i></p> <p><i>Can be used as primary or supplementary source of data</i></p>	<p><i>Difficult to arrange, transcription time consuming.</i></p> <p><i>Moderator's role difficult to balance.</i></p> <p><i>May get false consensus.</i></p> <p><i>Might be difficult to interpret and analyse. (Litosseliti, 2003)</i></p>
<p>Questionnaire</p>	<p>Good for large groups.</p> <p>Generates a lot of information quickly</p> <p>Provides participants with privacy, anonymity & reflection.</p>	<p>Response rate low</p> <p>Unlikely to get detail or profound information.</p> <p>Impersonal</p>

		(Burton, Brundett & Jones, 2008)
Survey	Better for large groups	Response rate low. Impersonal
Diary	Detailed and insightful information over time. Comparative from other diarists	Significant effort required from diarists. Diarists may have own agenda.
<i>Drawings</i>	<i>Can get immediate impact & insight which verbal accounts are unable to fully encompass. Creates a personal narrative</i>	<i>May have complex alternative readings/interpretations (Spencer, 2011)</i>
Those methods highlighted in <i>orange bold italics</i> were chosen		

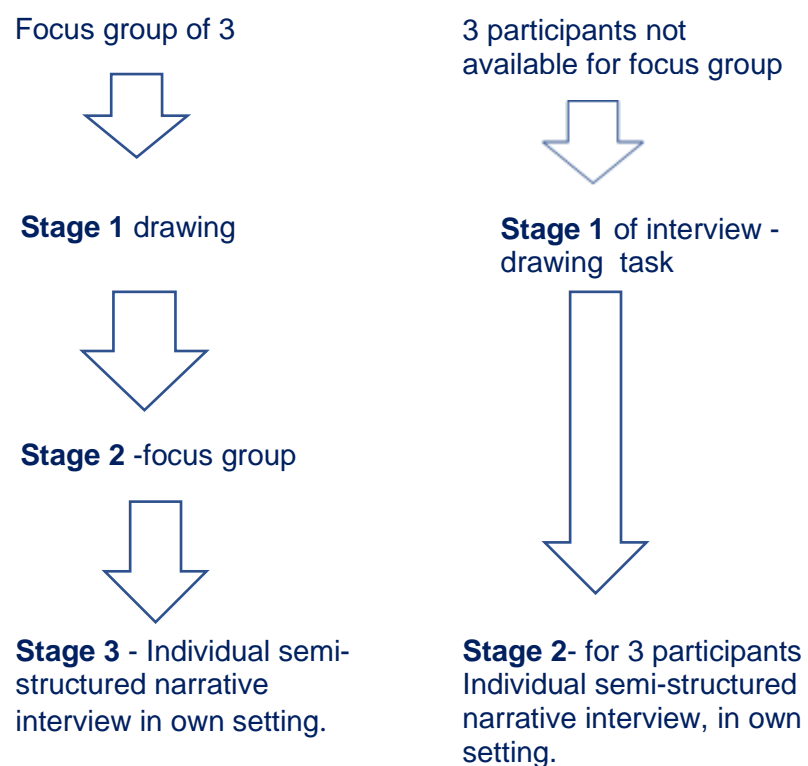
I discounted questionnaires and surveys as methods for this study, the reasoning for this was that questionnaires can pose difficulties of non-response and do not elicit the same quality of narrative compared with personal face to face contact (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). I rejected asking SENCOs to keep a diary account of their day to day perceptions of the role because I judged this to be too large an expectation of a research participant for this study and could add extra pressure to their lives. My choice was for the more personal interactive methods of:

- drawings
- focus group
- semi-structured narrative interviews

I reasoned that using these three methods supported Meyer's (1991) contention that the integration of visuals with verbal exchange is a useful addition and lends further credibility to study results.

3.4.1 The data collection process described

Figure A Diagram to show the data collection process



An added consideration was that by using each of the methods in succession I could draw on the insights gained from each to build up a more complete picture of what it means to be a SENCo in the current educational climate.

I used the drawing task (Section 3.4.3) as Part 1 of the focus group session and Part 1 of the interview for those participants not at the focus group. I judged the drawing task to be a more informal and personal way of opening up ideas about the meaning of the SENCo role. I reasoned this was a good way to establish a rapport and an immediate personal response about the role and gain visual insights which could be used as an inroad to the discussion within the group/interview. The focus group discussion began by each SENCo giving a contextual explanation of their drawing to the group. This initiated a dialogue and acted as a catalyst for further discussion of the role.

It was disappointing that I could only achieve attendance at the focus group of three participants because selecting a time when all six were able to come, proved extremely difficult. Even though only three participants were able to attend the focus group it still gave the opportunity to have a collective discussion about the role. Similarities and differences of each SENCo's role emerged and their perceived perceptions of what gives meaning to the role for them were aired. This emerging data gave me a starting point for follow-up in the individual interviews.

The semi-structured narrative interview was held at a different time. I arranged an interview with each participant, in their own setting, at a time which suited them. I judged they would feel more comfortable and relaxed in their own domain and I would be the one to travel to them. They had come to the university for the focus group and it seemed only fitting that I should travel to them since they were giving up their time to be interviewed. The time gap between the focus group and interview also allowed me to listen to the recording of the focus group to note any questions which emerged from the discussion which I wanted to follow up.

The semi-structured format of the narrative interview, with open-ended questions (Appendix 11) allowed some structure yet gave some flexibility for participants' narratives to emerge.

3.4.2. Data collection

The intention behind choosing a focus group as a research method was to bring a group of SENCOs together in the hope of getting a wider range of responses and different perspectives from one meeting that would not be possible from individual one-one interviews. Focus group data relies on the interaction and stimulation from the group participants themselves (Morgan, 1998; Gibbs, 1997). Even though the focus group was small, it allowed the participating SENCOs to have an opportunity to develop some consensus about the role and share their personal insights and perceptions. The format for the focus group started with introductions and a biscuit and a drink. I took on the advice of Kreuger and Casey (2009, p.92) that 'eating together tends to promote conversation and communication in the group'. It was good advice. A drink and a biscuit helped to

reduced nervous tension and gave the group a sense of informality. I then moved to the introduction of the drawing task.

3.4.3 The drawing task

I started Stage 1 of the focus group with a drawing task. Participants were asked to draw their own picture of 'What does being a SENCo mean to you?'. This task was a way of creating a non-threatening situation for participants to immediately be involved in thinking about their perceived role and to build some rapport within the group.

Visual techniques have been successfully used in research with both children and adults (Connelly and Clandinin, 1985; Weber & Mitchell, 1995). Drawings offer a different kind of glimpse into human sense-making than written or spoken texts do, because they can 'express that which is not easily put into words: the ineffable, the elusive, the not-yet-thought-through, the subconscious' (Weber and Mitchell, 1995, p.34). Visual methods are regarded positively for use with children, young people and adults where perhaps language capabilities might be a barrier (Guantlett, 2007), whilst other researchers (Vince, 1995 p.12) have found that 'drawings are good at revealing the underlying emotional experience'. Further, Bagnoli (2009) employed the use of drawings as a way of enhancing participants' reflexivity and to gather a holistic picture of the topic under investigation. She found that the additional use of 'a non-linguistic' dimension gave access to an expressive dimension and a deeper level of experience, that might not be available in words' (Bagnoli, 2009, p.547).

Merleau-Ponty's (1962) view is that mind and body together take on experience and therefore both should be used, bringing cognitive and non-cognitive processes together to divest that experience.

The visual research literatures persuaded me to use both the creative and linguistic capabilities of the participants to explore what it means to be a SENCo. I also wished to investigate the possibilities of using drawings for making explicit personal knowledge immediately accessible. Additionally, Bagnoli (2009) and Morrow (1998) maintain that the use of visual methods such as timelines and drawings work well as 'openers' during an interview. I also took note of the suggestion of Bagnoli (2009, p.566) that a 'graphic elicitation tool can encourage a holistic narration of self and overcome silences'. Although there was silence when the participants were drawing it stimulated much conversation afterwards.

Weber and Mitchell (1995, p.22) indicate that image can be used as a way of providing a 'language for teachers that makes explicit the subconscious assumptions on which practice is based'. The visible picture is largely dependent on the invisible frames of reference and the underpinning perceptions. Studies that have employed this method, for example (Weber & Mitchell, 1995) found that metaphors were increasingly used to conceptualise and classify the role of the teacher.

According to Gauntlett (2007), the drawn image often functions as a metaphor for complex emotions, perceptions, and identities. This was apparent in this study when participant SENCoS drew images of SENCo as plate spinner (GFG) or SENCo as juggler (AFG). This is explained by Gillis and Johnson (2002, p.37) who maintain:

they [metaphors] reveal our educational values, beliefs, and principles, they contain information essential to our growth as professionals.

The SENCo's drawings gave structure to the conversation and gave the interview a sense of a collaborative venture (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). What was essential to this exercise was the telling of the story that elicited the drawing. Woodhouse (2012) advises that the analysis of the image should not rely on the interpretation of the researcher, but the image-maker should make known their own interpretation. It was, therefore, essential to capture the interpretation of the drawing by the participant. The resultant SENCo narratives explaining and interpreting the images became a vital source of data.

I used the drawing task as Stage 1 of the discussion in the focus group. Each participant was asked to contextualise their drawing and were encouraged to refer to the drawings to prompt them into sharing their thoughts and perspectives of the SENCo role. Later, I presented each participant, at their individual interview, with their drawing, to recap on their thoughts. I found drawing to be a useful tool which enabled me to have an immediate insight into the participants' perceptions and reflections of what it means to be a SENCo.

Those participants who were not able to attend the focus group were asked to do a drawing as Stage 1 of their interview.

3.4.4 Focus groups

Kreuger (1994, p.6) describes a focus group as 'a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perception on a defined area of interest in a permissive non-threatening environment'. I saw it as another useful way of immediately gaining insight into participants' views, attitudes, beliefs, responses, motivation and perceptions (Litosseliti, 2003) of what it means to be a SENCo. The group discussion was guided by me as facilitator using predetermined, carefully developed open-ended questions, (Appendix 11) with minimal intervention (Litosseliti, 2003). The interaction of the group also gave rise to issues that were followed up in the individual interview. Kreuger and Casey (2009, p.7) suggest that focus groups provide a more natural environment than that of an individual interview because 'participants are influencing and influenced by others', as in life. I set my role to facilitate, but also to listen, observe and to manage the intended questions and other unintended questions which might arise (Krueger & Casey, 2009).

It has been suggested (Morgan, 1988; O'Brien, 1993; Krueger, 1994) that in general 'people tend to express personal views and disclose more to those whom they perceive as like them in certain ways' (Litosseliti, 2003, p.32). This was evident in the focus group discussion as the group began to exchange narratives of their experiences. The SENCos as a group were able to discuss

issues that arose which were either prompted by my questions or topics which they raised.

Litosseliti (2003) points out some of the limitations of using focus groups suggesting there is a danger of manipulation from dominant members and possible corruption of others' views. The advice to alleviate this is by careful planning and preparation of topics to be discussed. I used a sheet of open-ended questions that I was able to refer to. The focus group session was more of a discussion between me and the three participants of the focus group. My thinking is more in line with Krueger and Casey (2009) who suggest that focus group interviews should be considered when 'you are looking for a range of ideas or feelings that people have about something....or are trying to understand differences in perspectives' (p.19). Although small in number, the focus group was successful in revealing different perceptions of the role and different ways of carrying it out.

The use of focus group interviews or interviews per se has been laid open to criticism because of the question of reliability and epistemological questions raised about the objectivity of knowledge gained from interviews or resultant narratives (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). I maintain that there were benefits gained from the focus group interview and discussion. It revealed some of the participants' beliefs, attitudes experiences and feelings about the role (Litosseliti, 2003). It did uncover factors which influenced the SENCOs in the individual interview which I was able to follow up.

3.4.5 Semi-structured narrative interview

I had experience of using a semi-structured narrative interview for the pilot study of this research. I found as Flick (2014) warns that there are possibilities where the narrative incidents constructed by memory may be influenced by the situation in which they are told. During the interviews for the pilot study, I became very aware of my part as an interviewer and how I needed to step out of the role of tutor since I was interviewing participants who had formally been in my tutor group. I was aware that there could be a power imbalance which might have a possible impact on the data collected. Sacks (1992, cited in Silverman, 2007) highlights the challenges of relying on what participants say and what conclusions researchers might make:

Telling someone about our experiences is not just emptying the contents of our head but organising a tale told to a proper recipient by an authorised teller. In this sense, our experiences are 'carefully' regulated sorts of things (Sacks 1992, p.248 cited in Silverman, 2007, p.41)

I found that eliciting 'stories' from participants is not a simple matter because, for some, storytelling is easier, than for others (Hollway & Jefferson 2008). I also had to prompt the participants with more questions than I had prepared. What unfolded did not really encapsulate any long narratives about the SENCos' critical experiences.

Flick (2014, p.178) suggests that:

if you want to elicit a narrative which is relevant to your research questions, you must formulate the generative narrative questions.

I learnt to avoid closed questions but felt that my essentially open questions did not always lead to substantial narratives. Hollway and Jefferson (2008, p.35) suggest that 'one should turn questions about given topics into storytelling invitations' but there is a risk of participants telling stories that they think the researcher wants to hear.

Flick (2014) maintains that an interview should mediate between the freedom to unfold subjective viewpoints, the thematic direction and the limitation of what is mentioned. In retrospect, I felt that I did not give pilot study participant SENCos much freedom because I was aware of the constraints placed upon us in that interview setting which took place after school with limitations on time. Further, advice from Flick (2014, p.183) that structuring or thematically deepening interventions in the interview should be postponed until the final part of the interview 'in which the interviewer can take up topics broached earlier and ask more direct'. This was not available in the context of the pilot interviews because it took place in a setting where bells rang to signal 'home time' for staff and the interviews were cut short.

Overall, in the pilot study, I experienced the varied complexities of an interview situation and with knowledge of these experiences, I constructed the enquiry for the main study in a slightly different way. I decided to present a drawing task, that might be more revealing and introduced the element of a focus group in

combination with a one to one semi-structured narrative interview. I also arranged for each participant to be interviewed in their own setting with sufficient time to lend to a narrative interview.

I chose to carry out semi-structured narrative interviews as a way of obtaining each of the personal narratives because I wanted the approach to be person-centred and face to face. I wanted to add to narratives gained from the focus group and this research method accomplished this. Bryman (2016, p.201) describes a semi-structured interview as being a looser form of interview compared to a structured one. The questions are more 'general in their frame of reference' and as there is more flexibility in the interviewing schedule, I was able to ask further questions as they arose from the dialogue. I did use a prompt sheet of questions (Appendix 11) but suggest it became more of a professional conversation as described by Kvale, (2007, p.21) 'through linguistic interaction, where participants' discourse, its structures and effects are of interest in its own right'.

The participants' semi-structured narrative interviews were voice recorded and then transcribed by an independent transcriber. I chose to outsource the transcription because I judged my limited time was better employed in the submersion of the scripts, listening, reading the scripts and listening and repeating this process several times over, rather than with transcribing. I was able to use script and voice recording together to become immersed in the data. Tilley and Powick (2002) suggest that it is advisable to work with script and

voice recording together if the transcribing has been outsourced. I found this useful advice to ensure that the transcripts are an accurate representation of the recordings and it allowed me to make alterations in punctuation to note any inferences in the language used. I had seven transcripts and found this is manageable. The drawings, together with the transcripts of the recordings of the focus group and narrative interviews formed the basis of the data.

The next section is one of ethical considerations which are important in any research study. Flick (2014, p.61) suggests that ethics has a lot to do with 'reflection and sensitivity' towards the participants, but overall ethical considerations should frame and guide the research design to enable the researcher to research with integrity (Macfarlane, 2009).

3.5 Ethical considerations, anonymity and positionality

Ethical considerations are important for all research both for the protection of the participants and the credibility and trustworthiness of the research claims (Mason, 2002). Court and Abbas (2013) suggest that as researchers we should continually examine how and how well we have captured the interviewee's voice. In this study, I have had to exert what has been described as the 'ethics of care' (Noddings, 2010). This requires the need to consider the vulnerability not just of the participants but also of the families and children who may have been included in their narrations, both at time of data collection and at the time of writing.

Throughout the analysis (described in 3.7.1) I cross-checked and compared the data, as Miles and Huberman (1994, p.110) recommend, looking for the plausibility, sturdiness and 'confirmability' in relations to the ethics.

Brinkmann and Kvale (2015, p.99) describe 'four fields of uncertainty' which run through ethical considerations within research: these are informed consent, confidentiality, consequences and the researcher's role. I will use these four fields of ethical uncertainty as a framework to describe the ethical considerations for this study. Firstly, I have used the principles of informed consent (Appendix 8,9 &10) to ensure that the participants were informed of the purposes of the study making sure that they were aware of their rights of protection. Details were given of, who had access to the interview recordings, the security of keeping data on a password-protected computer and encrypted USB drives, participants right to withdraw at any time and their access to the transcripts. Emails were sent directly to SENCos with details of the research aims and the expectations of their contribution prior to the research. Copies of the participants' invitation to attend, the participants' information sheet and consent form are in the appendices (Appendix 8, 9 &10). Information on the purpose of the study and the participants' co-operation in it, has been made clear so that it is understood that the SENCos involvement does not compromise their professional status in any way. Participants had the opportunity to read the transcripts in order to obtain agreed representation of the raw data.

Secondly, the question of confidentiality and anonymity is problematic because although I can protect the participants by changing names, the very fact that SENCos are telling their own stories may mean that some of the examples used in the final text may be recognisable by their owners and others who know them. The purpose of the research was made clear from the outset, in letters of explanation, (see Appendices 8,9, &10) so that participants were aware of possible outcomes of participating in the proposed research. The need to consider the potential benefit to the participants and the importance of the knowledge gained should outweigh any risk of harm to themselves. There are issues with confidentiality, as Brinkmann and Kvale (2015, p.95) highlight, 'conflict can arise between the ethical demand for confidentiality and the necessity of providing specific information for 'intersubjective control and for repeating a study'. Similarly, the consequence of the demand for anonymity to protect the participants may also deny them 'the very voice in the research that might originally have claimed to be its aim' (Parker, 2005, p.5). Confidentiality was given to all participants in this study as well as the opportunity to read their own transcripts of the interviews in order to obtain acceptance with the way their narratives have been presented for the purpose of this research.

Thirdly, the consequences of the study should not be detrimental to the participants. The test of ethical care and responsibility is in the moral approach of the researcher to ensure that the participants are protected and that any potential harm will be outweighed by the potential benefits of the study. Denzin (2001, p.24) reminds us that researchers belong to a moral community and for

all researchers 'doing interviews it is a privilege granted to us and not a right'. Researchers do not want beneficence to be seen as only benefitting the researcher. It is essential that we have the 'respect for the dignity and wellbeing of the participants which takes precedence over expected benefits to knowledge' (Guillenim & Gillam, 2004 p.270). I recognise the need to be open, honest and committed to representing the SENCos' experiences as objectively as possible but also to recognise that there is no neutrality. There is only greater or lesser awareness of one's own biases (Rose, 1985). Hammersley (2008, p.124) maintains that the 'fact that people have background assumptions, preferences, interests, does not automatically mean that their accounts are biased' but Brooks, te Riele and Maguire (2014) add that it can be very hard to divorce analysis from values.

Fourthly, there are ethical requirements of the researcher in providing transparency of the procedures in the way data is collected and conclusions arrived at. There were also ethical considerations of the asymmetrical power relations between me and the participants. I was conscious of my own possible influence on the research and participants because of my known role to the SENCos as their ex-tutor. It was difficult to eliminate the inherent power differentials that existed between myself and the participants, but it was necessary to note the implications of the knowledge produced from such a situation. In order to mitigate the power differentials I felt that I had to play down my inherent position of power and approach the interviews as professionals

discussing the SENCo role, but recognising that the conversation was led by my questions and the outcome co-constructed (Bignold and Su, 2013).

Rose (1997, p.317) suggests that even though a researcher 'may have a conscious awareness and understanding of agency and power this knowledge may not be able to reduce the impact of it upon the research'. I am also mindful of the advice given by Asselin (2003) for insider-researchers to acknowledge these feelings at the onset of data collection, to maintain objectivity and to check that the role of researcher is being maintained. I believe that I did this throughout the data collection and analysis. I took the advice of Sikes and Potts (2008, p.8) in being alert to the risks of 'othering' the participants (seeing and treating them as different) and to 'do as I would be done by'.

3.5.1 Positionality

My positionality in terms of being researcher-tutor-SENCo was one that required careful consideration. Research does not start from an objective viewpoint (Letherby, 2014). Our research activities tell as much about ourselves as about the people we are researching (Steier, 1991). I began this study from a position of knowledge of the SENCo role with my own perceptions governed by my professional and personal experiences which may influence the meanings I emphasise and therefore influence the conclusions. I recognise that my perceptions of the SENCo role have been gained in different circumstances, working within the confines of different policies and legislation as described in section 1.1 of the Introduction. This can be viewed as helpful insight or bias but

throughout the research process, I was aware of my responsibility to the participants and to the trustworthiness of the research claims.

3.5.2 Insider-researcher

Humphrey (2012) writes about the dilemmas of doing insider research and talks of the 'tight rope between being an insider and being a researcher'. Rose (1997p.309) maintains that the relationship between the researcher and the researched should be made 'visible and open to debate'. Katz (1992, p.48) suggests that researchers should make 'conscious awareness of the situatedness' of their knowledge'. In practice, this means to be as transparent with the participants as a researcher can be. This may not, however, take away the difficulties of 'transparent reflexivity' (Rose 1997, p. 317. There is an element of unpredictable risk in research, that is impossible to predict (Rose, 1997).

Merton's, (1972) view is that insider status may have a positive impact by virtue of the status of belonging to the study context and the researcher is therefore well-positioned to access and explore the phenomenon under examination. Similarly, Mercer (2006) attests that insider-researchers often have a direct, intuitive sense that makes possible an empathic understanding. This is especially the case as insider-researchers often share common languages, themes and experiences with their participants. Insiders can have a 'better initial understanding of the social setting because they know the context. They understand the subtle and diffuse links between situations and events and can assess the implications of following particular avenues of enquiry' (Griffiths,

1985, p.211). An insider-researcher can be better positioned than an outsider due to the familiar patterns of social interaction required for 'gaining access and making meaning' (Shah, 2004, p.556).

Asselin (2003) recommends the necessity of being aware of 'taken for granted assumptions'. She advises insider-researchers to use reminders to acknowledge feelings at the onset of data collection, to maintain objectivity and to use as a check to ensure the role of the researcher is being maintained. Similarly, Macdonald (1986) advises researchers to periodically reaffirm and emphasise their position as a researcher.

Clandinin and Connelly (1990) consider that there are benefits of research by researchers who are familiar with the context or content of what is being studied. This considered I argue that my prior knowledge of being a SENCo, and also knowing the participants, provided an effective platform of trust from which I could develop a rich conversation interspersed with narratives (Josselson, 2007). The positive gains in knowing the participants meant that, as a researcher, I could build on an existing relationship which allowed the participants to recount experiences of being a SENCo in a more self-revealing way. I learnt about personal history from three of the participating SENCos which had bearing on the way they approached the role. Josselson (2007) suggests that data obtained with this greater degree of trust should be handled with great sensitivity and respect. This kind of situation can create dilemmas for a researcher because if during the interview, the participant releases personal and sensitive information it relies on the integrity of the researcher whether or not to include it. Since I sent the transcripts to the participant SENCos any

sensitive information revealed in the course of the data collection could be removed if the participant so desired, but this was not the case. The one piece of information that was queried by one of the participants was the possible recognition of the SENCo by others. This worry was alleviated when I reminded the participant there was the protection of anonymity and that both school and the authority in which they worked were given pseudonyms and any traceable identity obscured.

Squire (2005) argues that the relationship between the listener and the storyteller is significant because the listener can encourage the development of the story. Webster and Mertova (2007) support this notion by suggesting that narrative offers a bridge across the divide between researchers and practitioners by allowing practitioners 'a voice in the construction of new knowledge' (p19). This was an important consideration for me for I wanted to hear the voice of the SENCos in their construction of the meaning of the role. It is not just the listener that is all-important in the construction of the narrative but also the audience. Andrews, Squire, and Tamboukou (2008) maintain also that the audience can shape narratives on different levels, each bringing a different interpretation to the narrative. Denzin (2001, p.24) suggests that researchers should continually 'examine how and how well we have captured the interviewee's voice.' There is a recognised need to be open, honest and committed to accurately representing the participant SENCos experiences.

Whilst it was my intention to have an open-ended relaxed interview, I was also mindful that the participants were fully aware that what they said was recorded and would be analysed. There might be concealed and distorted messages within an interview response or a narrative which Polkinghorne (2005) suggests makes it 'untrustworthy'. Clandinin and Connelly (1990, p.10) imply that a personal narrative can display a kind of 'Hollywood Effect' suggesting that whatever happened it all worked out for the best. There is also the consideration that whilst talking and responding to questions and telling their personal narrative, participants, may unknowingly or perhaps knowingly, be constructing a discourse that they think the researcher may want to hear. This may be the case, but qualitative methods are subjective (Bryman, 2016). As explained earlier (Section 3.2.1), this research is not about collecting objectives truths from SENCos but credible and authentic narratives of SENCos' perception of their role. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015, p.282) suggest that trust in a social science investigation rests on whether a 'method investigates what it purports to investigate'. I was able to follow up points made in the focus group in the individual interview checking and asking for more in-depth responses from the participants, but the opportunity was only available for those three of the participant interviewees who were in the focus group. Should I have wanted to clarify anything from the three individual interviews there was an opportunity through email or telephone.

Given these considerations, it is my belief is that the SENCos gave what I interpreted as honest and credible accounts of their perceptions of their role.

Every effort has been made, in the ways discussed, for it to be a careful and ethical representation. The preparations for the research was subject to scrutiny by the Ethics Committee of Sheffield Hallam University and approved. It is my understanding that the ethics of the study are not just covered by a tick box approval. The researcher has to be prepared for all eventualities when dealing with human beings (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015) but I believe that I acted with honesty and professional integrity and the participants have reciprocated.

Once I had established the methodology, the methods and considered the ethics for the intended study my next decision was to consider how I was to approach prospective participants who might be willing to be involved in the study. This next section introduces the sampling methods used and is followed by an introduction to the research participants.

3.6. Sampling

Since the inception of the Post Graduate Certificate in Special Educational Needs Co-ordination Award, (SENCo PG Cert) now a mandatory requirement for all teachers who take on the role of SENCo, I have been involved in the designing and delivery of the course at a northern university. I have listened to the SENCos in discussion during the courses and been made aware of some of the complexities of the current role. This stimulated my interest in gaining more in-depth insight into the SENCo role.

For this study, I invited SENCo participants from the primary age phase (4-11) for several reasons. I wanted to investigate how primary SENCos perceive their role in schools given the changes instigated by the SEND Code of Practice (DfE

& DoH, 2015) which stipulates quality first teaching which is inclusive class-based teaching, rather than relying solely on intervention groups for children with the label of special needs. There have also been other changes in the curriculum, for example, the introduction of maths mastery (Boylan & Ryecroft-Smith, 2019), another whole class teaching approach based on research from Shanghai and Singapore. I was interested to investigate SENCOs' views of these changes in teaching with regard to children with labelled needs. I also have many years' experience of teaching in the primary and early years phase and completed six years as a primary SENCO myself, so I was particularly interested in exploring the meaning SENCOs give to their role in the current educational climate

As a tutor on the SENCO PG Cert, I have access and links to SENCOs who could be invited to take part and was, therefore, able to use a convenience sampling frame for the study and purposively asked those SENCOs who worked in primary settings. I wanted to put together a group of primary SENCOs who would be willing to talk in-depth about their role and experiences. I was acutely aware of my position as tutor and researcher and the possible conflict of interest that might incur from involving past tutees. I was also mindful of Hargreaves' (1996) perspective on the impact of the role of the researcher. I was in a position of unequal power as regards the participants because they first knew me as a tutor. Coffey (1999, p.4) comments on the 'usefulness and the dilemmas' (p.4) of known relationships and therefore it is imperative that when participants are known we do not usurp that relationship. I was aware that in

asking SENCOs who were known to me that they might feel unable to refuse. Some did refuse but those that responded were given the outline of the research and the ways in which confidentiality and anonymity could be maintained. (Further discussed in Section 3.5).

I initially approached ten SENCOs from the primary school-age phase who had attended and passed the PG Special Needs Coordination Award. I sent emails to SENCOs in a variety of settings and local authorities because I wanted as much variation as I could within a small group. I attached a request letter giving information about what was required of the research participants (Appendix 9)). Some of those contacted did not reply but I did get some interested responses which became reduced to six, due to the timing of the data gathering. The final selected group of six SENCOs from primary settings were then sent a formal invitation and full details of the research with information and consent forms (Appendix 8,9, &10).

I was able to assemble a small group of SENCOs which included a variety of settings and roles which was useful in attempting to disclose the contextual range and variation within the role. The final group of five females and one male reflects the nature of the primary teaching population. Those that replied were all white Caucasian of British nationality and approximately the same length of time in teaching with similar length of time as SENCO. The range included an Inclusion Director across three large inner-city primary schools in a large northern city, a SENCO in a trio of linked schools in a semi-rural area in a northern educational authority, one SENCO from a large primary school in a

northern city, one SENCo from a medium-sized primary school in a smaller traditional mining town, one SENCo from a primary school in a small traditional steel manufacturing town and one SENCo from a small primary school in a rural area in a different educational authority from the other participants. (This is set out clearly in the table below). The disadvantage in collecting such variation of roles and local authorities in one small group is that I might obtain a skewed view of experiences from each SENCo, meaning I might just get one person's perception from working in that particular authority or setting which may not be concurrent with other, but I reflected that this might be worth the risk of going for maximum variation sampling.

3.6.1 The research participants

As described, I gathered together six purposively invited SENCos to take part in the research. I had hoped to gather the focus group together in the summer term but that proved too difficult due to pressures of review meetings and transfers of children to next phase schools. One SENCo did comment that perhaps the difficulty of convening date and time for the meeting was indicative of the role of the SENCo; suggesting that the role pressures of time and school responsibilities were a priority. This phenomenon of time was later confirmed in the data, as being an issue in the role.

3.6.2 Introducing the six participants

The six participant SENCoS are regionally situated within travelling distance of the northern university where they undertook the Post Graduate Certificate in SEN Co-ordination (PG SENCo Cert). All the SENCoS taking part have several years' experience of the role. Each tried to explain their reasons for taking up the role of SENCo. Some were more open than others about experiences in their personal lives which they interpreted as impacting on their role. The following table gives a little more information about the participants, their situation at the time of the interviews and their settings. This is followed by a collection of six vignettes which give a little more information as revealed by the participant SENCoS during the narrative interviews. It provides a little more background to each of the participants enabling the reader to make more sense of their narratives knowing the context of their settings and a little of their lives (Clough 2002).

All names of participant SENCoS and the authorities have been changed to protect the anonymity of the participants in line with data protection legislation and ethical guidance. (Section 3.5).

Table 3.2 to show the positioning of the SENCos in the context of their settings

SENCo	Title/role	Type of setting	Local authority
Ava	Inclusion Director Looked After Child teacher Lead of an Integrated Resource Locality lead Safeguarding Lead SENCo	3 large inner-city primary schools in Baumforth	Baumforth City Council
Gill	SENCo Deputy Head Safeguarding lead	Primary school in small former mining community. 200 on roll	Wigfield Metropolitan Borough Council
Rob	SENCo Assistant head Maths coordinator Deputy Safeguarding	Semi-rural primary school. 105 on roll,	Midshire County Council
Lily	SENCo in several linked schools Deputy Head in 1	Works in 3 linked semi-rural schools.	Northside Metropolitan Borough Council

Zara	SENCo	Primary school in a deprived city area of Baumforth 200 on roll	Baumforth City Council
Jess	SENCo Deputy Head	Primary school. In a deprived part of industrial town of Kensey 200 on roll	Kensey Metropolitan Borough Council

3.6.3 Vignettes of the participating SENCos

The following section introduces more knowledge and insight of the participants' life experiences both personal and in education, which they shared in the focus groups, narrative interview and through their drawings.

When referring to quotes of the participants in the text I will use their initial letter followed by FG- focus group or I for an individual interview. For example, FGA is focus group Ava or AI meaning Ava interview.

The descriptions below describe the SENCos at the time of interview Autumn 2017

Ava was in one of the first cohorts to study for and obtain the PG SENCo Cert eight years ago. She now works across three primary schools in an academy trust in a northern city, for the purposes of this study named Baumforth. There was an expectation at the time of interview that the trust was about to include two more schools. Ava is the named SENCo for one of the schools and is also responsible for the integrated resource unit for children with multiple and complex needs at one of the other schools in the trust. She is the safeguarding

lead in one of the schools. She also fulfils the Lead SENCo role for the area locality of schools. Her title is Inclusion Director. In her interview, Ava revealed that she was adopted and felt that she had a privileged upbringing. She intimated that this might not be the case for all adopted children. She believed that her interest in Special Educational Needs came from a moral, social justice perspective to ensure that all children who were within her sphere of influence were able to access the best opportunities available to fulfil their ambitions.

Gill obtained the PG SENCO Cert three years ago and is Deputy Head, Safeguarding Lead and SENCo at a primary school with 200 pupils on roll. The school is part of an academy trust of three schools. It has a satellite unit which enables children from a special school to integrate into lessons and playtimes. It is situated in a once-thriving mining area named Wigfield (so named for the purposes of this study). Gill explained her reasons for being a SENCo were based on ethical and moral principles to give 'everybody fair chances' (GI). She went on further to explain that she felt she was driven by a desire for social equity explaining that she was brought up in a single-parent family by her mum who died when Gill was eighteen and just off to university.

Jess obtained the PG SENCo Cert six years ago. She is a Deputy Head and SENCo in a primary school with 200 on roll. The school is situated on the borders of Baumforth city, and another a large town, Kensey, which in the past relied on heavy industry for employment. Jess says the catchment area is a deprived area of the region. She explained that she took the role because she

felt as a Foundation teacher for several years, that she knew most of the children and parents and had built strong relationships with the families. She described herself as a 'people person' and as a more experienced teacher thought these were good qualities for the role of SENCo.

Lily obtained the PG SENCo Cert three years ago. She is Deputy Head of a semi-rural school and SENCo of a group of linked primary schools in a semi-rural area within a large northern metropolitan borough, for the purposes of this study, named Northside. Lily spoke of being SENCo in another school fifteen years previously when she 'was much younger' (LI) and as she suggested 'inexperienced'. She reported that she felt that she was coming into the role this time with her eyes open to the challenges the role might bring

Rob obtained the PG SENCo Cert five years ago. He is Assistant Head, SENCo, Maths Coordinator and Deputy Safeguarding Officer, in a small semi-rural primary school with 105 on roll, and for the purposes of this study, in a county named Midshire. Prior to teaching, he worked for fifteen years in the science laboratories as a quality manager in a large steel making conglomerate. He admitted that he brought to the role of SENCo perceptions influenced by fifteen years in industry.

Rob was born and brought up in the area and some of the parents know him from their own school days. Rob says he is comfortable with this and does not mind meeting parents and Governors in the local pub.

Zara obtained the PG SENCo Cert seven years ago. She is a SENCo in a primary school with 200 on roll. It is in an inner-city school, (for the purposes of this study), in a city named Baumforth. Zara described it as being in a 'deprived area', due to the decline of the local heavy manufacturing industry. She has been teaching in the school for twelve years and she spoke about the strong ties she has with the families and the children.

Zara spoke of the difficulties of being a Y6 teacher and SENCo. She explained that she thought the demands and pressures of the SATS tests seemed at odds with her role as SENCo. She spoke about the trusting relationships that she feels she has generated over the years with parents and children and this she explained means that children and families are willing to share their feelings with her.

In summary of this section of the chapter, which has outlined and discussed my philosophical stance and the research strategy appropriate to the study. I have also introduced and discussed the range of methods used to collect data. This next section presents the choice of the analytical framework which best fits the methodology described in the preceding section.

3.7 Choosing an Analytical Framework

The first step in the analytical process is the choice of a framework which fits with the methodology and this was governed by my desire to make the best possible use of the data that would enable due consideration of the research aim. I considered the methodological aims of the study, for this guides the analysis (Gibbs, 2007). I reasoned that as this study is interpretive and narrative in outlook, the analysis required should be one that synchronises with the data collection. I drew on the work of Wolcott (2009) who advises that the chosen analytical framework has implications for drawing relevant conclusions about the research question.

The data was collected using three different methods:

- six drawings by all the participant SENCOs – made either as Part 1 of the focus group or part one of the single narrative interview.
- a focus group of three, which was half the number of participants
- semi-structured narrative interviews of all six participants

The search for a suitable analytical process for the interpretation of the data led me to consider two types of analysis narrative or thematic. In broad terms, a thematic analysis emphasis is on the content of what is said more than how it is said (Riessman, 2008) whereas a narrative analysis typically asks how and why. Bold (2012) suggests that thematic analysis focuses on the content of narratives, 'the events that occur, the experiences that people have and the meanings that emerge' (p141) Since I was looking for an interpretation of the meanings that SENCOs attach to their experiences of the role, I considered

thematic analysis a suitable approach for the interpretation of the data. Braun and Clarke (2006, p.79) describe thematic analysis as 'a means of identifying, analysing and reporting patterns or themes within data' whilst Boyatzis (1998) regards thematic analysis, as a tool which can be used across different frameworks.

This was a useful recommendation because I had both drawings and talk to analyse. Merriman and Guerin's (2006) advice to researchers when analysing drawings is that they have a choice between using a content approach, which is a system of counts and frequencies in a quantitative strategy mode, or interpretation of patterns and themes, which leans towards a more qualitative and thematic analysis (Silverman, 2006). I used a combination of both content and theme, by scrutiny of the drawings for content and then coding into themes. But I also needed to consider an appropriate framework for the interpretation of the interviews and accumulated narratives

Reissman (2008) describes three different approaches to the analysis of interviews of recorded speech. The first of these structural analyses investigates how participants use language in the telling and construction of their stories. This kind of analysis is very precise where every clause and gerund has a functional code (Labov, 1982). I was not approaching the analysis from a linguistic point of view but more from the 'critical event approach' (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p.108). I was looking at the narratives for recall of critical incidences which had an impact or meaningful importance for the participants. I did not consider the linguistic approach a suitable focus for the

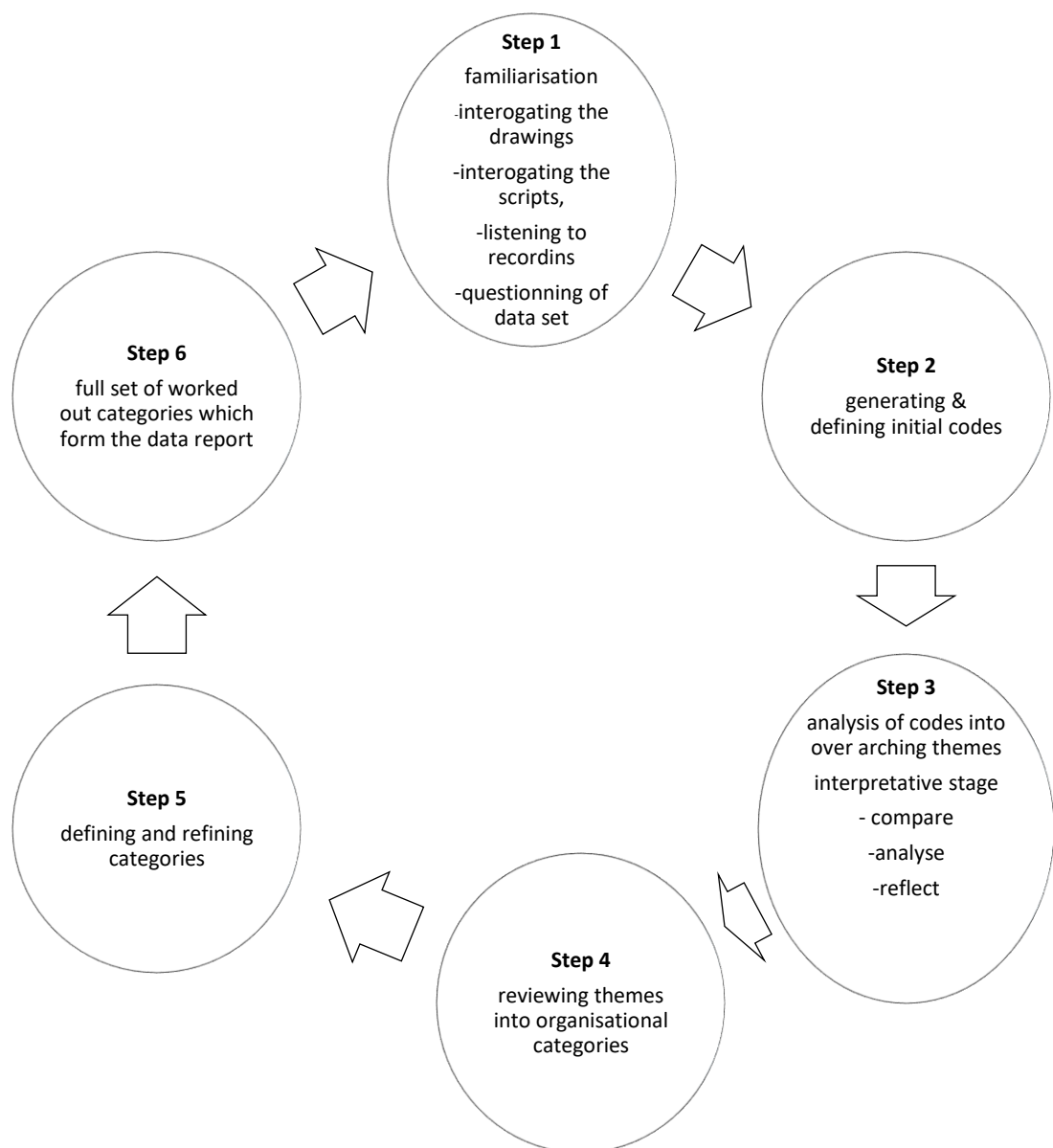
purpose of this research. The second approach, dialogic analysis, anticipates the joint construction of the narrative with the researcher (Reissman, 2008). Although I was involved in the conversation, and my very presence may have impacted upon the dialogue, I did not consider that the end result was a collaboration, rather a perceived view by the participant. The third type of analysis is socio-cultural looking at the 'broader interpretive frames that people use to make sense of every day happenings' (Grbich, 2009, p.130) Analysis involves organising sections of the data into recurrent themes and this thematic approach I decided fitted with my methodology which I will discuss in the next section.

Braun and Clarke (2006, p.81) argue that the 'keyness' of the emergence of broad themes is not dependent on quantifiable measures, but rather the importance of what it captures in relation to the overall research aim and suggest that there are two ways of identifying patterns in the data. One is inductive or bottom-up where the themes identified are strongly linked to the content of the data (Patton,1990). This involves the process of noticing relevant phenomena, collecting and analysing commonalities, differences in pattern and structure without trying to fit the data into a pre-existing coding frame. The coding comes out of the data which provides the framework for the analysis. The other type of thematic analysis termed deductive or top-down way (Boyatzis, 1998; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison 2011) where the interrogation of the data is more driven by the research aim. I decided to use an element of both inductive and deductive thematic analysis. King (1994) recommends the

creation of a template or framework for analysis and I used the six-step (Braun & Clarke, 2006) analytical process as a framework, illustrated in Figure D.

3.7.1 An overview of Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step model of thematic analysis as adopted

Figure D Diagram of the analytical research process



Step 1- familiarisation began with an intense immersion into the data, using the drawings in 'intensive seeing' (Gibbs, 2007) [Demonstrated in section 3.7.2] and then scrutinising the transcriptions of the participants' recorded narratives. This initial step involved constant questioning and checking of the data set in order to lend insight into the emerging data patterns and to analyse any commonalities or differences.

Step 2 – generating and defining initial codes

This step involved gathering any emerging themes that were present across the data set in order to generate some initial codings.

Step 3-analysis of codes into overarching themes

Throughout this stage, I was comparing, analysing and reflecting on the emerging themes making decisions on the best groupings and overarching themes emerged from the data.

Step 4-reviewing themes into categories

After identifying and coding emerging patterns and themes drawn from the complete data set, the next step was to combine them into organisational categories (Attride-Stirling,2001).

Step 5 defining and refining

This step provided a strategy for further data reduction and interpretation (Mason, 2002; Gibbs, 2007). By grouping initial themes into organisational categories, I was able to continue to interrogate and distil the data sufficiently to enable an interpretation of what the SENCos were really saying about their role.

I looked for both similarities and possible dissonances within the data set and did not ignore the possibility of the appearance of the unexpected, so left an open mind as to what might also emerge.

Alongside this, I looked for any key data that would be worth investigating in relation to the research questions (Mason 2002; Gibbs, 2007). See Table 2 Appendix 2 where initial themes are illustrated with examples and grouped into organisational categories.

Step 6- full set of categories.

In this way, the process of the analysis moved from the coding of themes arising from the initial drawings and transcripts towards a description of the phenomena with an acknowledgement of the semantic content taking me in the direction of an end interpretation. This final step in Braun & Clarke's analysis model led me to group a full set of categories which formed the basis of the data chapters illustrated in Appendix 1 Table 1 with the grouping illustrated in colour coding in Appendix 2 Table 2

The next section explains the more detailed process of the thematic analysis of the participant SENCos' drawings.

Johnson (2004) used image as a way to conceptualise and understand the knowledge of teachers, reporting that 'image can provide a language for teachers to make explicit the subconscious assumptions on which practice is based' (Weber & Mitchell, 1995, p.22) I was able to use the drawings to extract some of the major issues which impact on the SENCos' perception of the role

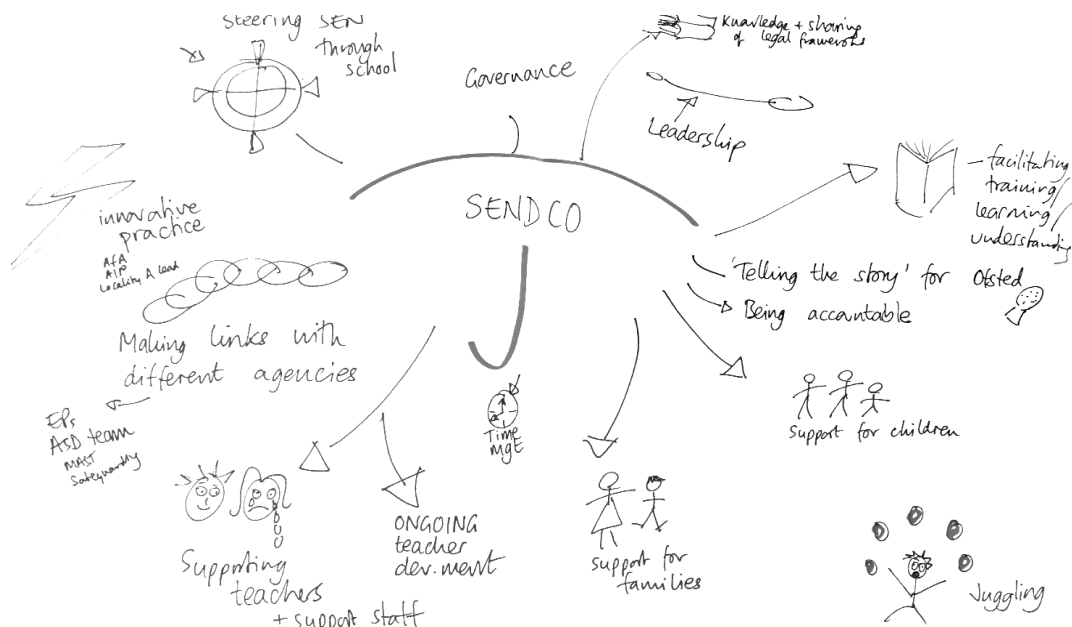
and used these main themes to further investigate SENCo's perceptions' during the focus group and individual narrative interviews which allowed me to probe a little deeper into the participants' perception of the role of SENCo.

The drawings allow immediate insight into how the SENCo's perceive their role. It can be seen from the drawings (see Appendices 3,4,5,6,7) that each SENCo interprets the role in their own way, but with some similarities. Each drawing is filled with imagery that concisely brings together what the SENCo's consider to be the elements of the role. Five out of six participants put themselves in the centre of the picture in either a coordinating or leading role and the sixth makes links to different aspects of the role with emphasis on placing the children first. The drawings are key in revealing a SENCo's perception of the role and in conjunction with the data from the focus groups and semi-structured narrative interview a comprehensive insight evolved of the implicit meaning SENCo's attached to their role.

Following is an example of the process of extracting and processing the data from the drawings. Figure B shows Ava's drawing and her explanation of it. Table 3.3 (p.132) indicates the data categories extrapolated from drawing and narrative. (Table 1 Appendix 1 shows an amalgamation of themes into categories).

3.7.2. Demonstration of the process of extracting data from drawings.

Figure B - Ava's drawing of her perception of the SENCo role



Ava's interpretation

We are a lot of things to a lot of people. The parent bit is massive. It's a mix of being somebody that can be there and listen and talk and go through things but also the 'Right so we need to put you in touch with this is what we need to do next' and about skilling up the teachers. There's quite a bit more jobs than days in the week, but so be it! We're split into localities now, so I'm one of the locality SEN leads. It's that accountability side of it making sure that actually, we are doing everything that we need to be doing and doing that right so that nobody's working unnecessarily or going in the wrong direction. That is leadership-the dog lead, I didn't know how to show that! (FG)

Table 3.3 Data distilled from Ava's drawing and narration

Category	Data matching categories
Enabling 1a,1b,1c	1a, 1b,1c. A lot of things to a lot of people'
1b - Supporting families	'Parent bit is massive'
1c Supporting staff	Ongoing teacher development Skilling up teachers
2b knowledge of policy SEND	Knowledge and sharing of legal frameworks. Governance. 'Right so we need to put you in touch with' Learning and understanding
2c pedagogy	Innovative practice
2d- Leadership	Steering SEN through school 'Nobody working unnecessarily or going in the wrong direction'-I I'm a locality lead
2e Accountability	Accountability. Making sure, doing what needs to be doing and doing that right Telling the story for Ofsted
3a 3b Networking	Liaising and facilitating(3a) Links with agencies Spilt into localities
4a-time 4c tensions	Quite a bit more than days in the week- Juggling (4c)
5b- emotional support to families 5c-caring 5d-counselling	Somebody that can be there. listen and talk (5b,5c,5d) Right so this is what we do next (5b)

I suggest that the immediacy and accessibility of the drawings make the complexity of the SENCo role very accessible to the reader. The use of the particular metaphor of 'juggler' indicates the uncertainty and overall challenges of the role and Ava's comment 'we are a lot of things to a lot of people' is a phrase which, I suggest, exemplifies the challenges encountered in the role. The illustration immediately evidences the multiplicity of expectations of the role and the pressures of time to execute it. The themes that each SENCo represented in their drawings have been extrapolated into categories and then merged with the further data from the focus groups and the individual semi-structured narrative interview, together this collection forms the basis of data chapters.

3.7.3 Matching themes from drawings with those from the focus group and interview

Following is an example of the process I employed of abstracting initial themes from the drawings and then matching against the narratives that the SENCos provided through focus group and semi-structured interview, saving those extracts that appeared to shed light on the research questions. The following example is of the participant SENCos representations of parents and families indicating a perception that parents and families play a significant part in their role of SENCo. There are similarities and differences in the way parents are perceived by the participant SENCos and their interaction with them.

Every participant SENCo represents parents and families in some way in their illustration. Ava and Gill's representations both indicate support of families, Rob has a mix of happy and sad face parents, Zara's drawing reflects that she found the support of parents at times, emotionally draining, Jess represents parents as part of the community of learning, whilst Lily indicated the relationship with parents with lots of arrows, representing questions directed at the SENCo.

Figure C-The illustrated perception of parents by the SENCos



When I scrutinised the transcripts of the interviews and focus group discussion for a mention of parents and families, I found more data to support this theme of working with parents an example can be seen in table 3.4.

Table 3.4 Extract from Table 2, Appendix 2

Theme	Ava	Gill	Jess
Supporting families & parents	Supporting families- 'parent bit is massive'	Working with parents. Helping them to help their children'	Parents were included in the process
	Lily	Rob	Zara
	Regular checks with parents maintaining reassurance	Working with parents on pupil voice	Supporting parents re mental health issues

3.7.4. The emergence of organised categories

Combining the data from the drawings and the focus group and interview I was able to identify common themes, noting commonalities, difference and relevant patterns. These themes I was able to analyse in more detail and began to group these basic themes into larger themed categories as follows (see Table 2, Appendix 2).

Five main categories were drawn together from the emergent themes and grouped according to the similarity of purpose. These are:

Category 1 Enabling,

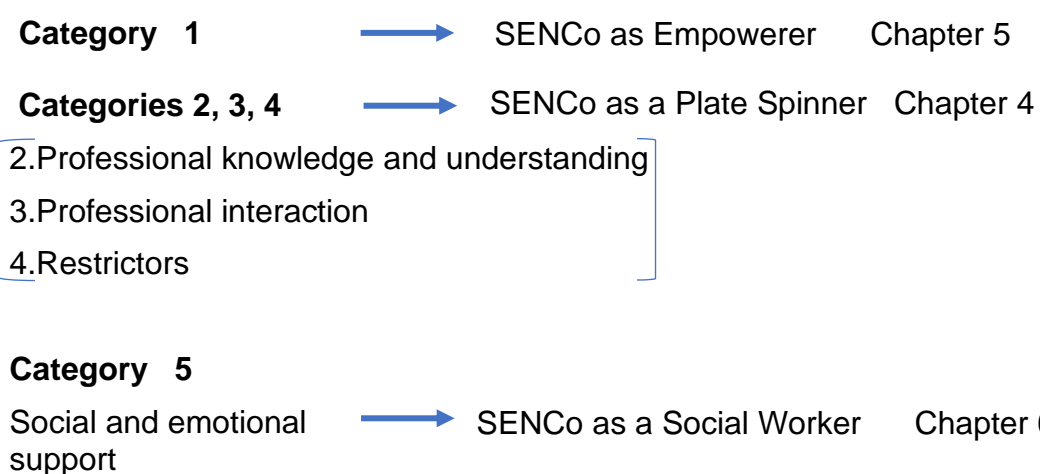
Category 2 Professional knowledge and understanding,

Category 3 Professional interaction,

Category 4 Restrictors

Category 5 Social and emotional support

The categories were channelled into three main chapters.



The analytical strategy is seen in diagram form in the appendices, (Appendix 1 Table 1).

Each category denotes an area of the role which has emerged from the data as being perceived as important to the participants in the construction of their role.

The categories are as follows:

Category 1-Enabling

There are three main themes to the enabling category:

- 1a- supporting children
- 1b-supporting families
- 1c-supporting staff

SENCoS spoke of creating opportunities for children's voice to be heard, for enabling support for families and for supporting and enabling staff through continuous professional development. SENCoS in the study did term this 'enabling' as empowerment, but the data revealed that although perhaps perceived as empowerment by the participants it was empowerment within limits. This is revealed and discussed in Chapter 5 SENCo as Empowerer

Category 2 Professional knowledge and understanding

Included within this heading, is the theme of 'becoming a SENCo' because I considered that the way in which SENCoS took on the role has a bearing on the way they perceive it. Grouped within this main category are the emergent single themes which include specific areas of knowledge which SENCoS referred to as needing to know and are found in the SEND Code of Practice (2015) and the Learning Outcomes for the SENCo Certificate Award in SEN Co-ordination. These areas of professional knowledge include knowledge of policy and SEND and specific pedagogy. Also included are approaches to leadership and known ways of employing leaderships styles because some of the participant SENCoS referred to their strategic leadership role in school. Accountability is also

included in this category as SENCoS described ways of managing this element in their settings. What emerged from the data was how SENCoS described their use of this accumulated knowledge and professional expertise in leading and managing approaches to learning in school. This category of professional knowledge and understanding appeared as important to the meaning of role for the participants and is amalgamated and further discussed in Chapter 4, SENCo as Plate Spinner.

Category 3- Professional interaction

This category of professional interaction consists of liaising, facilitating and networking, which SENCoS saw as creating links not only with parents but also with outside agencies such as educational psychologists, speech therapists, social care professionals, and independent or voluntary bodies. This is the role which the SENDCoP (DfE& DoH, 2015, p.109) emphasises for SENCoS, in working across education, health and care for joint outcomes relevant to the child with a label of needs.

Liaison occurs across phases of school life, that is from early years providers into primary or infant schools, from infant to primary and then to secondary. If the SENCo is in an infant school, then the liaison occurs with the primary or middle school. SENCoS are also required to interact with the school governor responsible for SEND to ensure that the school meets its responsibilities under the terms of the Equality Act (2010), with regard to making reasonable adjustments and access arrangements for children with the label of needs. SENCoS also mentioned aspects of networking such as meetings arranged by

the local authorities, and other more informal networking with other SENCoS in their areas. SENCoS revealed occasions where they facilitated between families and other agency support which is really outside their remit. This category feeds into Chapter 4 which is titled SENCo as Plate Spinner, where there is a discussion of the perceptions of the SENCo in terms of the range of expected tasks that they are obliged to fulfil.

Category 4- Restrictors

Lack of time to undertake the role has been a recurrent theme in various research which focused on the role of the SENCo (Cole, 2005a &b; Szwed, 2007, a b &c; Pearson, Mitchell & Rapti, 2015; Maher & Vickerman, 2018). I noted that the participants continue to worry about pressures of time, bureaucratic paperwork and the diminishment of resources. I categorised the phenomena which SENCoS referred to as limiting their role, as restrictors these are paperwork, time and resources. These restrictors emerged as creating tensions in the role and this is discussed in Section 4.4.

Category 5 Social and emotional support

The category of social and emotional support for children and families emerged unexpectedly from the data as an important phenomenon for SENCoS exposing the shifting nature of the SENCo role. The participant SENCoS highlighted their support of children and families and emphasised the need to aid and empower parents and children because of an ethic of social justice. The data suggest that SENCoS are taking a role in the social and emotional support of children and families that is beyond their brief. I uncovered examples from the data,

where the SENCoS were entering unfamiliar territory to face the challenge of supporting families in ways that are new to the role. This corresponds with the theories of boundary-crossing (Engeström, Engeström, & Kärkkäinen, 1995) (discussed in Section 2.1.2), where professionals negotiate and combine ingredients from different contexts to achieve hybrid situations. The participant SENCoS listed social and emotional support as a priority and described an element of the role that appeared to be changing due to the changes in social support resulting from economic austerity measures and also an emphasis on the government policies and plans for the support of mental health of children and adults (Parkin, 2018). It is for this reason that the category of social and emotional support for children and families is analysed in more depth in Chapter 6 SENCo as Social Worker.

After establishing the main categories from the common themes and deciding how to organise the main themes into chapters (Attride-Stirling, 2001) I decided to use metaphors to label the chapters and the following section explains the reasons for this.

3.8 The use of metaphors

The use of the particular metaphors by Gill (Appendix 3) and Ava (p.124) of plate spinning and juggling indicate the SENCo's perception of the precarious nature of the role. Ava's comment '*we are a lot of things to a lot of people*' (Al) also begins to define the complexities encountered in the role. The use of these metaphors 'plate spinner' and 'juggler' immediately resonate with Ekins' (2012) study and bring to the fore the multiplicity of expectations of the role and the pressures of time to execute it all.

I have found the use of metaphor valuable in this study to both inform and to categorise the findings. My use of metaphor echoes other SENCo studies (Ekins, 2012; Kearns, 2005; and Pearson, Scott & Sugden, 2010), which are discussed in the literature in, Section 2.11. The use of metaphor in studies of teachers is not new (Munby, 1986; Russell, 1988; Sumsion, 2002). Previous studies focusing on teachers' use of metaphors to describe their role reveal that metaphors can play a central role in conceptualising and reflecting on the nature of teaching and learning and are used as a way to make connections between personal beliefs and educational theories (Martinez, Saulea & Huber, 2001; Hodgkinson & Hodgkinson, 2004; Alger, 2009; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Kearns (2005) and Ekins (2012) have both specifically used metaphors in their studies of SENCos. Kearns (2005) by providing a typology for approaches to the role and Ekins (2012) by a suggestion that there is a move away from the SENCo as 'juggler' or 'plate-spinner' towards more of an enabler or facilitator role. This may not be the case for the SENCos of my study

because data reveals that they still try to combine all those elements. Since metaphors do provide a useful way of providing insight into the role, I decided to use a metaphor supplied by a participant to title one-chapter SENCo as Plate Spinner which discusses the varied responsibilities of the role which give rise to pressures and tensions. Other metaphorically named titles for chapters came about through further distillation of the data which is explained later in those chapters.

3.9 Summary

The first part of this chapter has outlined and discussed the philosophical stance of the study which took a constructivist approach leading to a qualitative, interpretivist paradigm. I have justified the use of narrative as a research strategy which is considered appropriate to the study. The range of methods used to collect data of a drawing task, followed by a focus group of three SENCos and then a one to one semi-structured narrative interview of all six participant SENCo's in their own setting, have been presented and discussed. The sampling structure for the study has been explained and justified and the reader has been introduced to the participants.

The second part of the chapter outlined the choice of an analytical framework governed by the methodological approach and context of the study.

Explanation of the strategies used and how the data were interrogated using a thematic approach was presented. The tables presented in the appendices (Appendix 1, Table 1, & Appendix 2, Table 2), draw attention to the analytical framework used and the process of analysing the data into themes, main

categories and then filtered into three chapters. As a result of this analytical process there emerged sufficient evidence to support three chapters which are titled:

- ◇ SENCo as Plate Spinner
- ◇ SENCo as Empowerer
- ◇ SENCo as Social Worker

These three following chapters present different perspectives of the SENCo role, as described by the participants. Together the chapters form the viewpoint of the role of a SENCo as seen through the eyes of primary school SENCos.

The following chapter is the first of the three and introduces the data in relation to the SENCo as a Plate Spinner.

Chapter 4

SENCo as Plate Spinner

'I see it as keeping lots of plates in the air and juggling lots of different things at once.' (GFG)

Figure E SENCo as Plate Spinner



4.1 Introduction

This chapter is entitled SENCo as Plate Spinner. The metaphor describes the SENCo role as one of many parts which have to be kept constantly under check and in place. The use of metaphor in studies with teachers and SENCos is not new (Munby, 1986; Russell, 1988; Martinez, Saulea & Huber, 2001; Sumsion, 2002; Hodgkinson & Hodgkinson, 2004; Kearns, 2005; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2011; Ekins, 2012; Woolhouse, 2015; Mackenzie, 2012).

One of the participant SENCos, Gill, used the metaphor 'plate spinner' as a depiction of the SENCo role, drawing herself (see above and in Appendix 3) in the centre of spinning plates thus emphasising the precariousness of the role.

She describes the multiple elements leaving her with precious little time to accomplish the tasks and responsibilities expected, giving rise to reported tensions within the role. The use of the metaphor plate spinner immediately conveys the frantically busy and at times, tense nature of the role, where a SENCo keeps as many things on the go as possible. Another participant SENCo, Ava, drew a similar metaphor of juggling to describe the role. (Section 3.7.2) The principle is the same, that of struggling to multitask and trying to give enough time and attention to each aspect of the role.

The chapter focuses on the multiplicity of elements of the SENCo role using the themes which constitute the categories from the data (Appendix 1, Table 1).

Firstly, examining how the SENCos reported becoming a SENCo. The section focuses on those moments of appointment as SENCos experience being new to the role. This section is included here because I was curious to know what drew the participants to this difficult and challenging role, and consider this background information as valuable in giving insight into the perceptions of the role by the participants which links to one of the research questions:

Q1 How is the role of the SENCo perceived by those who hold the positions in primary school settings?

In revealing why they took on the SENCo role participants described personally related experiences which they felt impacted upon their approach to the role.

This helped to shed light on my second research question:

Q2 What experiences and personal history influence how SENCos perceive their role?

After the section on 'becoming a Plate Spinner', the chapter moves on to a discussion of the data revealing some of the other elements and perceived challenges of the SENCo role, these include professional knowledge and

understanding, pedagogy, leadership, accountability, liaising, facilitating and networking. The penultimate section is about the perceived restrictors to the role of time, paperwork and causes of tension. The summary concludes the chapter.

4.2 Becoming a Plate Spinner: jumped, pushed or chosen?

SENCoS spoke of their fears and anxieties prior to taking up the position and of their resolve to support children and families. Some of the group also spoke of their motivational beliefs in the principles of inclusion. Studies of SENCoS (Cole, 2005a&b; Layton, 2005; Szwed, 2007a&b; Norwich 2010; Rosen- Webb, 2011) document the challenging nature of the role and there is evidence from a National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT,2016), survey of recruitment which reports that the position of SENCo is difficult to fill.

Each SENCo narrated their personal reasons for taking up and accepting the position. Each has a different story of how they were appointed but what became evident from the narrative data were the similarities of their stories. Only one of the participants made a conscious decision to apply for the role, the other five were persuaded by senior colleagues to apply. What follows are extracts from the narrated accounts of how each participant SENCo was appointed and their thoughts and feelings about taking on the role.

Five of the six participants reported that their immediate reaction to acceptance of the role was a feeling of fear, unease or panic. They spoke about the fear of the responsibilities of the SENCo role and described their feelings as follows;

Jess: *A little bit terrified. (JI)*
Gill: *Rabbit in the headlights. (GFG)*
Ava: *Slight panic. Fear of not knowing what I need to know. (AFG)*
Zara: *I don't know anything about it! (ZI)*
Rob: *Poacher turned gamekeeper! (RFG)*

Only Lily reported that she accepted the role without too much fear or anxiety because she applied for the position aware of the expectations it involved. She explained that she had been a SENCo in a previous school but did admit that it was the deputy role conjoined with the SENCo role, that attracted her to apply for this current post. She freely admitted that the balance between her Deputy duties and the SENCo role was now heavily weighted towards the SENCo role

Rob related that his first reaction in taking on the role was to laugh incredulously, believing that he might not be entirely suited to the role. Rob spoke of immediately setting his own agenda, stipulating in his acceptance of the role, the terms under which he was willing to carry it out. He revealed that he had a thorough dislike of bureaucratic paperwork and in accepting the SENCo role reported that he felt a necessity to change the existing school approach.

Rob:

If you're going to offer me SENCo it's not going to have lots of paperwork tied up with it because that's not what I believe the job should be". I volunteered (with the proviso) they let me do it the way that I thought it could be done. It's not an add-on' (RFG)

Zara was asked to apply for the position in her school because, she reported, the Head thought 'she would be good at it'. She admitted to wanting a challenge, 'a step up' to a post with some responsibility. She said that she had her eye on the Literacy Coordinator's role, but this was not available at the time,

so she accepted the challenge of SENCo instead. Similarly, Jess was asked to apply by the Head who had previously held the role but, as Jess reported, the Head felt it was becoming too unmanageable alongside headship duties. However, just after Jess had accepted the role of SENCo she was informed that she needed to attend an accredited Master's level course to obtain the SENCo PG Cert qualification. Jess reported that this had not been explained beforehand but said that she did not have much choice after accepting and was obliged to attend the course. She reportedly found it extremely useful.

Gill admitted that she had been heavily involved in assisting the previous SENCo in school, and when the SENCo retired Gill offered to take on the role, 'if there's no-one else who wants to do it' (GFG).

Ava and Rob said they accepted the role in their settings because 'there was no-one else' (AI, RI) and '*the school needed one*' (RI, AI).

Ava: *I didn't end up here really on purpose. I was a deputy in another school and ended up being seconded here and then roles came up (AI).*

The participants saw the SENCo role as different from the responsibility and accountability of a teaching role. There was a consensus from the focus group about the difference between the role of the class teacher and the role of the SENCo. The focus group suggested that the responsibilities of accountability and the safeguarding issues as set out in the Teachers Standards (DfE,2012) were manageable as a class teacher, but became hugely magnified when in the role of SENCo. Fitzgerald and Radford (2017) suggest that many in the role are called upon to 'create space that is unfamiliar to them' (p.454). It was in the context of the whole school responsibility that participating SENCos reported initially frightening. For example, from the focus group;

Researcher: Why, why did you feel like that?

Gill: *I think because you've got all these different things to spin, and suddenly being faced with it all in one go, it's like...What do you prioritise? Which is the most important thing? Where do you start? I guess it's like 'chicken and the egg' but with lots and lots of chickens and a basket of eggs as well. So, it's, kind of, where do you start with it all? (GFG).*

Ava: *And it's bigger than your own class, you know, if you've got your own class then you know what needs are, (what's) happening and what's done, you can be sure that you've done the right thing for children, but there's an awful lot of children in a whole school (AFG).*

This extract of conversation with Gill and Ava, from the focus group, highlights the metaphor of spinning plates. Gill recognised that there was a multiplicity of things to do within the role and Ava emphasised the larger number of children that they had to be responsible for when compared with previous experiences of only being responsible for one's own class. The SENCo participants talked of the fear and anxiety they had of the demanding pressures that came with the post and not knowing where to begin. Studies by Hallett and Hallett (2010), Norwich (2010), Peterson (2010) and Ekins (2012) confirm the changing nature of the role which gives rise to a degree of uncertainty. Gill admitted the overwhelming fear of the responsibility for the whole school and was tinged with the panic of '*Where do you start with it all?*'(GFG).

The anxieties that SENCos' express illustrates the move from novice to 'expert' indicated by Akkerman and Bakker (2011) in studies of crossing boundaries (Section 2.6). Also highlighted by Pearson, Scott and Sugden (2011) in considering the aspect of 'becoming a SENCo' when constructing their new professional identity as a SENCo.

The data revealed that the SENCo's motivation for taking on the role was predicated on their belief of equal opportunity encapsulating perceptions of the principles of inclusiveness based on the social and the disability rights models which SENCos saw as moving into a more positive holistic support of children. For example, Ava spoke of building relationships with families, making sure that children with labelled needs and their families were getting the opportunities they deserved. (Discussed in Section 6.3).

Both Gill and Ava used the term 'corny' to describe their feelings about taking on the role, tentatively apologising for their sentiments in wanting to make a difference to the lives of the children and the families with whom they work. For example, '*I know it sounds corny* (GFG) or '*a bit corny, but a privilege*' (AFG).

Rob spoke in terms of doing the just and '*right thing*' (RI) for the child, to enable children to feel equally valued. Both Rob and Lily stressed the importance of the values of equity which they interpreted as their desire for all children to be equally valued and have equal opportunity to participate in the life of the school. Glazzard (2014b, p.52) refers to these values as the 'core principles of inclusion'.

Rob explained his thinking:

it was about doing the right thing for the child in the setting in the school that we're in. Seeing them enjoying being in school and feeling equally valued as members of the school to everybody else (RI).

Lily talked about removing barriers to learning as a way of supporting children's inclusion and participation in learning activities.

Lily: *I think that all children should have equal access to learning, and if there are barriers to learning, that those barriers are reduced... the pupils can then, be able to participate as all pupils would, so regardless of their need, they are able to actively participate, and make progress and be happy, feel safe and secure and that's obviously our main aim as a school (LI).*

Rob and Lily both spoke of the importance for all children in the school to have an equal opportunity to participate and to feel valued. They also referred to a need for all children to feel happy and to be able to enjoy school.

Ava and Gill spoke with a genuine passion about their role in supporting children with a label of needs but there is an underlying assumption that the families needed their help and support. This positioning of the families, I argue, is rooted in sociological theories and studies about parenting styles and deprivation mingled with statistics showing that socio-economic background remains the strongest predictor of educational attainment in the UK (Lupton, Heath and Slater 2009; Field 2010; Strand, 2011). Ava and Gill spoke of supporting children and families and claim to be driven to ‘*make a difference*’ in the lives of the children.

For Ava and Gill, their motivation for the role of SENCo came from personal experiences in their own lives. Ava explained that she was adopted, and this has some bearing on her personal belief and motivation. She spoke of her positive experience of adoption as being a driving force to be an advocate for the children with the label of attachment disorder.

Ava: *I didn't think it made any difference to anything,but it interests me ..that I'm finding that I'm really championing attachment and our looked after children, and so actually maybe I am a bit more drawn to it than I thought... Then I realised consciously I was (AI).*

Gill suggested that her interest in children with the label of needs came from a desire to help and support those whom she perceives as disadvantaged.

Gill: *I've always had an interest in special needs but particularly safeguarding because of my interest in deprived families and helping families like that (G1).*

Gill explained her motivation thus:

I lost my mum when I was 18 and I was on my own, I didn't have any siblings or a dad, and I still went to uni, and I don't know if many people do that, and maybe that might be a driver. If I was a child with special needs, I'd like somebody to be my voice and so I think that's where it comes from really, I've created the role (G1).

Gill explained that she created this supporting role with children and their families because of her own reported experiences in her youth, of being alone with no-one to turn to. She related that she was able to pursue this aspect of role because her role in the school as SENCo and Deputy Head, gave her the positional power to enable and support children and families whom she considered needy. The role Gill described is not unlike the role of 'caring warrior' (Woolhouse, 2015) that Ava described for herself, but more of a fixer or remediator rather than a warrior. Both SENCos display an approach which is constructed as caring and supportive but has its' base in theories of disadvantage and deficit (Tomlinson, 2017).

Maher and Vickerman (2018 p.18) found similar paradoxes in their study of SENCos and Learning Assistants where they uncovered a strong belief in fairness, justice and equity but a desire to assist children and families because of a 'perceived deficit of capability'.

The female SENCOs in this study appear to replicate Maher and Vickerman's (2018) findings. Where they perceive a necessity of caring, protecting and supporting as part of their SENCO role but also display a benevolent paternalistic perception (Tomlinson, 2017) that vulnerable children and families require help in parenting.

Gill and Ava recounted childhood experiences which gave them the motivational drive to create a supportive role for children and parent. Lily's approach, she explained was governed by her previous experience of being a SENCO, when not being a member of the senior leadership team with limited authority, thwarted her attempts to make changes. Her current role includes being Deputy Head and she commented 'I've got much more authority to do things now.'

Lily discussed how previous experiences impacted on her own practice.

Lily: *I think some of it comes from previous experience I've worked in much bigger schools that have had a much greater range of need. I visited special schools myself because I wanted to improve my own practice, ...seeing how you can tailor-make some of the elements of the curriculum to individual children, how that can then be manageable and have an impact on that child within a mainstream setting. So that's had a big impact on me (LI).*

Other SENCOs described positive influential experiences which made an impact on their perceptions of the role. Jess gave an example of a scenario that she saw as successful working with parents.

Jess: *in the early days you can see the tension and the stress (of parents) and the lack of acceptance sometimes, but then, as you go through the process, it's lovely for them to come in and they relax, and they're happy to talk to you and you can see that they're now accepting, and they're making changes in the home that's having a big impact in school and for themselves, for their own lives. That's really nice. (JI)*

Jess exemplified this scenario as an experience that went well and provided successful outcomes for the child and the family as a result of working together. Zara also cited how working with parents really influenced her perception of the role. She described an experience that was critical for her learning (Tripp, 1993) when she discovered, through talking with parents, that a child's behaviour in school could be deceptive.

Zara: *When you hear from parents that (the child) is going home and maybe unhappy.. once you hear from (parents) that's going on it's not just about how they're presenting it, you've got to look underneath that, and treat each day as being very different, that's sort of my approach a lot now, and I try to explain that to other teachers (ZI).*

Rob explained his approach to the role of SENCo as being influenced by previous experiences in total quality performance and quality systems, having been in working in industry for fifteen years before becoming a primary school teacher. He described his approach using an analogy of horse racing in relation to the systems in companies or school,

Rob: *what most companies and most schools end up with . are things that are supposed to keep you safe, (but) some of them become barriers that you have to jump over. So, what your system should have is the fence to keep you safe on the outside, you don't have to jump them in the middle. But what you find in most companies is their quality systems have become horse jumps. They've become show jumping, it's just a room of things you have to jump over, and at some point, at the end, they tell you whether you got there. I brought that (analogy) into school - that's the same analogy of our systems, the process you do for these children should be as easy to do as possible (RI).*

Rob explained that anything he felt was a '*fence or barrier*' to teachers that just '*ticked a box*' he challenged, questioning the value and outcome of the task. Consequently, he reported, that the systems he set up for protecting children with the label of needs were inclusively whole school systems.

The narratives of the SENCos depict personal, positive and negative experiences which have influenced their perception of the SENCo role and impacted on the meaning of the role for them. It is noteworthy that of the six SENCos in this study, only Lily willingly applied for the SENCo role. The other SENCo participants were asked personally because they reported, the Head thought 'they would be good at it' (ZI) or 'there was no one else willing' (GFG). The recruitment of SENCos has caused some concern in schools. The NAHT (2016) survey revealed that 60% of SENCos were recruited with difficulty and in 23% of cases, schools failed to recruit altogether. These statistics raise questions about the challenges and desirability of the post of SENCo.

Although there were some similarities in the offer and acceptance of the role of SENCos in the study, the data revealed influences of personal, professional and of context in the SENCos' perception of the role. Each of these influences playing a part in the professional development of the role. The data indicate the transitions that the SENCos made as they moved from 'doing to being' a SENCo (Creuss et al 2014, p.1448).

Previous researches of SENCos (Cowne, 2005; Pearson 2008; Norwich 2010) highlights the importance of context. Differences in context are not just the size of setting or the numbers of children with additional needs, it is also dependent on the culture of the school (Maher & Vickerman, 2018).

However, despite the foreseen difficulties of the role, the SENCOs in the study accepted the post of SENCO, albeit with some attached anxiety and trepidation. Later they began to identify other challenges and complexities of the role which they encountered, and these form the basis of the following chapters.

What follows in this next section is a discussion of the main categories (Appendix 1 Table 1) that emerged from the data to form the basis of this chapter of SENCO as Plate Spinner.

4.2.1 Knowledge of policy and SEND

There is an expectation that SENCOs will have some knowledge of national legal and local policy and specific knowledge of special educational needs. This next section outlines the SENCOs' perceptions of how they view this element of their role.

The SENCOs in the study, acknowledge that they have specific knowledge in the area of special educational needs which they use to lead SEND in their settings and to support parents and colleagues. This aspect of professional guidance is a requisite as noted in the SEND Code of Practice (DfE/DoH, 2015 p 108). There is a requirement for SENCOs to impart knowledge in the form of continual professional development (CPD) (DfE/DoH. Section 6.89). Training colleagues is a recognised aspect of the role. Ava saw it as a necessity to develop an awareness for colleagues of legal and policy frameworks.

Ava: *making sure that the things that need to be there are there and people are aware of and understand what we need to do (AI).*

Whilst Gill suggested that it is necessary to develop staff knowledge of different specific labelled needs

Gill: *I've just arranged a (session) on social stories. we've got one coming up on precision teaching, we've done a few online courses.. we've done ASD and ADHD, it's more acknowledging information (GFG).*

Gill said she likes to be seen as an expert:

I talk a good talk, so I like to put myself in the role of the expert - whether I actually am or not remains to be seen! Although, I suppose, on the flip side, you do have to watch that colleagues don't get over-reliant and de-skill themselves, and I think that can happen. I like to make people feel secure, so I don't like them to think, "Oh goodness it's something we can't cope with - if Gill doesn't know, nobody does!"(GFG).

Zara (ZI) spoke of teachers needing to be aware of a variety of strategies for teaching children with complex needs. (discussed more in Section 5.4). She reported her teaching benefitted by having good SEND knowledge but acknowledged that it could also bring extra work,

Zara: *I like that I've got a good knowledge about the different areas of SEN, that if I do have a child in my class, it helps as a class teacher role. So, because there's 3 children with ASD this year in Y6, the head thought it would be a good idea to put them all in my class! (ZI).*

SENCoS were mindful of the new policy demands of the SEND CoP, (DfE & DoH, 2015) for high-quality teaching for all children rather than selecting groups of children for the delivery of interventions by teaching assistants. The SENCo participants reported that they see it as their responsibility to guide, inform, support and cajole colleagues in the best way they can. Gill saw herself as a role model and said she led by example.

Gill: *people would nip into my lessons or come and say What can I do for this? It's very informal, which works for us (GI).*

Lily's illustration (Appendix 5) is full of arrows and question marks with solutions being sought from her. But she did add that 'They tend to be questions about how we can make it better for the inclusion of all children' (LI). Lily acknowledged that she felt regarded as the expert as the question marks in her drawing indicate, but also saw the need to embrace staff and '*get them asking the questions as well so that they are part of that*' (LI).

Lily reported that she felt she had knowledge and vision:

I think that they respect the fact that I've got this knowledge base that they can then call upon. And I know why I'm doing it, and what it's for and where I'm going with it, and that's driving the vision, so the knowledge drives the vision, the understanding drives the vision (LI).

Ava said that she too, like Lily, found it a challenge to manage staff expectations when it was assumed SENCoS held all the answers Ava suggested that building relationships with colleagues is the key to:

pulling things together, being able to get the teachers and support staff the training they need in order to be able to support, getting them to understand that this is what we can do as a school (AFG)

Jess too, saw the way to disseminate knowledge through staff meetings and CPD for staff (JI) but as her drawing indicates(Appendix 7) she also saw her role as '*someone to accumulate all those ideas*' and Jess saw her role as a '*joint venture now between everybody involved*'.

These examples from the data illustrate how the SENCoS were moving towards an identity as an 'effective SENCo' reflecting Woods and Jeffery's (2002, p.98-99) proposition of stages in the process of becoming a SENCo.

There is more discussion about the involvement of staff in CPD in Section 5.4 and 5.41.

Rob saw his role as a facilitator more than the expert on SEND, his view was that teachers should become the expert:

Rob: *I don't see my job as SENCo being responsible for children with special educational needs, I see it as the class teachers as experts and it's my job to support them...we train the teacher up to be the expertand it's quality first teaching and we expect them to run it as part of how they run everything. I'm supporting their quality first teaching (RFG).*

Each of the SENCo participants perceived that it was part of the role to disseminate their knowledge of SEND to colleagues, making sure they were aware of any changes in the policy or new approaches to the teaching of children with the label of needs. Zara recognised the benefit of having good knowledge of SEND for teaching but was mindful that it might not always work to her advantage.

Although the SENCos may be viewed by colleagues as the experts in SEND, the data suggest that the SENCos themselves were keen to involve all colleagues in the process of supporting the education of children with the label of needs in moving towards an inclusive whole-school strategy. The next section discusses SENCos reported ways of incorporating more inclusive strategies into their settings for the teaching of children with the label of needs.

4.2.2 Pedagogy

This section introduces the evidence from the data to suggest that the SENCos perceived the introduction of more inclusive practices into their settings as part of their role. The SENDCoP (DfE & DoH, 2015 6.37p.99) states that the first stage of a graduated approach of support for children with the label of needs is 'quality teaching differentiated for individual pupils.' It is referred to as quality first teaching (QFT), a term which first appeared in National Strategy publications (DfES, 2006, p.3) stating that 'quality first teaching and personalised learning comes from an inclusive approach to classroom practice'. Layton (2005, p.57) suggests, that the 'core purpose of the SENCo ...is to lead staff in creating conditions that favour the participation and learning of all pupils'. The data reveals that SENCos are beginning to change the culture and approach of the pedagogy within the settings with regard for the teaching of children with the label of needs.

Ava reported that through training and encouragement, teachers and TAs were becoming more skilled at teaching children with the label of needs in a more inclusive way.

Ava: *When I first started here the lower ability group in each class were taught in the corner or at a table in the corridor by the TA. But I changed that because it just meant that they weren't getting quality first teaching, and just was a sink group, there was no spark going on. (A1)*

Gill was troubled by the lack of clarity around the concept of inclusion (Allan, 1999; Ainscow, 2005; Nind, 2005). Whilst she thought her setting was inclusive

through integration, in accepting children into school children from a special school, it was not what she viewed as inclusive teaching.

Gill: *I think you could always do things better but as a school, I think that we are inclusive. We've got a satellite unit that's from a special school so we've got two classes of children from the special school, so they integrate with our children in a lot of lessons and at playtimes and things, so that's one aspect of inclusion but that's not what inclusion particularly means to me...It's personalising that curriculum and having children with a variety of needs within classes (GFG)*

Lily, too, spoke of her desire to have a more inclusive approach to teaching in the three schools to which she is attached.

Lily: *I'm the person that's trying to drive forward an inclusive vision for the three schools, but I'll have key people within all schools that can be doing that for me in some respects (LI).*

She went on to describe the differences in practice between the three linked schools in recognising the challenges as underlined by Dyson(1993), Hallett and Hallett (2010) and Fitzgerald and Radcliffe (2017) when trying to bring about whole school changes in practice when working with colleagues who may conceptualise inclusion differently.

Lily: *Every school has got a slightly different view of inclusion and inclusive practices, so, I'll not identify. This school here is still in the kind of an early stage, so there's lots of questions and maybe more, little more resistance, there's less driving forces here...But there are some people in this school, some of the TAs...I'm enlisting to support me in my mission! So, I'm working alongside them and just trying to share my ethos with that school more. This school here is looking more at the nurture approach and how we can adapt what we do so I'm working alongside them. You know, there's some certain individuals that they have got that understanding, so it's about making sure that we've got that shared ethos really (LI).*

Kearns (2005, p.142) found those SENCos who identified closely with the metaphor of ‘collaborator’ appeared to be particularly focused on collaborative staff and curriculum development. His study concluded that collaborators were questioning all forms of exclusive practice and were keen to develop the competences in staff but collaboratively and democratically. This echoes Jess’ explanation in her drawing (Appendix 7) of how she works with colleagues:

*It’s more of a joint venture now between everybody involved.
We also have a learning community. We wrote the policy
together and adapted it for our schools (JI).*

What Jess described is similar to the model argued by Ainscow and Sandhill (2010) and Hallett and Hallett (2010) for the development of processes of social learning within settings to form communities of practice, Wenger (1998). A model also reflected in the relational leadership as described by Layton (2005, p.59) when she affirmed that inclusion can be achieved ‘through learning together’.

The reported description of the inclusive practice in Rob’s setting falls in line with Layton’s (2005) recommendations because Rob maintained that his setting’s whole-school approach was inclusive because children with the label of needs were at the ‘*heart of school strategy*’ (RFG). and ‘*every teacher knows what every child needs in their class*’ (RI).

The data suggest that after the changes to the SENDCoP (DfE & DoH, 2015) and the recommendations for quality first teaching, participant SENCos were able to make strategic changes to the pedagogy within schools. They reported a move to more inclusive practice which involved class teachers taking more of a

share of the responsibilities and more involvement in the teaching of children with the label of needs. SENCOs reported that this led to a more collective staff approach and greater staff understanding of the learning and emotional needs of children with the label of needs. This reflects a way of working as argued by Fitzgerald and Radford (2017) and Morewood (2012) which facilitates a whole school approach towards the inclusion of diverse learners.

The following section looks at how SENCOs managed to execute this change of pedagogy by focusing on their approaches to leadership.

4.2.3 Approaches to leadership

One of the attributing factors for the successful implementation of change was whether each SENCO had enough authority to carry out the role in the way they wanted (Muijs et al., 2010). There was agreement that the extra status and positional power (Robertson & Cowne, 2005; Fitzgerald & Radford, 2017) linked to the power of being a Deputy or Assistant Head, made leading change much easier. As Gill reported:

I think from my cohort (referring to the SENCO qualification course) I could see a marked difference between those people who are SENCOs and on the leadership team and those who didn't have leadership responsibility. And they found it really hard to get things done and put into place. Whereas, I don't really because I go in and say, 'Well this is what we are going to do' and everybody says "Okay!" (GFG)

Ava: *it makes being able to make the changes so much easier, I don't know how you would do it if you weren't on the leadership team' (AFG).*

These observations by Gill and Ava support the findings of Szwed (2007a) and Tissot (2013) who both stress the importance of gaining a position in the school's hierarchy where strategic aims can be managed and achieved.

SENcos said they approached the leadership role in a variety of ways. Gill spoke of applying a more advisory and coaching approach to supporting staff but also described situations where she would be more assertive.

Gill: *It depends on what the task is. If it was like a learning plan, then it would be more coaching because those teachers would know the children better than I would - or you'd hope they would anyway - and so it would be working with them to finalise targets maybe and word them correctly. If it's say, something like asking staff to fill in a provision map then I guess it's assertive because I want it done a certain way and this is how they're going to do it (GI).*

Jess reported working with colleagues as developing good relationships to enable a joint approach.

Jess: *But we have a really good relationship, and because we're a small school I think the leadership role is easier than if you've got a huge team with different pockets. We all pull together; we all work together and that's something that's always commented on when people walk around our school – the atmosphere and that you can feel the team approach to things (JI).*

Here Jess was describing a more shared process rather than a top-down type of leadership. It is a collaborative approach to leadership that can be identified as relational leadership (Layton, 2005) or distributed leadership which is explained by Leithwood and Mascoll, (2008, p.530) as enhancing opportunities for the 'organisation to benefit from the capacities of its members; permitting members to capitalise on the range of their individual strength.'

Lily stated what she saw as the advantages in adopting different approaches of leadership responding to the needs of staff in the different settings. This form of leadership is described by Hersey & Blanchard (1969) as a situational approach because different situations require different approaches. As Lily describes:

You have to be quite assertive in your role ...It's quite hard, you've got to use kind of, quite a dynamic style of leadership in which sometimes you need to say to people, "No, this is the way that you're going to do it, because that's what I'm saying, and this is what we need to try, we need to give it some time and then come back to me if things aren't working!" but (sometimes) you need to be quite authoritarian, but then sometimes you need to work and embrace other people's opinions,seeking other people's opinions and ask them what they think (LI).

Rob was keener to devolve the work to the teachers leaving him in a more consultative role.

Rob: *It's my job to support them (teachers) in doing that and helping them when they need help with it. But if they need things that they can't do, they'll come and talk to me, and they know that I'll support them with that (RI).*

Zara spoke of her leadership approach in the more transformational terms (Northouse, 2018) described as leadership which strives to improve the performance of colleagues whilst supporting the development of their potential.

Zara: *the responsibility is much more on the teacher delivering it than in the past, so CPD for staff is really important (ZI).*

The participant SENCOs recognised the necessity of employing a variety of leadership styles to support and to move colleagues forward in their thinking in order to make changes effective. SENCOs reported a variety of styles giving examples situational leadership (Hersey and Blanchard, 1969), coaching,

transformational (Northhouse,2018) and distributed (Leithwood & Mascal, 2008). Lily and Jess both mentioned the necessity to make careful progress towards change, describing the difficulties of moving some staff too quickly towards new ways of doing things.

Overall the SENCos described wanting to set a clear vision and purpose for moving towards a more inclusive way of working. Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, and Fetter (1990 p.112) describe this way of working as 'promoting co-operation amongst staff working together towards a common goal'. In this way, they reported becoming enablers as 'agents of change within the context of inclusion' (Laisidou and Stevenson, 2014, p.788). SENCos admitted to using their status and influence to get things moving and talked of displaying flexibility and sensitivity depending on the requirements of the envisaged outcomes.

The data suggest that the SENCos are mindful of the need to be accountable for the decisions made with regard to the children with the label of special educational needs, and they approached this accountability in different ways.

The following section briefly describes the different approaches which SENCos recounted and their perceptions of what was required in terms of accountability.

4.2.4 Accountability

Ofsted and standardised testing with publications of results have shaped teachers views of accountability, although the concept dates from the 1980s (Gilbert, 2012). In simple terms, accountability is where one party has an obligation to account for their actions or performance to another (Brundrett &

Rhodes, 2011). The following accounts describe the participants' view of accountability and what part it played in the perception of their role.

Ava saw accountability as the necessity to keep a paper trail which '*told the story*' for Ofsted but also to be accountable to their responsibilities of supporting children in their progress.

Ava: *making sure that actually, we are doing everything we need to be doing and doing that right (AI).*

Ava described one way to check on what was being done was to have half termly progress reviews which she describes:

there are half termly pupil progress reviews and with that teachers bring along their intervention maps and look at the different children and who's getting what support and what they want and what the outcome should be and where are the gaps and who are the non-movers and so, the forms that they use have sort of pupil premium children, children on the SEN register, quiet children, English is second language, kind of, a raft of needs there and then just making sure that actually if they're in either of those columns, what is it that they're getting but also why. We don't do 10-week intervention type things; we don't touch those anymore. It's about pre-taught, post-teach gap-filling boosting, addressing needs and trying to plug those. In Year 6 there are 2 classes and then they've got a TA as well so that for most of the time, they're split into 3 rather than 2 classes and that's very much ability lead to boost them (AI).

The data suggest that for these SENCos accountability is seen as synonymous with paperwork or electronic data recording. It is seen as necessary to record progress and work done on behalf of the child, enabling evidence to be produced for Ofsted, parents or outside agencies, such as psychologists or outreach workers with specialisms for dyslexia or autism.

Gill explained that to her, accountability was:

about ticking the boxes, I guess and filling commitments that Ofsted require, that the results require, and making referrals to different agencies, putting in EHP (Education & Health Care Plans) applications, doing things in a timely manner (GI).

In response to a remark made by Rob about paperwork and bureaucracy in the role, Gill replied:

I'm quite a good girl, I like to tick boxes, so I don't mind forms and paperwork but I think that's how my mind works, I'm quite comfortable with forms and paperwork, but I do agree with you - there's far too much bureaucracy completely, and it does annoy me that we seem to have to get the paperwork in but it's not reciprocated (GFG).

Jess too found that setting up a system of recording, logging and tracking each child was one of her first jobs as SENCo.

Jess: *That was my first thing, thinking, "Just set up your systems, set up different folders where you know where things are" Then you can start gathering the evidence over the next few years and making sure it's all logged and documented (JI).*

Lily found that the responsibility of the role to be accountable for the progress of the children with the label of needs weighed heavy.

Lily: *it's the burden of responsibility, sometimes I feel a personal level of responsibility and I feel that I've failed if things aren't working and I know I shouldn't do - but you do, you feel that someone is asking you, and you're the SENCo, you should have sorted this. I think, sometimes when parents are asking or they're not happy with what you're doing when they don't really see what you're trying day-in-day-out and how you're trying to manage, that can be quite frustrating and demoralising if they feel that their child hasn't made sufficient progress or that we don't understand their child, when people are working flat out to try and understand and you know, tweak and change provision(LI).*

Rob reported that in his view accountability was not solved by paperwork. He had his own view about that:

If you're filling in bits of paper, you've missed the point of the system. I read Beating Bureaucracy by Jean Gross and went, "Let's try this and see what happens," if you're prepared to change your systems then SEN is not an onerous thing. It's an ethos of who you are as a school. That's that heart of the system. I'm not here to tick boxes.....I'm here to make a difference for the children (RI).

He described introducing an inclusive school tracking system, suitable for all the children which covered the stipulated requirements of tracking and monitoring pupil progress for children's progress.

Rob: *It's inclusive for everybody, so it isn't an add-on it is integrated, it's not something we fill forms in to pretend we are doing. The assessment is the same for everybody, there isn't an IEP that's forgotten about in a cupboard (RI).*

In a similar way to a SENCo in a study by Clark, Dyson, Millward and Skidmore (1997) Rob reconstructed the school's approach to special needs by focusing on the review and development of the processes of teaching and learning for *all* the children in the school. His premise aligning with the social model of disability (Hodkinson, 2016; Oliver, 1990). Rob explained that he used school resources to develop a whole school approach and was keen to provide quality support in a system that worked for the benefit of all the children and not one that just 'ticked boxes' (RFG). In Rob's view, he was '*trying to get rid of juggling plates*' and support teachers in '*quality first teaching*' (RFG).

Five out of six of the SENCo participants saw the accountability, and responsibility towards children with the label of SEN in each setting, as an important part of the role. It was seen as important evidence to show what

progress had been made in the development of the learning and emotional needs of the children. It was reported to be necessary to enable other colleagues, outside agencies, the parents and Ofsted, insight into the support given to children and essential in the fight for funding.

Another element of the role emerged linked to establishing the provision for children with the label of needs is that of professional interaction which includes liaising, facilitating and networking.

4.3 Liaising and facilitating and networking

The SENCo participants reported that liaising with other professionals is essential to the role in the obtaining of an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP). This is the legal document which describes the details of education, health and social support that is to be provided to the child who has labelled needs or disability after an assessment procedure and relevant consultation with the partners' agencies (DfE & DoH, 2015). It cannot be achieved by the school alone because there is a necessity of bringing in outside agencies to confirm or help in the diagnosis of a child a requirement for funding purposes. Some ambivalence was noted for the requirement of a member of the medical profession to have involvement in the drawing up of an Education and Health Care Plan. Comments about getting hold of other professional agencies have already been noted but there was a suggestion that medical practitioners were hard to contact, and it was even harder to retrieve reports and documentation from them.

Ava: *I can invite everybody with more than a month's notice and nobody comes from the medical side of it (AFG).*

Gill: *I've never had a medical person and I do find it frustrating that you don't get back always last year's paperwork before this year's new review. That's awful! (GFG)*

Mackenzie's (2012) study found that local SENCo networks were seen as particularly important in combatting the feeling of isolation within the role. For the SENCos in this study, networking was more to do with their relationship with their Local Authority network and this varied. In some cases, it was ambivalent, and others recognised the necessity of keeping a partnership with outside agencies supported by the Local Authorities. Each Local Authority (LA) provides support mechanisms for SENCos such as training sessions, conferences, local meetings, and support in moderation, but it is up to the setting and the SENCo whether these offers are taken up by buying into a package of support. Since the support is different in each LA, I have examined the SENCo responses individually. The following section, therefore, highlights individual perceptions of how LA support has helped or hindered the SENCo's role.

For example, Zara found Baumforth City LA new system of moderation both tedious and time-consuming. The process of recording support changed due to the changes in the SEND Code of Practice (DfE/DoH, 2015). Children previously registered on different bands or statements of need had to be registered on the new city Support Grid, which is a system devised to distribute monetary support fairly to schools. This process involved several rounds of

moderation. First within the family of schools and then across the locality and then citywide.

Zara: *we've had so many rounds of moderation, It's just been a really onerous process and it just takes ages. We got told last year it was being done on need, so it got all moderated and done and it changed to provision so we had to re-do it all then. (ZI)*

Lily in Dearneside LA found the informal support of the pyramid of schools valuable but her school also bought into a package of support provided by the Educational Psychology Department in that area.

Lily: *I think that doing the additional needs meetings within a pyramid school, and we're very good in our setting of doing that, but I know from previous experience, it can be quite isolating...But I feel that there are more support networks now, for example, we even have, like an email group. (LI)*

Jess in Kersey felt that she had a great deal of support from her LA:

We still have the local authorities as well, we have the SENCo Network Meetings. What was great at the same time as the training (referring to the PG SENCo Cert) the LA ran their own course. That really helped as well. And W (from the LA) did come in and work with me, and she was great. (JI)

Gill working in Wigfield felt that her LA had been less than supportive and at times felt that the LA was countering her perceived role. She related two incidents with the LA which also involved parents. The theme of empowerment of parents is discussed in more detail later but these incidents are placed here because they reflect Gill's view of the LA support in Wigfield. One of the incidents described by Gill was a result of the Wigfield LA granting an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) for a child on parental request. This happened after Gill had recommended, and the LA agreed with her at the time, that this

EHCP was not necessary for engaging support from the school. Gill felt that the granting of the EHCP at the parents' request had undermined her position in school and the relationship she thought she had forged with the parents.

Gill: *On the face of it they've said all the right words to me but then gone and done something else. (GI)*

The other incident was at an LA organised conference where parents were invited to share their views of the support given in school to their children. Gill felt that those schools which had the direct criticism should have had the opportunity to redress the balance, but they were not in attendance. In this instance, Gill felt herself under attack from parents and this instilled in Gill a sense of 'powerlessness'. (This incident is further discussed in Section 5.2). Both these incidences suggest uncertainty or vulnerability in her position as a SENCo. Gill described it as:

a challenge when I feel I'm doing the right thing but then I'm not supported or that I don't have a voice and that's hard (GI).

This section has exemplified some of the inconsistencies of LA support which the SENCos described as an irritation within the role. Gill did make comments about the difficulties of working in a situation where things were not equitable across the nation.

Gill: *I think there should be more common ground because if Education Healthcare Plans are going to be countrywide then there's got to be some sort of standardisation and I don't think there is. And, looking at Ofsted, not that I do feel very sorry for them very often, but that must be quite hard to inspect when things are so different across different authorities (FG).*

The inconsistency in SEND provision nationally is something that was stressed in the Ofsted Annual Report 2018. It was highlighted that the quality of Education and Healthcare plans were considered far too variable, that provision is inconsistent and disjointed across local authorities, that diagnoses take too long, and health and mental welfare are not supported sufficiently. Gill may 'feel very sorry for' Ofsted but there is a beginning of national awareness of some of the problems that are being highlighted by the SENCOs in this study.

Ava, in her role as a locality SENCO in Baumforth, explained her responsibility in the organisation of the local moderation that Zara found so frustrating. Ava spoke of her work as a Locality SENCO lead, explaining that when the Baumforth City LA allocated money it did not go to a specific child but was directed more at training and '*upskilling schools*' (AI) Monies in Baumforth, Ava reported, had gone towards training for teachers in Speech and Language, understanding Autism, and training in behaviour and nurturing. The intention she explained was to '*upskill schools to be more inclusive*'.

Training went to support teachers and teaching assistants rather than to pay for one to one 'velcroed' assistants for individual children. (The term 'Velcro' is used to describe one to one support given to a particular child). This happened more frequently in the previous system of allocating money to a specific child. This may still happen with Education and Health Care Plans, but Ava described the Baumforth system where after a city-wide system of moderation of need, monies are allocated to schools for the training of teacher assistants to help pupils develop independent learning skills and manage their own learning as

recommended in the guidance from the Education Endowment Foundation (Sharples, Webster & Blatchford, 2015).

Rob had a very different view of the LA because he explained his experience was influenced by fifteen years of working in industry as a quality manager prior to teaching. His view, as explained earlier, was that bureaucratic measures are like fences, put up for people to jump over to prove themselves. This was the view he took of the bureaucratic requirements that are imposed from county LA.

Rob: *I see a lot of my job as filtering out all the rubbish that comes from outside. I look at it and I go 'I don't need to do any of that, you at county are telling me I need to do that and actually, you know what? None of that is adding to the outcome of this child at all!'" (RI)*

Rob reported that he was able to successfully justify his school system of reduced paperwork with continued support for children with additional needs, to an Ofsted Inspector who reportedly, congratulated him.

The role of a facilitator was mentioned mostly in support for the parents and families of the children in school with needs and is viewed by the participating SENCOs as a large part of the role. The SEND Code of Practice (DfE/DoH, 2015, 6.89) emphasises working in partnership with parents, but several of the SENCOs go further than just working in partnership. They position parents as requiring support and help in the development of parenting skills. Ava linked the area of the school as having an impact on the needs of the parents.

Ava: *Where our schools are it's a pretty deprived part of north Baumforth and so the parent bit is massive (AFG)*

Zara spoke of supporting parents as part of the role but also described the extra pressure of supporting both children and their families as 'draining' (ZI).

Zara: *I've done a lot of support work with parents....and a lot of them do feel like they can come and talk to me, and if they are anxious about something they often want to come and tell me about that (ZI).*

This theme of supporting parents and children emerged strongly from the data. Gill spoke of a desire to empower parents and others like Zara, above spoke of providing emotional or practical support to parents. I chose to interrogate the data more fully to investigate the connection between support and empowerment of children, parents and staff as related by the participating SENCoS and this is discussed in more depth in following Chapter 5, SENCo as Empowerer.

4.4 The restrictors of time, paperwork and causes of tension

The last theme to be explored in more detail is the impact of time management, paperwork (paperwork has been discussed under the heading of accountability) and causes of tension which have emerged in the preceding sections but are specifically addressed in this section. When asked about the challenges of the role the SENCoS were very definite in their response about time management and the difficulties associated with the time necessary to fulfil the various aspects of the role. Ekins (2012, p71) study, revealed certain metaphors that were used to describe the role 'juggler' being one which emerged in this study, along with 'plate spinner' as described by Gill.

The lack of time available to do justice to the role is a recurring theme noted by several high-profile SENCo studies over the years (Weddell, 2004; Layton, 2005; Cole, 2005 a&b; Szwed, 2007a& b; Pearson, Scott and Sugden, 2011;

Pearson Mitchel and Rapti,2015; Maher and Vickerman 2018). All these studies have highlighted the difficulties that SENCos have in fulfilling the responsibilities of the role within the time allotted to it. The metaphor that Gill used to describe the role as 'plate spinner' seems suitably apt to describe the attempts to fulfil the myriad expectations of the role of SENCo.

Jess expressed difficulty is getting time to liaise with outside agencies, particularly when other professionals did not work the same days as she did.

Jess: *Time is a challenge, especially in terms of trying to liaise with people because a lot of professionals don't work Mondays and Fridays I've found, so...which must be really nice! (JI)*

Lily, when asked in the interview what advice she would give to a new SENCo, suggested:

manage your time effectively, ...manage provision effectively ... and that you're actually spending time assessing all the planned do-review cycles, and that's actually being done. So, you have to think very carefully about the year ahead and how things are going to look (LI).

Rob in describing how he fits in the duties of SENCo alongside all his other school responsibilities explained that the staff often used lunchtime to discuss matters concerning the children.

Rob: *I can ask for release time for SEN, and I do very occasionally ask...., but because we're so close, we all sit down and eat lunch together, (and have conversations about the children) we know the children, that allows this to work (RI).*

Ava explained that her role is complex because her responsibilities cover locality as well as three schools 'So, there's quite a bit of more jobs than days in the week' (FG). These extracts reveal the continued challenge of time management. The pressures are evident in the language used, for example,

Zara said she was always 'rushing' (ZI), phrases 'more jobs than days in the week' (Ava, AFG) and use of lunchtimes to catch up with colleagues (Rob, RI) and the frustrations of trying to contact outside agencies who have different work patterns (Jess, JI). My data suggests that these pressures have not ameliorated over the years since lack of time was highlighted in earlier studies (Dyson & Gains, 1995; Weddell, 2004).

Other time-related restrictions became evident from the data, linked to the multiple roles that SENCoS hold within their settings which impact on the amount of time available for the SENCo role (Cole & Johnson 2004). In addition to the various roles explored in this chapter and the next chapters, the participant SENCoS highlight the multiplicity of roles that they hold within the school such as class teacher, Deputy Head, Safeguarding or subject coordinator alongside the SENCo role. This was a particular issue in smaller schools where SENCoS had a greater responsibility, as was evident as shown in the table of roles and responsibilities in the preceding analysis chapter. Each SENCo has at least two, and as many as six roles. Rob had a multiplicity of roles and aware of the constraints of time, given his other responsibilities, his response was to introduce a whole school approach for SEND.

The lack of time needed to pay full attention to each aspect of the role results in tensions. In the following section, the SENCoS perceptions of tensions and how they are manifested are discussed.

Zara's use of imagery to describe her feelings suggest real tensions in the role of SENCo and Y6 class teacher. She explained that she felt a sense of betrayal by putting all children through the required Standard Assessment Tests (SATs)

hence the jagged edge of the split roles pictured on her illustration. For example:



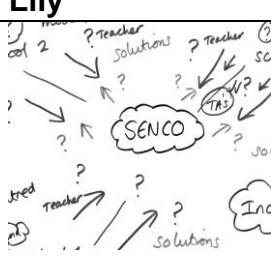
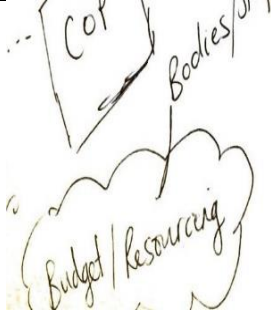


Figure F Split Role



Tensions within the SENCo role have been identified in other studies (Norwich 2010; Rosen & Webb, 2011), but, perhaps, not so graphically. The jagged edge clearly illustrates the tensions of trying to maintain standards under related pressures of performativity (Ball, 2003), as against the comfort and support for children that Zara describes in her SENCo role in the other parts of her illustration (Appendix 6).

The tensions of the role emerge graphically in the drawings which the SENCos produced (see extracts drawn below and in Appendix 2,4c). The illustration by Jess depicts the tensions caused by lack of budget and resources including the resource of staff which makes the whole management of the role of SENCo difficult if resources are in short supply. Rob's answer to the tensions caused within the role is to place SEND at the heart of the school policy so it is not considered as an extra add on but emphasised as part of the school policy and the teacher's role. Lily has described the tensions caused by managing three different approaches to SEN in the three linked schools. The numerous elements of the role which this chapter has described are illustrated by Ava and Gill as juggling and spinning plates.

Figure G Extracts from drawings depicting tensions in the role

Tensions depicted by the participant SENCOs.	Gill	Ava	Lily
<p>Note- Rob's picture of heart illustrates his desire to avoid tensions by putting SEND at the heart of the process.</p>			
			
	Jess	Rob	Zara

4.5 Summary

This chapter has highlighted the perceived impact on the SENCO role of a myriad of constituent elements and made use of the metaphor of 'plate spinner' to illustrate and explain. Many of these elements such as lack of time, resources, leadership, accountability and the burgeoning of bureaucratic paperwork, are worries that have been evident from SENCO studies over the years (Weddell,2004; Layton, 2005; Cole,2005a &b; Szwed,2007a,b,&c; Pearson, Scott and Sugden, 2011; Pearson Mitchel and Rapti,2015; Maher and Vickerman 2018). This study reveals that the concerns remain. The SENCOs reportedly understand the challenges faced in acceptance of the role. There are the responsibilities not only to support children with the label of needs but also

to support colleagues and take the lead on the development of inclusive pedagogy in their settings. Links with professionals were concluded to be necessary but experienced as unreciprocated which SENCoS found to be irritating. The role of the Local Authorities was reported to fluctuate between being supportive and being obstructive.

There are reported tensions in managing on several fronts. These are,

- i) in managing tensions of government policy arising between inclusion and performance
- ii) in managing tensions in relation to providing services that government policy has severely cut
- iii) continued challenge of managing time

However, over and above the described constituent elements of SENCo as Plate Spinner, the participant SENCoS also reveal a moral purpose to support and empower parents in their parenting and to empower the children. The influence in this approach coming from the disability rights-based model (Visser & Stokes, (2003). (Section 2.3.3.)

There is also a recognition of the need to upskill staff to enable them to take a greater share of responsibility for the teaching of children with the label of needs. This importance of empowerment has emerged as a strong theme in this study and is discussed in the next chapter entitled 'SENCo as Empowerer', raising the notion that empowerment manifests itself in different ways which are discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 5

SENCo as Empowerer

5.1 Introduction

The chapter explores the complex theme of empowerment in relation to the SENCo role and examines the practices that SENCos describe in bringing about empowerment of parents, children and staff, drawing on data which exemplifies the SENCos' perception of empowerment of these three stakeholder groups.

Briefly, this chapter covers the following different interpretations of empowerment Irwin, (1996) and Bogler and Somech, (2004) refer to empowerment as a transition from helplessness to capability, Muijs and Harris, 2003; and Hargreaves, (2007) see it as a process of personal development as do Avidov-Ungar, Friedman and Olshtain (2014, p. 714) who devised a model of empowerment which claims that it becomes 'hierarchical with different stages of intensity'.

There are three main sections to the chapter. The first describes the strategies which SENCos recount in supporting and empowering parents and the issue of building trust, the second concentrates on what the SENCos say about giving children empowerment through mechanisms of pupil voice and the third section reveals SENCos' interpretation of empowering staff through professional development. The data reveals that the participant SENCos consider the empowerment of parents, children and staff to be a requirement of their role. The changes brought about by the Children and Families Act (2014) The

Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Disability Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015) brought changes in the SENCo role as discussed in Chapter 2. The SENDCoP (DfE & DoH, 2015, 6.37p.99) places more emphasis on equal partnership with parents, more whole-class differentiated 'high-quality teaching' which puts the onus on the class teacher to be aware of the learning needs of all children with a greater expectation of increased opportunities for children to voice their views about their learning. What immediately follows is a consideration of the mixed approaches to the empowerment of parents which SENCos report they instigated with this group of stakeholders.

5.2 Empowerment of parents

Gill: *I hope that I give them (parents) the power they need to get the best for their children (GI).*

The participant SENCos reveal that the main aim of empowering parents is to encourage and support them in their capacity as partners in the education of their children (as seen in Gill's quote above). The narrated scenarios reveal the positioning of power relationships where SENCos report increased confidence and self-esteem in parents, enabling them to take a greater and more confident role in supporting their children in partnership with school.

Muijs and Harris, (2003), Hargreaves (2007) and Avidov-Ungar, et al., (2014) refer to empowerment in terms of individuals achieving greater control of their lives and this definition is consistent with how Gill described empowerment regarding parents. This intention of greater control links to the social model of disability suggesting that institutional practices have been a barrier to parent participation (Morgan, 2012).

Over the last twenty-five years, there has been a policy emphasis on parental involvement in children's education. The document Every Parent Matters (DfES, 2007, p.6) placed emphasis on parental responsibility:

We must ensure that all parents have every chance to get involved have their say and secure what is best for their children

There is a recognition that parent partnership has a beneficial impact on children's progress (Fullan, 1991) and under the terms of the Children and Families Act (2014) parent partnership is written into the SENDCoP (DfE & DoH, 2015). Pinkus (2003) suggests that the concept of partnership is sustained by the idea that the partnership benefits each partner individually as well as the partnership as a whole. As Rob describes:

Although we've got lots of professional parents, they don't all support their children so the aim is to point out if all three of us (parents, teacher, child) aren't in place it's not going to have the best possible outcome for everybody (RFG).

SENCOs spoke of the desirability of building and maintaining the confidence of parents in developing partnerships with the school community, with the purpose of creating a shared understanding of the value of supporting children's learning. SENCOs describe parent partnership as the first steps towards full empowerment of parents, and this corresponds with Arnstein (1969) and Hart's, (1992) levels of participation which move from no participation, through to tokenism, participation and finally delegated power and citizen control.

In order to have a successful partnership, there needs to be trust on both sides for both building and maintaining partnerships. Research has shown the more interaction the parties have over time, the more their willingness to trust one

another grows as their perceptions of one another's intentions, competence, and integrity develop (Brewster & Ailsback, 2003). Gill describes the necessity of achieving trust through the development of good relationships:

The most important elements, I feel, are the relationships. And that's relationships between myself and parents, myself and the children, myself and other professionals as well and myself and colleagues. (GI)

Gill spoke of creating relationships on the foundations of trust and as she made explicit '*because you don't get anywhere in the SENCo role without relationships*', but she related an incident where she felt there had been a betrayal of trust when she sensed the negative effects of power. This incident is mentioned in the previous chapter section 4.3 but is explained in more detail here. This critical incident (Tripp, 1993) demonstrates Gill's feelings when parents, in her view, created an uncomfortable situation for her at a network meeting where she felt an imbalance of power and her role of SENCo to be under attack. It is only one SENCo's view but the justification for looking in-depth at the incident is that the experience Gill describes had consequences for her perception of the role.

Gill explained that she went along to a meeting that had been billed as a conference by the local authority. She expected to learn something new about partnership with parents. It was addressed by a politician with the focus on parent power.

Gill: *there were certain schools invited, also parents of children with special educational needs which we didn't know before the meeting that they were invited, and I'm not saying it was a bad thing, but we just didn't know. It was sold to us as a SEND conference and so we'd gone thinking, "Oh we're going to find*

something out, we're going to get some information," but it ended up being a platform in which these parents could stand up and say what the schools were doing wrong...It was a horrible meeting. But the trouble was, none of the schools that their children went to came because the ones that came were probably the ones that were trying to do it right.....but the whole thing was basically saying that parents know their children best - which they do - but the parents have all the power and what they want should be implemented in the schools, and I felt that we didn't have a voice, we weren't answerable...we felt absolutely under attack. (GI)

She described herself as feeling uncomfortably disempowered by the situation, placed in what she felt was an invidious position without recourse of reply.

Gill: *At the end of that conference, I think I felt pretty powerless really, I felt that the parents had all of the power, and that's a horrible thing to say because there shouldn't be one person with power, it's not that, but I felt that my voice wouldn't be heard or it didn't have any weight to it (GI).*

Gill said she was embarrassed to admit to feeling very uncomfortable in a position where she felt totally vulnerable without control, power or voice. She described it as unnerving and reported that she felt negative and 'horrible' in suggesting that the parents should not wield the power granted to them at a conference to voice concerns about what was happening in their children's school. Her reaction worried her, saying she felt anger at having experienced a backlash from parents. Gill said she felt it was a case of bad organisation on the part of the LA when parents were allowed to expose a school's practice in a public arena.

This incident illustrates the complexities of empowerment and the challenges it brings to the SENCo role. Gill implies that she supports parent power in her own setting '*I hope that I give them (parents) the power they need to get the best for their children*' (GI). But when the situation swings towards a different power

imbalance she admits to feeling differently, *'I think I felt pretty powerless really, I felt that the parents had all of the power'*. This incident, I argue, suggests that she is comfortable with empowerment when she holds the balance of power. I chose to include this narrated incident because it demonstrates confusing messages concerning expectations of empowerment. Gill reports receiving mixed messages about the purpose of the conference and describes discomfort when she felt powerless admitting that it is not a usual situation for her. Morrow and Malin (2004) found similar conflicting situations with parents, pinpointing legislative policies which support parental engagement in playing key roles in establishing partnerships but with the expectation that they do not do or request too much.

One of the difficulties that SENCos face is the historic positioning of parents in the hierarchy of stakeholders in schools. Pinkus' (2003) study of parent-school partnerships found that there was an unequal distribution of power within the partnerships studied, with parents being the least empowered. This unequal positioning of parents was also found in Hodge and Runswick-Cole's (2008) study of partnership with parents where they report a hierarchy of knowledge where parents' views are only called upon 'when desired rather than enabling parents to initiate and direct' (p.7). McKay and Garratt (2013) report that friction can result when consistently placed in an unequal situation. Even though parent participation is encouraged, there is a 'failure to recognise or account for the tensions that are persistently reported at the interface of families and service providers' (p.736). Empowerment of others implies that at some point power is transferred. Gill suggests that she is willing to empower parents but then describes a scenario where parent power was used in such a way as to

make her feel threatened. Avidov-Ungar et al., (2014, p.714) model of empowerment suggests the first stage of empowerment is limited acceptance of power but, in reality, it is how much power is willing to be given. I suggest that the challenge for SENCos is how to transfer power with a sense of ownership to the stakeholder (Sarason,1997) and not regret their own loss of power and control.

Gill used the term 'empower' in the context of supporting a parent in obtaining an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) for the child:

the EHCP that I got last year that I was really pleased about is a mum on her own, she was 15 when she had the little girl, she has no support, she's got no relationship with her own mum, she's got nobody, and she's now got 3 children and she needs somebody, she needs a voice, she needs somebody to speak for her, she has learning difficulties, and hopefully I empower her and people like her (GI).

EHCPs are notoriously difficult to compile and Gill reported that as a result of the help and support she gave to the parent the application was successful and the parent's confidence increased. However, there remains a slight sense of 'othering' with the phrase 'and people like her'(GI) for it suggests an underlying assumption of disadvantage and deficit (Tomlinson, 2017) which is also reflected in the views of Zara, Ava and Jess. There is an indication of an assumption that parents are in need of their help and the following are some examples which give evidence of this kind of underlying perception. Zara explained that she has been teaching in her school for over eleven years and feels she is now well known and trusted by the parents. She emphasised that there was already ongoing support work with parents in school on coping with their own anxiety and low self-esteem and explained that the school provided

support within a school group called Friends. She spoke of a new project with Child Adolescent and Mental Health Services (CAHMS) beginning in her school to support children in managing anxiety.

Zara: *we try and involve the parents with the Friends thing because that's what's nurturing some of the mental health issues, the anxiety and the low self-esteem and a lot of our parents have these issues (ZI).*

The data suggests that the school is willing to support parents who they believe have low self-esteem, but the balance of power is retained by the school. This is a similar scenario to that of Jess who said she became aware of some of the difficulties parents experience when attending the more formal Review or Transition meeting so began to support parents in preparation for the meetings. Jess reported that the parents began to feel that their contributions were valued and appeared to be more confident in dealing with the formality of meetings and engagement with other unfamiliar professionals after she had provided some help and support. She explained:

Jess: *I try to support them...because a lot of our parents ...don't feel like they've got the ideas or that they're as valuable as what they are.
I send out some information before the review meetings with questions that we might ask or things that they might want to think about so that if they've got things that they want to share, where the children are doing well at home or where they think they need more support, they can jot that down beforehand so that they're not put on the spot, so to speak. And they do like that. (JI)*

The action of stepping in to support, because it is judged that the parent requires it, is, on the one hand, enhancing the caring and helping (Vogt, 2002; O'Connor, 2008) nature of the act but at the same time increasing the control in the hands of the helper (Safilios-Rothchild, 1981). The example from Jess

indicates well-meaning support for the parents, but it also reflects an uneven distribution of power within the relationship (Mittler, 2000). It resembles the example given by Zara. The intention is one of support in a move to empower parents but again the control lies in the hands of the SENCo (Safilios-Rothchild, 1981).

A further example from Ava strengthens the evidence to suggest a pervading deficit ethos in some of the schools. Ava explained that in their locality the school provides training for families in parenting skills. She spoke with some empathy about parents' feelings about coming into school explaining that, in her view, the parents' sessions help with parental confidence.

Ava: *the parents who've had a poor school experience themselves, they don't want to come into school, they don't like it, we're not on their side, or they've had troubles with authority, they're not in control of very much in their life and.....getting them to see that actually there are things that they can do, and there are things that they're not being judged on (A).*

In this example, I suggest that Ava is taking a rather paternalistic view of the inadequacy of some of the parents revealing a belief that parents need help in parenting to raise their self-esteem. In Zara's example, she refers to the projects with the parents as 'getting parents involved' but as in Jess and Ava's examples, the SENCo and the school remain in control.

Lily spoke of supporting and forming partnerships with parents by being available to engage with them on first-name basis. She talks about the person-centred approach which is a method used in schools based on core values of appreciating, encouraging autonomy and understanding relationships

(Sanderson,2013). Lily tells of using person-centred approaches to gain trust with parents.

Lily: *we talk to each other through first names, we try and embrace the whole person-centred', we're not just doing it tokenistically but like, you really tell me about your child and, I'll chat to them and they feel like they can talk to me, and little things like that make an impact (LI).*

Lily recounted using informal and first name chats to break down some of the barriers of home-school relationships and gain the trust of the parents. This action supports research by both George (2003) and Hodge (2007) which suggest that a closer and more trusting relationship can be built if leaders listen and provide disclosure about themselves. SENCos in the study indicated that it takes time, understanding, insight and essentially trust, to build up good working relationships with parents. The data revealed that behind the desire to maintain trust and develop partnerships, leading to empowerment for the parents there is a well-meaning benevolence to support parents. Tomlinson (1982 p7) wrote of a 'benevolent humanitarianism ideology' which permeates special education. Both Tomlinson, (2017p.273) and Gerwitz (2001) have been critical of practitioner and professional beliefs based on 'well-worn theories of disadvantage and deficit' which have arisen from historical discourses of deficit based on the medical model (Oliver and Barnes, 2012) (Section 2.3.1). I contend that these beliefs still pervade the thinking of some of the SENCos in this study.

In this section, the empowerment of parents has been described by the SENCos in different ways and similarities are revealed. There were some SENCos who, whilst providing an understanding of the parents' position and a

desire to be sensitive in their support, mixed this approach with an underlying rationale linked to disadvantage and deficit (Tomlinson, 2017).

Although there can be difficulties in forming parent-partnership with professionals, (Pinkus, 2003, Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2008), there is a common thread which emerges from this data of the necessity of building trust and good relationships before placing any demands of the change-enhancing type of empowerment of parents. It has been demonstrated that parent partnerships do not just happen, there must be some preconditions to be met such as good relationships and trust which makes way for the development of empowerment. Using the Avidov-Ungar et al., (2014) model of empowerment, I suggest that there is an indication that many of the participating SENCOs are currently operating at level 1 with parents, which is limited empowerment. SENCOs talk of partnerships forming, but the data suggests that it is an unequal partnership with the SENCOs holding the power. SENCOs are shown to be well-meaning in intent but with an air of benevolent paternalism, deciding what is best based on assumptions about parents' capabilities.

The SENCOs spoke of empowerment of children as giving them a voice or encouraging participation in decisions about their education. This is something that evidently concerned the SENCOs and this next section focuses on the phenomenon of giving voice to children in a variety of ways to enable participation in decision making.

5.3 Empowerment of children

The empowerment of children is not a new phenomenon. It has been stressed in a variety of documents since 1989 when the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child highlighted the importance of giving young people a say on matters that concern them (Article 12.13). The concept of 'pupil voice' underpinned by the disability rights model (Section 2.3.3) was promoted in 2003 in Every Child Matters Green Paper and again in 2004 in a document Working Together; Giving Young Children and Young People a Say where it was stated 'giving children and young people a say in decisions will impact positively on inclusion' (DfES, 2004c p.1). More recently, the SEND CoP (DfE & DoH, 2015, 1.1 p.19) clearly states that children, their parents and young people should be involved in the discussion or be actively supported in contributing to developing and reviewing Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP).

How the participating SENCOs talk of the empowerment of children varies. Each setting approaches the phenomenon of pupil voice differently, but each method used refers to giving children opportunities to voice how they feel or to be involved in decisions. The aim is to give children a conduit to voice feelings or concerns designed to foster a feeling of mutual participation. SENCOs in the study refer to the inclusion of children's views using different terms, such as 'pupil voice' or 'person-centred approach' and refer to different strategies of achieving this.

5.3.1 Different strategies for pupil participation

Rob used the term pupil voice. He spoke of using a system devised by the school called 'pupil voice' but admitted '*it's not what the world calls a Pupil*

Voice' (RI). He recognised that this pupil voice system was particular to his school, giving the children an opportunity to say how they felt about their teaching and learning in review and parents' evenings.

Rob reported that he makes sure every child in the school is involved in the school pupil voice strategy, but for those who do not appear to be making progress, there is a more in-depth form. He explained that the school's in-depth strategy of 'pupil voice' was set up in order to give more time for children who did not appear to be making progress, to help them voice their view alongside parents. The system is based on Rob's 'three-legged stool' metaphor of a three-way collaboration involving teacher, parent and child. But the process is centred on the child and not the parents.

Rob: *the child that's the heart of our process, if the child isn't making (progress) The next place to go is, "Let's listen to what the child has to say. (RFG)*

Rob explained the process of the pupil voice strategy in his school:

I want to listen to (named child) "whatever it is that (child) wants to tell me". So, what s/he likes doing, what interests (him/her), what s/he doesn't like in class, what s/he finds hard in class, what s/he enjoys in class..., I spend time going "Okay, I didn't know that, didn't know that, didn't know that." (RI)

In this way, Rob explained that he has set up a system where the pupils can feel that they are being listened to. Quicke (2003 p.72) suggests that systems like this one Rob describes, are based on a rationale that teachers '*need to know what they (pupils) think they do when they are learning*' but also '*what they think are the reasons for them learning or not learning*'(RI).

Rob set up the system in a tripartite way with child, parent and teacher, but he reportedly makes parents sit and listen too. This is a very powerful message for the child taking part. As a result, there is an agreement constructed on a way forward where each of the participants agrees to do something different that has been discussed within the voiced meeting, which is monitored, and progress noted.

Not all participant SENCOs had such an overt strategy for pupil voice as in Rob's setting. In the other schools, pupil participation, or pupil empowerment, was seen differently. In Rob's school, a pupil voice strategy appears to be embedded in the fabric of the day to day workings of the school but, for other settings, it is just beginning to emerge or not quite there yet.

Lily spoke of a person-centred approach which is based on the values of independence and rights, coproduction, choice and control. This approach arose in the 1980s as a way of enabling children and adults to be involved in the choice and the realisation of their own goals (Sanderson, 2013). This active approach encourages the participation of children and adults in decision making (Harris & White, 2018) and embraces inclusive principles of participation, belonging and achievement (Mittler 2000). Lily was acutely aware that the three schools in her jurisdiction were perhaps not ready for the full ramifications of a person-centred approach. As Lily admitted, it might take some time implementing in schools where teachers like to have full control. She reportedly felt that a person-centred approach might be the next step, but realised that there was more work to be done on the provision of the learning for children and

a general understanding of planned changes for quality first teaching, before implementing a person-centred approach.

Lily: *person-centred, we're getting there, in both those ones, (schools) we're not having to do as much (LI).*

Lily was aware that pupil empowerment was on the radar to work towards but, as Bragg (2007) suggests, pupil voice or greater participation in decision making should not be achieved through compliance with an externally imposed model but 'through flourishing environment of discovery, teamwork and trust' (Bragg 2007, p.715).

Jess too reported being aware of the need to fully prepare staff and children for the introduction of a pupil voice strategy. She spoke about the need for the introduction of pupil voice in the regular review meetings but felt that it requires a controlled introduction, tempered with caution. Bragg (2007 p.717) suggests that 'we should not under-estimate the complexity of pupil voice'.

Jess described the staff at her school as being a close team. Bragg (2007) suggests that schools with a child-centred pedagogy, where teachers can be very involved and close to the children, can feel that pupil voice is unnecessary. But Bradbury, Feeney and Gager (2010) caution against professionals seeking what they think the child might require, rather than asking the child.

Jess explained that she has made pupil voice a target for the current year and the first step was to make sure that children were not overwhelmed by the process:

The child's views are included, we've not yet brought the actual child into the meetings and that was something for me to look at this year... but it's looking at when it's appropriate and when it's not appropriate for that child to be involved, and looking at the

relationship with the parent, and whether the parent can handle that as well. But the child's views are certainly included in the meeting (JI).

Jess had a realisation that the child's view is important but did not want to expose young children to what can be a formidable array of professionals in a review meeting. She reported being aware of more work to be done on how to incorporate pupil voice more securely into school life, and to make sure that it is a successful innovation. Jess spoke of moving towards a more sensitive approach of including pupils' views about their teaching and learning in review meetings but, currently, her approach is to have conversations with pupils prior to review meetings. In this way, she explained children can have a voice about their learning provision, which is included in any discussion held, but they do not attend the actual meeting. Jess also spoke of having worry boxes (discussed further below) in classrooms that are overseen by the class teachers and monitored by the PSHE (Personal Social & Health Education) coordinator.

Zara explained that children in her school have a voice by using a communication system called a 'worry box'. A system which allows children to give voice to a range of child worries. Children have the facility of writing their worries and posting them into a box which Zara checks regularly. Zara reported that this an important part of her role, to be available if children wish to talk to her about any worries they might have. This box is available to give voice to children's concerns. Zara perceived the necessity for the children to know and trust the person who is willing to listen and be sympathetic to their needs. She explained that children are willing to voice their concerns to a listening ear if they think they will be taken seriously. The system is available for all the children and Zara reported that it was particularly helpful to children who dislike

initial face to face communication. This mechanism allows for concerns to be recognised and sorted before they escalate.

Zara: *We have a worry box in school, and it says, "Who do you want to talk to?" and quite often it'll be children across school putting down my name. A lot of children want to come and talk about the problems [that] they've got or just want to come and see me so, I feel like I'm a comfort, and especially for the autistic children that we've got. They can come and talk to me, and if they're anxious about something they often want to come and tell me about that...I think they feel they can trust me and, you know, they want to share that with me so I feel that's one of the main parts of my role. (ZI)*

This system allows children to exercise their right to be heard and to voice a concern in a safe environment. Zara explained that the children know her well and she believed that the children trusted her to treat all posted worries with respect even though they might be transitory.

Zara: *I see myself as being...as a comfort to the children, so whether it's the children in my class or the children on the SEN register, a lot want to talk to me and see me throughout the day(ZI).*

Bradbury et al (2010) warns of the danger of using advocates to elicit pupils' views. In this context, Zara is acting as an advocate in support of the children. But there is a risk of children voicing what they think the advocate wants to hear rather than actually, voicing their true feelings and desires. Zara reported that she knew the children and their families well enough to judge whether or not that is happening.

In this section, I have discussed the different strategies which SENCos employ to create systems for children to voice concerns or to participate in decisions

about their learning. The SENCoS in this study spoke of an awareness of pupil empowerment and different ways of implementing it.

The data reveals that SENCoS are demonstrably aware of the need for strategies to develop pupil voice and or pupil participation but are also aware of the challenges it may bring to the dynamics of the relationships within the school community. The implementation is at the discretion of the SENCo and both Lily and Jess saw that a tempered approach might be more successful than a fan-fared introduction.

On an empowerment level using the Avidov-Ungar et al.,(2014) model I suggest that pupil empowerment is limited but through the use of Rob's or Zara's strategies a change could be instigated at a higher level so it might be possible for those models of pupil voice to attain a Level 3.

The following section focuses on the SENCoS perceptions of empowerment of staff and the meaning this has for SENCoS in their desire to influence and change the pedagogical culture of the school.

5.4 Empowerment of Staff

The requirements of the SENDCoP (DfE & DoH,2015, 6.36) for 'all teachers to be responsible and accountable' for children with additional needs meant that SENCoS became responsible for instigating and leading a cultural change in the school focused on the organisation of children's learning. SENCoS spoke of the task of the reforming the approach to the teaching of children with the label of needs, as a major element in the role. SENCoS reported that in school they became positioned by their colleagues as 'the experts' in special needs because of the designated role and the requirement for mandatory training.

SENCoS became aware that in developing a SENCo identity they were shifting over time into the 'expert role' (Akkerman & Meijer, 2001).

To balance this perception and to increase staff participation in SEN teaching SENCoS saw the necessity of expanding and developing colleagues' knowledge, through professional development, enabling colleagues to feel more confident in providing learning strategies for all children. In this way, SENCoS maintained, staff would be ready and able to take greater responsibility for the teaching of children with the label of needs. SENCoS saw this transition as a form of empowerment but the route to empowerment for staff is complex. It involves a combination of factors, not only professional development but also responsibility and accountability, an understanding of pupils needs and a motivation to change.

What follows is an examination of the data illustrating the strategies that SENCoS refer to as empowerment of staff and their justifications for implementation.

5. 4.1 Empowerment of staff thorough professional development

When Ava related how much she enjoyed the SENCo role, she remarked that one of the joys of the role was to be able to 'empower' staff. She explained that when staff were empowered with knowledge and understanding of children with additional needs, this knowledgeable support really made a difference to the children's education in school.

Ava: *being able to empower staff to understand and support children and not see children with additional needs as a problem but actually, to support and make a difference (AI)*

This quote is indicative of SENCOs' thinking around the theme described as the empowerment of staff, which refers mostly to professional development. The participant SENCOs maintain that professional development enables a better understanding of the teaching of children with the label of needs and therefore better outcomes for all teaching and learning throughout school.

Lily's exemplified illustration indicates this as she depicts an expectation from staff that she will have the answers and 'solutions to lots of questions' (LI).

Lily: *My role as SENCO does feel like...I'm actively trying to find the solutions to issues that are there and often when I do ask, sometimes people haven't actually adapted anything before they've asked me? (LI)*

Similar to Ava, Lily suggested that by increasing her colleagues' knowledge of children's diverse needs and strategies for teaching, it will increase staff confidence in their own ability to confront problems. For example, as Lily describes:

I'm trying to embrace staff and try and get them, to asking questions as well, so that they're part of that "What have you tried? What have you changed? What have you adapted?" So, I'm asking that a lot more now than I used to do (LI).

Ava explained her belief in the necessity for staff to have knowledge of strategies that support the diverse needs of all children, for example:

it's behaviour, about understanding the reasons for it and then by having some scripts, having confidence, having understanding to not to be stressed by that. So, if a child comes in and throws a chair, it's about understanding, 'I can see something's happened rather than focusing on the chair-throwing (AI)

Zara also spoke of the impact of professional development for staff as a positive for the children:

if the teachers are aware of how they can support and differentiate and be understanding towards the ASD pupils or the pupils that have got ADHD or you know, be understanding of what attachment is, and it might present as this, If they can, be delivering...what they need to in class, then those children are going to get that without having to all be coming out to groups with me or TAs and the learning mentor' (ZI)

Lily recognised that when trying to instigate changes in practice that staff were at different levels of acceptance of change due to their previous experiences, professional knowledge and expectations of their own role as teachers:

I think they're (staff) all in different positions in terms of their understanding of SEN and their understanding of quality first teaching and the impact of that (LI).

Zara spoke in the same way as Lily of staff receptibility to change and the different stages of acceptance. Some staff were less keen than others to be involved in any new innovations. She gave an example of staff who were not keen on some of the new 'fiddle toys' that were being introduced in lessons to occupy children who fidget. She said that in this instance she needed to have great flexibility and understanding of their position.

Zara: *there are some teachers who don't agree with them (fiddle toys) and they don't think they should be in the classroom; I do understand their concerns, and I said, "I'm a class teacher, and I know." I think you have to be really flexible and understanding (ZI).*

Lily recounted some of the challenges faced by trying to change the pedagogy of teachers. She spoke of looking at a situation and appreciating it from another point of view:

Some schools I go in ...they say "Ooh, we've tried this, we've adapted this, what do you think?" and they'll ask for advice in that kind of way, whereas others it will be, "This isn't working, can you tell me what I need to do?" So, often it's about being

able to take a step back yourself, be quite observant ...reflect and (ask) "What is actually happening here? What are the restrictors here that's working in this school? How can I move it forward...? How can I support this member of staff but also support this pupil? (LI)

In this way, by asking questions, Lily explained that she was trying to shift the problem-solving responsibility from her role towards that of the teachers (Reitung,1994), but admitting, that she still saw a need to support staff with her expertise.

Ava explained that staff require time to make a shift in their thinking about the teaching of children with labelled needs. She noted that a change in pedagogy did not come easily to some staff. This led her to introduce a step by step procedure of professional development. Ava described a 'drip-feed' method of first trialling a new approach to enable the staff to assimilate the impact, then discussion about the effects and lastly providing training to ensure a secure a collective understanding.

Ava: *it's not the TA's (Teacher Assistant) job to have this velcro-ed (where a TA continually takes responsibility for a labelled group) little group, it's the teachers' job and that shift...And trialling it, and seeing it, and people seeing the difference, and up-skilling teachers and TAs so that they can see that. And understanding, perhaps, about the context our children come from (AI).*

Gill approached the role of leading and managing a change of pedagogy through example. She explained her personal need to be a good role model:

I support colleagues and give them ideas, show them how to do things and I think that I'm a role model in that...I don't think you should be a senior leader actually if you can't do what you do on the ground anyway, so I think that people could come and observe lessons and see what I was doing, anybody could come in my classroom whenever and I think that that's how I lead them, and so hopefully, they've seen by example GI).

In the example above, Gill explained that by demonstrating the type of approach that she wanted to be adopted through school, she was able to build trusting attitudes with staff. She said she was fully prepared to accept observations 'at any time'. By inviting staff into her class, she says she is proving to them that whatever she is asking of them, is achievable in a class situation.

Rob describes a completely different approach to changing practice and empowering colleagues. It is more in the form of direct delegation, appointing the teacher as 'the expert' rather than himself. His strategy was to move away from the role of SENCo as the expert and move towards a more collegiate approach (Ekins, 2012). Rob reportedly took on the role of SENCo with the expectation that class teachers take the central role in the provision of children with needs.

Rob: *So, the staff know that the first place they look for pupil progress, and for that child having a high-quality education, is themselves - that it isn't the responsibility of anybody else in the school...Clearly, it is part of our remit, but the first person we'd look to is the class teacher (RI).*

Rob's explanation of the school system for the support of children with a label of needs emphasises that the key person in school in supporting the learning of all children is the class teacher and he is reportedly on hand to support when asked. Jess, on the other hand, does not talk about empowerment directly but of giving support and sharing knowledge from her own training to allow teachers to enable an adaption to their class teaching.

Jess: *I explain that my job is a monitoring role and an advisory role to staff. What I do try to do, when I can, is learn more about the interventions that are happening, and look at how that can be adapted in class to support class teachers, and try to go on as much training as I can, like the attachment training was quite lengthy, but that was brilliant(JI).*

The SENCOs in the study, talk about the areas of challenge that they found when trying to make changes by introducing professional development strategies. They described a variety of strategies which they use to encourage and motivate colleagues into different ways of approaching children's learning. Lily explains the necessity of having good interpersonal skills to support colleagues and to encourage them to look at the problem in more depth:

Sometimes it's about being able to have those conversations with people and like I say, that's why your interpersonal skills are so important because you need to be able to embrace what your colleague's saying, but also say, "Well, actually no, from what I'm seeing this isn't what is happening"(LI).

Ava considered that funded projects gave a little more status to the consideration of a change in pedagogical thinking under the banner of professional development and best practice, for example:

Things like being involved at the Education Endowment Fund (EEF) project, is useful, that gives a little bit of weight to what is best practice and sharing information and being able to use some of the statistics that come through ... and being able to show that(AI).

SENCOs in the study spoke of employing a variety of approaches to effectively empower staff. They admitted to using their status and influence to motivate staff and talk of displaying flexibility and sensitivity towards colleagues, depending on the requirements of the situation. The SENCOs described the difficulties of trying to move forward too quickly. Lily, Jess and Ava emphasised

the necessity of employing care in the progress towards empowerment of staff.

The data revealed that the SENCos drive towards the empowerment of staff was a desire to enable staff to be more effective in their support of children with the label of needs. They sought to provide a wider knowledge base with a greater understanding of children's needs alongside the desire for staff to be self-directing.

Lily, in explaining her own motivational needs to share her knowledge, exemplifies the SENCos motivation to empower staff.

Lily: *I can share with staff and (then) staff understand why we're doing things, and why we're trying things and say "I get that now, it's not just 'just do this because I said' It's 'do this, because of this, and this is the knowledge base that is driving this (LI).*

I suggest that Lily is trying to lead her colleagues towards an empowerment level that can be described as a change-enhancing level using Avidov-Ungar et al's (2014) model of empowerment. This is a high level of empowerment that Lily aspires to which allocates more responsibilities and autonomy to staff and promoting more participation in decision making about children with the label of needs (Muijs & Harris, 2003). But the stage that the SENCos are currently achieving with staff appears to be more at the Level 1 Stage because the professional development they speak of is only the first stage of full empowerment.

5.5 Summary of empowerment of parents, children and staff.

In this chapter, I have described how SENCos see empowerment as a process of personal, and for teachers professional, development within each group of stakeholders of parents, children and staff.

Educational research focused on empowerment (Avidov-Ungar et al, 2014; Newman, Berg, Rodriguez, & Morgan, 2010) have found empowerment of teachers to be a slow process, affirming the view of Lily, Jess, Ava and Zara who spoke of the need to make advancements carefully, by firstly introducing a planned programme of professional development. SENCos talked of colleagues '*not ready*' or '*not quite there yet*' seeing a need to not push for reform too soon but I suggest there might be the possibility that perhaps some of the SENCos may not only wish to maintain the control but also maintain their role as the expert. This is not so with Rob explained when he took on the role he was no expert and, in his view, the teaching of all children was the teacher's responsibility.

Since the introduction of the SENDCoP (DfE & DoH,2015) there is an expectation of SENCos to take a lead in bringing changes into school which affect the role of stakeholders. The participating SENCos spoke in terms of empowerment or enabling for each of the groups of stakeholders and used the term empowerment loosely depending on the group membership. The SENCos reported the pressure of these expectations and spoke of ways of empowering parents to take on the partnership role with confidence, to support teachers in gaining more knowledge of, and approaches for, teaching children with a variety of needs and of the introduction of strategies that allow for pupil voice.

SENCoS spoke of the importance of partnership with parents with the intention of creating a shared understanding of the value of supporting children's learning. But underlying the articulated desire of the SENCoS to support and meet parents on an equal basis is a revelation from the data, that some of the participant SENCo narratives contain identifiable underlying rationale of disadvantage and deficit rooted in the medical model (Tomlinson, 2017). It is possible to assume that it is an attitude of benevolent paternalism, but it might also be construed as a form of control and limitation of full empowerment. We saw how vulnerable Gill felt at a meeting where parents felt empowered to make comments in a public arena on their children's provision in school. I conclude from the data in this study, that the empowerment endowed to parents is currently with limited powers only remaining at Level 1 (Avidov-Ungar et al., 2014) within the control of the SENCoS.

In the section on pupil empowerment through pupil voice or a person-centred approach, the examples show different ways of implementing pupil voice (Wetzelhütter & Bacher, 2017). It seems that there is no formulaic approach to the phenomenon of 'pupil voice' and one concludes that pupil empowerment can be achieved through a variety of mechanisms. Rob spoke of using his influence to instigate pupil voice across the whole school but particularly for children who appear to be faltering in their progress. He reported that the time given to the child to reflect on their learning with both parent and teacher has positive results. Zara constructed a role as a carer and a protector of vulnerable children and, in her view, has become an advocate for children to access pupil voice. The children in Zara's school are described as having a direct line to a

teacher who listens and, Zara reported, for the vulnerable children in her school, to know that someone does care about them, is in itself empowering.

Participating SENCos were revealed to be demonstrably aware of the need for strategies to develop pupil voice or pupil participation, but also aware of the challenges it brings to the dynamics of the relationships within the school community (Bragg, 2007). Hence Lily and Jess revealed consideration of the implementation of pupil voice, but an acceptance that the school community needs time to assimilate its' development. Lily reported that she has put pupil participation on hold until she feels the time is right, suggesting that she is preparing for readiness in staff awareness and knowledge. This reason is also given by Jess for taking the process of introduction slowly, as she reported not just for the benefit of the staff but also for the benefit of the children. She maintained that she investigated sensitive ways of including pupil voice in review meetings.

Bradbury, Feeney and Gager (2010) suggest teachers need to be prepared to engage in the challenges of introducing pupil participation or pupil voice for it to be successful. The strategies exemplified by the SENCos for the development of pupil empowerment revealed consideration for the expansion of participatory approaches which enable pupils to be more involved in their own learning,

The data demonstrated that there was an intent from SENCos to empower parents, pupils and staff but on variant and different levels. When compared to the Avidov-Ungar et al (2014) model of empowerment none of the groups attains the highest level.

The SENCos articulated the need to empower but, in some cases are slow to relinquish all power from themselves. They explained their reasons for making the change to full empowerment slowly, but change can be slow and tortuous. On the positive side, the data does indicate a movement from a prescribing role to one of enabling and supporting.

The next chapter explores the emergence of the SENCos as social worker expressed by the participants. Included in this chapter is SENCos as carer, a supporter of social justice and counsellor.

Chapter 6

SENCo as social worker, carer, and counsellor

6.1 Introduction

The chapter presents the findings from the data suggesting that the SENCos in the study perceived the role to encompass aspects of social work. Issues are explored surrounding this shift in SENCo working, describing how SENCos in the study are reportedly crossing boundaries from education into social welfare. I assess what the data reveals about the changing aspects of the SENCo role which encompass those elements that can be described as social working.

The social worker principles of support, protection and empowerment for those who are vulnerable, oppressed or living in poverty, (British Association of Social Workers, 2019) are also closely aligned to the principles which the SENCos reveal (see 4.2 & 6.3). The SENCos' approaches to the empowerment of parents and families are discussed in Chapter 5, therefore empowerment is not discussed in detail in this chapter.

The attributes of the SENCo role which have emerged from the data as exemplifying social work are:

- a commitment to social justice and better outcomes for children,
- a strong commitment to the ethic of care,
- a commitment to the support of families
- an additional role as counsellor and listener,

These are all attributes of social work (Frost, 2011) which SENCos refer to in the findings.

6.2 SENCo as social worker

The 1993 Education Act introduced a statutory SEN Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (DfEE, 1994) and initiated the SENCo role which concentrated on identification of need, labelling children, defining and maintaining intervention programmes for the support of children with the label of needs. Now, with the introduction of the Children and Families Act (2014) and the related statutory guidance in the SEND Co P (DfE & DoH, 2015) the emphasis is on increased partnership with parents/carers, keeping the child and the family at the centre of the decision-making process (Curran, 2018).

My data indicates the participants' have experienced an extension in the remit of the SENCo role resulting in an expansion of support, not just for the child, but also for the families. The evidence discussed in Chapter 5 indicates the importance of developing relationships with parents/carers and emphasises the need for SENCos to ensure trust with the parents/carers before a successful partnership is formed. SENCos in the study report that as trusting relationships develop, they find themselves being called upon to make responses to the psychosocial needs of the parents and families. Gill describes building relationships with the family as important to enable her to make a difference in their lives.

Gill: *I think, making the relationships with people.....actually making differences to families - and children - but I think more to the family as a whole (GFG).*

Primary teachers have long been acknowledged, for a range of historical, gendered and altruistic reasons, to provide 'a culture of care' in primary schools (Acker, 1995; Nias, 1999).

What emerges from the data is an underlying theme of care that goes beyond the requirement of the Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2012, 8.) 'communicate effectively with parents with regards to pupils' achievements and well-being'. My findings reveal that it is not just the 'safeguarding and well-being' (DfE, 2012, p.14) of the child that concern the SENCos, but also the well-being of the family that surrounds the child.

SENCos report that they are mindful of their responsibilities for children's safety and wellbeing. As they find themselves working at the interface of education and community, the data indicates that there is a blurring of the boundaries between education and social welfare. Previous research suggests that the wellbeing of children, families and society are closely interlinked existing in 'complex interaction with each other' (Knowles & Holmstrom, 2013, p.110). But the link between these three social institutions is fluid and changing, for example, the concept of family has changed over the years as the structure of family life has become more diverse. The traditional format of the nuclear family has become more varied and flexible than in the past (Smart, 2007). Morgan (1998, p.74) suggests families have become more 'fractured and fragmented' with a rise in lone parenting. There are more non-traditional (not typical nuclear families) family type structures or kinship which provide emotional and physical support for the wellbeing of the child (Hirsch & Smith, 2010). The constructs of the family may be different for each child, but the parents/carers still have a

moral responsibility to 'invest themselves in the proper upbringing of their children' (Etzioni, 1993, p.54).

The role of the child and family social worker is to support family units in times of crisis to enable them to have more control over their lives (Frost, 2011).

However, a House of Commons Report (2019) on the funding of local authorities' children's services, highlights the high turnover and low retention of the children's social care workforce indicating that the system 'isn't working well' (Point 21 and Paragraph 130). It reported some councils were struggling to keep permanent child and family social workers due to a range of stressed related pressures from the increased workload and burgeoning administrative procedures.

Zara reported that the waiting list for CAMHS (Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service) team in her area was 'up to eight months' (ZI). This shortage of support teams was highlighted in a recent National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) survey (2018) focusing on the funding shortages related to critical support services for vulnerable children. The report suggests that '80% of respondents said that cuts to health and social care budgets were making it harder to support the needs of children with SEND'. (NAHT 2018 p 2).

SENCOs, it appears, are filling the gap that was previously filled by 'home school liaison' staff and child and family social workers.

Knowles and Holmstrom, (2013, p.18) suggest, 'if families thrive, children and society thrive'. SENCOs in the study reported that, because of their close relationship with parents/carers, they were alerted early to crisis situations within family units recognising that some families were in situations which

prevented access to all the constituents required to support the wellbeing of children. Ava, Gill and Zara describe themselves as working in areas of disadvantage, inner-city schools sited in areas of old and declining heavy industry or areas with decommissioned coal mines with widespread unemployment. They say they recognise the impact of low family income on health, welfare and educational outcomes which has also been highlighted by Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford, and Taggart (2004), Sutton Trust (2015) and Hirsch (2013). Factors of health, unemployment, poor housing, broken adult relationships or disability mean that some children do not have access to the most nourishing of foods, or settled and warm places to live. The participant SENCOs' schools, like many others, now provide all-round care with breakfast clubs, lunch-time hot meals and after school clubs where children have the opportunity to eat well and to socialise. This is only the base level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943) but SENCOs see themselves as supporting the parents/carers to the next level of Maslow's need (1943) towards securing more confidence in parenting children and more confidence in their approach to their own lives (see Chapter 5) which is one of the elements of social working.

In both Ava and Gill's setting, there are small school-based teams, concentrating on home school liaison but the SENCOs report that they were often the first people to be alerted to home issues and then would inform those teams.

Ava: *we will signpost (to) our pastoral team (who) do quite a cracking job with getting to know those parents. (AI).*

Findings reveal that if the pastoral teams or home school liaison teams do not exist in schools then SENCOs are now providing support which was previously the remit of an Education Social Worker or School Liaison officer funded by the local authority. These posts have mostly disappeared due to funding changes that came with the introduction of local management of schools, grant-maintained status, (Webb & Vulliamy, 2002) and latterly with academy status. There are instances in the past where home-school liaison has been funded by charitable organisations but currently it is the decision of the school whether or not they can budget for this. There remain some local authority teams of family support workers who liaise with SENCOs for example MAST (Multi-Agency Support Teams) and the CAMHS Team (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) which is a statutory service but due to heavy demand, their services are in short supply.

Webb and Vulliamy's (2002) study highlighted the workload pressures of social workers and teachers growing social work responsibilities. The passage of time has not diminished the workload of the social worker. Monetary cuts in local authority funding plus child family social work being challenged by high turnover of staff, unfilled vacancies and reliance on agency staff (Bowyers & Roe, 2015) have exacerbated the situation and intensified what SENCOs perceive as the need to get involved in family support.

Ava justifies the need to support families:

It's about making improvements for children; it's about helping children and their families (AI)

Some families are better positioned to provide for the needs of children and are more likely to enable their children to be ready for school and learning (Knowles & Holmstrom (2013), but in areas where there is a scarcity of family social workers the element of support and protection for vulnerable families is missing. It is this gap that the SENCos are attempting to plug. Gill spoke of the necessity of promoting good relationship to enable further support of the families, particularly in parenting:

These families don't just need school to support them they need support at home to help parent the children. (GI)

Ava gave an example of how nurseries are supporting families who had reportedly missed out on family welfare support due to cuts in social services and this was reflected in the parenting skills of the parents. She referred to some children entering nursery aged three, still in nappies and with dummies. There is a combination of factors here of changing expectations of parents, the expectations of school that children should come in toilet trained and able to articulate their needs, and the struggling child and family social services. Explaining the school's desire to approach the needs of children holistically, Ava went on to describe the strategy for persuading children to remove their dummies whilst in nursery.

Ava: *So, we have quite a lot of 'Ditch the dummy'. We have a Dummy Tree and they get some kind of reward in exchange for leaving the dummy on the tree (AI).*

Ava explained that 'Ditch the dummy' strategy was to lessen the reliance on dummies and to assist in encouraging language development. It was seen as both an educational and cultural issue.

SENCos justified their need for involvement in supporting families in social justice terms and the next section examines the findings from the data which emphasise the SENCos' social justice ethic in more detail.

6.3 SENCos commitment to social justice

The participant SENCos' ethic of social justice and human rights match closely to those which the British Association of Social Workers website (2019) outline as the mainstay of social work and aligns with the disability rights-based model (Section 2.3.3). SENCos in the study spoke of their role as enhancing the lives of the children for whom they are responsible. They revealed that their motivation is predicated on their belief of equal opportunity and social justice which encapsulate the principles of inclusiveness of belonging, participating and achieving (Mittler, 2000).

Rob spoke in terms of doing 'the just or 'right thing, to enable children to feel valued (RI). Whilst Gill commented:

We are really trying our best to get a fair deal for everybody and it's still not quite good enough (GI).

SENCos in this study articulated a personal desire to make a positive difference. They spoke with passion about using their knowledge and expertise to support children with the aim of making significant and beneficial changes to the lives of children and their families. SENCos talked positively of their role in supporting children with a label of needs but with an underlying assumption that the families also require their help and support.

Gill: *Giving everybody a fair chance. It's not anybody's fault where they were born or to whom they were born (GI).*

Ava also spoke of building relationships with families, making sure that children and families were getting the opportunities they deserved:

to support and make a difference to..... a bit of a privilege sometimes to be able to build those relationships with families and see that the children are getting a good deal and, you know, are getting where they need to be and being able to help in that way (AFG).

Ava and Gill both said that their involvement as SENCo is to make sure children are getting a 'good deal' (AI) or 'fair chance' (GI) enabling them to 'make a difference' (GI) to their lives. This reasoning appears to be based on a premise that in the construction of society, vulnerable children and families will not get a fair deal unless they have help and support (Field, 2010).

Gill maintained that in applying for an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) for a child she felt that she was also fulfilling a social need for the child and the family.

Gill: *transferring that into support for her mum and joining it all up together really. There were a lot of social needs there as well, and I think having the plan enabled us to get different support in for the family as well as just the little girl (FG).*

SENcos in the study explained that they are driven by an ethic of social justice and a belief that without their support and input, children would not thrive so well.

Jess: *I try to support them with it because a lot of our parents don't feel like they've got the ideas or that they're as valuable as what they are (JI).*

The participating SENCos justified their altruistic sense of care in the community with the implication that there is a need for it. I suggest that this is the combination of the culture of care of primary teachers (Nias1999) combined with the perceived moral obligation of giving those children and families, seen as disadvantaged, a helping hand (Gilligan & Attanucci, 1998). This is tempered with the knowledge that the families get little support from elsewhere due to the austerity cuts linked to social services (Bowyers & Roe,2015).

Data from this study reveals that SENCos recognise the importance of a child's home background because of the impact it has on the child's holistic development (Field, 2010). SENCos in the study acknowledged the impact of social disadvantage both on children's behaviour, on children's achievement and life chances (Aldridge, Kenway, MacInnes, & Parekh, 2012).

Although Bruner (1991) and Carr (2003) warn against the dangers of using education to shape, change or improve social and welfare issues, the data indicates that the participating SENCos believe that an essential element of the role is to enhance children's well-being and academic progress through supporting parents and families. Ava described some families within a persistent cycle of need from one generation to the next. In recounting this cycle of need she refers to the causes as parents' poor experiences at school combined with socio-economic disadvantage.

Ava: *a lot of our needier children have the needier parents – the parents who've had a poor school experience themselves (AI).*

This is a kind of 'cycle of deprivation' (Rutter & Madge. 1976) described and according to the SENCos remains a feature within some families. SENCos in the study saw themselves in a similar position to those in Kearns' (2005) SENCo study, as 'rescuers', with a belief that their help and support in lives of the children and families, could the raise the children out of this cycle of deprivation.

This section has outlined the ethical stance and reasoning of SENCos in this study in explaining their motivation to support families. The data reveals some similarities of ethical belief between social workers and SENCos of equality of opportunity and an emphasis on social justice and fairness. This comparison seeks to explain the participant SENCos' ability to cross boundaries (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011) into the realms of social working and has attempted to demonstrate some of the reasons why this shift in working has occurred. The following section examines the ways in which this ethic of social justice can be challenged.

6.4 Conflict and dilemmas experienced when principles oppose practice

This section examines the conflicts that can arise in school between the structural elements of the curriculum and SENCos' personal beliefs of social justice. There were times when the SENCos' principles about equality of access and social justice were severely tested and the next section illustrates the tensions and the difficulties of situations that arise when the requirements of the curriculum appear to clash with the personal ethical principles held.

The data revealed that the SENCos experience tension in the role when their principles of social justice conflict with the structures of the curriculum. Rob expressed his principles in social justice as:

It's about doing the right thing for the child in the setting in the school that we're in. Seeing them enjoying being in school and feeling equally valued as members of the school to everybody else (RI).

Lily and Zara talk of removing barriers to learning, illustrating the principles of the social model of disability (Section 2.3.2) as a way of supporting children's inclusion and participation in learning activities.

Lily: *I think that all children should have equal access to learning, and if there are barriers to learning, that those barriers are reduced... the pupils can then, be able to participate as all pupils would, so regardless of their need, they are able to actively participate, and make progress and be happy, feel safe and secure and that's obviously our main aim as a school (LI).*

Zara: *making sure that everybody is included in the class and that they're happy, they feel valued. That you provide an atmosphere where they can all thrive, that they don't feel stressed (ZI).*

These principles became challenged as Zara explained in the dilemma she has in her role as both SENCo and Y6 teacher. In this case, Zara's illustrated an appreciation of the disability rights model of social justice and the social model of inclusion in opposition to the need for performance measurements.

Standardised Assessment Tests (SATs) are administered in Year 6 and schools stress the importance of these, not just as a benchmark of achievement for the child but also an achievement for the school. The requirement to measure the 'performative worth of pupils' (Ball 2009,p.42) has been described as a way for vulnerable pupils to feel redundant within a very punishing form of

pedagogy (Giroux, 2012) because not all children perform well under the conditions employed in SATs tests. Zara, in her illustration, recognises the stresses that children with the label of needs experience in this testing situation. She is aware that it is a stressful time for all children but particularly for those who find school demanding most of the time.

Zara's drawing (Figure F) illustrates the tensions encountered in being a SENCo and Year 6 teacher. She depicted this conflict as a jagged edge, running through her body. She articulated the tension she felt trying to champion the needs of children with the label of needs whilst putting them through KS2 SATS. Coldwell & Willis, (2017) similarly recognised the tensions produced by Y6 SATs tests and their role in demonstrating progress and accountability.

Zara felt the conflict between the caring and comforting SENCo that her persona usually projected and the administrator of the SATS tests. She illustrated the 'split of the role' as a sense of betrayal of children labelled with needs.

Figure F: Extract from Zara's drawing.



Zara recounted the stresses that children accrue during SATS tests. She felt a personal conflict as the Y6 teacher obliged to administer the SATS knowing that many of the children labelled with needs would find the situation difficult and stressful.

Zara: *You know, obviously they're going to have stresses, but you want to reduce that and if you've provided somewhere that's inclusive, it shouldn't be so stressful. (ZI).*

Curran (2019) and Brundett, (2011, p 339). highlight this issue of teachers having to attribute value and importance to policies whilst navigating a difficult pathway of aligning to policies they find both 'controversial and challenging'.

As a specific example, Lily spoke of worries over the introduction of the new maths mastery curriculum. It is a method of teaching maths, imported from Shanghai and Singapore, which integrates the development of conceptual understanding and problem solving with a proficiency in routine skills (Huang and Leung 2005). Children are taught in class together, groups are not withdrawn, there is no differentiation and the class move forward together when everyone has grasped the concept. Lily reports that in her settings, the mastery approach in maths is difficult to manage for both staff and pupils. It is termed inclusive teaching but done in a way that Lily perceives as not in the best interests of the children labelled with needs:

Lily: *the mastery approach has shown, ...a phenomenal impact for some children, but for some of our children with special educational needs we're almost trying to drag them along with an understanding of concepts that they are not quite ready for yet, and the idea that one-size-fits-all goes against everything that we as SENCos has [have] ever believed (LI).*

Lily explained that she perceives mastery maths teaching as having a detrimental effect on the learning of the children labelled with needs:

the idea is all children are tackling the same concept at the same time and that we move forward and you pick up the ones that can't do it, but there are such gaps between some of the children that can't access it, that it's, "how do we fill those gaps?" and it's very frustrating for the teachers and for the actual pupils.

There's a real conflict between that and the approach as a SENCo. That's one of the things at the moment that I've been trying to navigate through and how can we meet the demands of the curriculum and the government with the demands of that child's individual needs? (LI)

Both Lily and Zara highlighted one of the problems of balancing the demands of government curriculum policy with their responsibilities to children with the label of needs and their desire to provide a fair and equitable approach for all children.

Rob spoke as being inclusive in his approach, aligning with the social model of disability, in giving children with the label of needs the opportunity to thrive.

Rob: *If you said, "What does it look like for a SEN child in school?" I'd say, "It should just look like anybody else, in that you should see you're getting quality first teaching, there isn't an IEP that's forgotten about in a cupboard, actually, every teacher knows what every child needs in their class." And if it is something specialist, like a last year Y6, who was profoundly autistic, all the advice from county and everybody was he shouldn't be here, he needed to go to special school. Parents didn't want that, we took him right through, (school). He lasted one day at his secondary school! We know we couldn't have done any more for that child. We know what we did, and we did the best for him in this setting. (RI)*

Rob spoke fervently about providing support for a child in mainstream when others thought might be more appropriately supported in a special school. He explained that it was the parents' choice for their child to be educated in a mainstream setting and the school supported them in their wish for their child to be educated in the locality school, even though outside agencies recommended

that the child attend a special school. Rob reported that, in this case, the school's inclusive methods, were successful in supporting the child through school.

Rob: *He made progress, he joined in here, he joined in on sports days, he was in the school play and on the night, he sang his line(although) not done that in any of the rehearsals. But (the success) was to see this from the child's point of view (RI).*

Rob claimed that inclusion was integral to the school *'it's not an add on, it's not something that we fill forms in to pretend we're doing, it's actually who we are!'* (RI).

Jess claimed that inclusiveness depends very much on the ability of the setting to accommodate the child's needs. She explained that she did not feel social justice through inclusion is a principle to be laboured if it becomes exclusion.

Jess: *I think there comes a point when I don't agree with inclusion for inclusion's sake.....If their needs can be better met, in terms of their peers elsewhere (JI).*

Jess illustrated this with a situation where a child with complex needs did not, in Jess's opinion, get the best support for her needs:

She spent two years with me in here because she couldn't possibly have coped with the curriculum in Year 2, but the children were seeing her as, a baby.

They (children) became her TA. They'd say, "Don't worry, I'll take (child) while you do that, and I'll do some drawing with her" you know? And what (child) needed was friendships, not mothers or TAs. And the gap was growing, and then she stayed with me through Year 2, and then the new Year 1s gradually started to take on that role because they were mentally outgrowing (child) and she just needed some peer group that she could play with, because she found play very difficult, and I didn't want to see her in Key Stage 2 taught outside the classroom because she was still working on recognising the value of a number up to 9(JI).

Jess's argument came from a desire to provide an education that met the child's needs. She felt the school was not able to do that, because the child was being measured on progress by age-related norms and therefore in Jess's view, was not being given the best opportunity to function at the level of her capability. Jess describes helpful and accommodating children who began to 's/mother' the child, treating her as the baby and appearing, in her view, to create dependency. Meanwhile, according to Jess, the ability gap between the child and her peers, measured by the age-related expected norms of achievement, grew wider. Jess reported that her principles of inclusion were tested. She said that her view of inclusion became exclusion for a child not able to experience a curriculum which fitted her needs. Jess concluded that inclusion in this instance was for some and those not included were positioned as 'the other' (Corbett,1996, Oliver,2004). Jess explained that this scenario really tested her belief in inclusive practice and the child was eventually, with parental involvement, transferred to a special school.

Each of these narratives retold by Zara, Lily, Rob and Jess are examples of the tension and inner conflict that can arise when personal principles of social justice and inclusion are brought up against curriculum or organisational practice which is there for the benefit of the majority and the minority have to fit in as best they can. It is the minority groupings of children with labelled needs which the SENCos said they feel most responsible for and those situations, as exemplified in this section, can underline the children's vulnerability. It brings into question what social justice and inclusion really mean in practice for the SENCos and whether they can construct their vision of a socially equitable

system within the current restrictions of school cultures of performativity and curriculum restraint.

Teaching is an emotional practice (Hargreaves, 2000 p.811) and the SENCos in the study are shown to have invested themselves heavily in the ethic of care (Nias1998) which is discussed in Section 3.8. The next section reports on the SENCos' position as caring SENCos and their perception of the emotional involvement of the role.

6.5 The SENCo as carer

SENCos in the study report that they provide what Vogt (2002, p.258) refers to as a teacher who is 'approachable and interested in the personal situation of the children' and according to the SENCos they achieve this both with the children and with the families. The ethic of care is exemplified in the following recounts in conjunction with the expectations that are held of SENCos.

The SENCos recount different aspects of caring. Jess specifically voiced commitment to a child, '*they knew that we cared deeply about (named child)*' and talking about the close relationships they formed with parents. Gill's asserts that '*you don't get anywhere in the SENCo role without relationships*' (GI). (discussed in Section 5.2. The following examples illustrate the varying ways that SENCos develop caring relationships with families.

Gill describes the closeness she felt with a parent after a successful EHCP application. She got involved because she felt the parent needed her help with the application:

She is a mum on her own she needs somebody, she needs a voice, she needs somebody to speak for her, she had nobody (GI).

Gill 's view was that the parent gained in confidence after the success of the application, sufficiently to call her by her first name.

Gill: *I've known her for probably about 3 years now and it's taken that long to get to know her, but she called me 'Gill' for the first time yesterday. She said, "Oh, thank you Gill"(GI).*

Zara talked of giving emotional support to parents when children were transferring from the primary to the secondary phase of education. This is a time of high anxiety when a child with the label of needs moves from a relatively small primary school to a much larger secondary. Zara explained that she goes with parents to the new school to help alleviate the anxiety of both parent and child and to help to ease the transition for both of them.

I'll go with the parents, with the child, and we'll spend a lot of time to try and get it right for them (child) when they move (ZI).

Ava, Gill, Rob and Jess also hold the post of Safeguarding Lead and both Ava and Gill spoke in terms of wanting to support families because they felt a double responsibility for care for vulnerable children who were on both on the SEND registers and the safeguarding lists.

This extract of conversation from the focus group illustrates this:

Gill: *I think there's quite a lot of crossover between the safeguarding and the SENCo role as well (GFG)*

Ava: *There is quite a lot of correlation isn't there, between needs and one of our main focuses this year is to improve outcomes for our vulnerable learners. (AVG)*

This dialogue indicated that safeguarding is not just policing but also requires some planned school response for those children considered vulnerable.

In the role of caring for children's physical and wellbeing, Zara, Jess, Lily and Ava narrated incidents of being able to provide support for children's emotional and physical needs and wellbeing whilst in school but worried that beyond the school gates the child's well-being could not be guaranteed. This caring disquiet about children's family life was expressed by Zara when she described a pupil who was sick with anxiety every day before school started.

Zara: *I would sit with her every single morning from 8 to about 8:40, and then once she'd go back into class, she'd be alright, and they had her checked out for everything medically under the sun. It was anxiety, and parents didn't know what was wrong, there was no problems at school, then the Multi-Agency Support Team (MAST) got involved, it came out the dad has... got anxiety, he's got drink problems, drug problems, massive stress, massive debts, things like that, he was coming home drunk. But we didn't know that at the time, and it's turned around now different organisations (are) now helping the family which has really helped the child (ZI).*

Zara's example indicates how the social stresses of the family were impacting on the child in school. Zara's observations and support of the child corresponds with research evidence which suggests when a:

family's socioeconomic position worsens, the risk of maternal and child mental health difficulties increase. Socioeconomic disadvantage acts as a psychosocial stressor and can work through poor housing and unsafe neighbourhoods to negatively impact young people's mental health and wellbeing

(Education Policy Institute, 3.2, 2018).

It was Zara who was first alerted to problems being experienced by the family and was then able to facilitate working with outside agencies and together they were able to assist the family. She spoke of her concerns for the problems of mental health that pupils and parents were experiencing and examples how the SENCos role is not restricted to purely educational welfare but has broadened to health and social aspects which impact on the learning ability of a child. Zara described a new programme planned for introduction into the school to help manage the increasing anxiety that was prevalent in the children.

She explained:

It's a 10-week programme for children with anxiety and it's to build their resilience, and it's about self-calming and self-soothing, you do a lot of mindfulness, visualisations, all that kind of thing and there's so many, there's so many children where the parents are coming in saying they're not sleeping... We've got children on sleeping tablets, you know (ZI).

Researcher: Children on sleeping tablets?

Zara: *Yeah, we've got children on sleeping tablets here. We even had one in Y6 that was on anti-depressants. And then when he went to Secondary it wasn't working enough so he had to have an ECG to see if he'd be able to tolerate adult anti-depressants. As soon as they go to secondary a lot of them struggle because it's quite nurturing and small here. The secondary school is amazing, they've got the Inclusion Centre and most of them thrive, but they've got three from our school that are non-attenders now (ZI).*

Zara suggested that much of the anxiety that children expressed emanates from the parents

The anxiety and the low self-esteem that a lot of our parents have (is) fostering that kind of negative... They want to talk about something negative... they'll have learned to dwell on these worries, they'll [have] learned to go over and over in their head because they talk about it (ZI).

Anxiety and stress manifest itself in different ways and Jess reported that she had real worries for a child who was so stressed by a variety of factors at school that he felt the need to destroy it.

Jess: *He got really angry at home and agitated and stressful, and he started saying "I'm gonna burn the school down, I don't want to be part of this school anymore"(JI).*

Zara, Jess, Lily and Ava's articulated worries about the mental health of the school population and this has become a national worry. Statistics from the Mental Health Foundation (2016) suggested that one in four adults and one in ten children are likely to have mental health problems in any year. The Conservative government commissioned a report on the increase in mental health issues in children and young people.(DoH & DfE, 2017) focusing on increasing the capacity of schools and specialised care providers to respond more promptly and effectively to children and young people experiencing mental health difficulties. The Conservative government (2018) deemed that mental health will be mandatory in the curriculum from 2020 and pledged more money to support mental health in the UK. Glazzard and Bligh (2018, p.2) recommend that 'primary schools need to adopt a whole-school approach to mental health' embedding mental health into school policy and school value statements.

Meanwhile, the SENCos reported that they feel it is their responsibility to arrange and provide support in schools for those children with anxiety issues. It is an aspect of their role that is more of a cultural problem, but schools are recognising the immediate impact of anxiety on children's learning and are motivated in securing funding for projects for children and families like the one Zara described.

Lily also spoke of her worries and the need to support children with anxiety:

I don't know whether it's that we're more knowledgeable, but it seems now that a lot of what we do in school is to support children with anxieties. A lot of my role at the moment seems to be involved in children who have anxiety, anxieties either between school or home or there's anxiety present in some area of their life and it's having quite an impact (LI).

Lily continued:

we seem to be doing a lot more nurture within the schools...And again, that might be because of my knowledge base or because we have a better understanding now, looking at supporting children with social and emotional needs (LI).

The answer for the social and emotions problems in Lily's setting is more 'nurture' in the form of Lego© therapy and art therapy and for Zara, it is mindfulness and visualisation sessions plus sessions on resilience. Both schools under the leadership of the SENCOs were trying to tackle situations that are perhaps more to do with the wider society rather than education but issues which also impact on their relationships with the families.

These issues of mental health evidence the various caring modes of Vogt's model (2002) described as a caring continuum, of vocalised commitment, caring as developing relationships, caring as parenting and caring as maintaining physical well-being. Jess provided an example of vocalised commitment and throughout interviews, SENCOs voiced personal concerns about specific children. The findings revealed the participant SENCOs' belief in the development of relationships with families and in giving parental support in times of anxiety; as Zara did in accompanying parent and child to the transfer school. The main caring support for maintaining physical well-being is given

over to support for mental health programmes, an issue which is reflected in society and has prompted government strategies for public mental health (NHS,2016).

The SENCos reported that the more closely they worked with parents and

Figure H families the more that their relationships were strengthened, but it also took its toll emotionally. SENCos report that there is an expectation from children, staff and colleagues for SENCos to have deep wells of emotional understanding.



Both Zara, in her drawing (left) and Jess in her narration (below), use the word 'draining' in connection with parents

Jess, narrated the help and support given to a family, referring to the emotional cost of her support.

Jess: *It was difficult, it was **draining**, but in the end, I think it had taken a long time but it had gone really well. It did, you know, you could see that relationship developing (JI).*

Both Zara and Jess revealed that giving emotional support to the parents comes at some emotional cost to themselves (Nias,1998) but do admit being driven by altruistic motives as the first part of this chapter exemplifies.

The caring element of the role also manifested itself in another social dimension of the role which Lily described as '*the role of counsellor*'. The following section describes occasions when the SENCos reported that they were called upon to act as counsellors to parents, but they were also supportive of children in creating pupil voice strategies described in Section 5.3.

6.6 SENCo as counsellor

I begin this section by defining the role of a counsellor in order to assess in what ways SENCos perceived this aspect of their role.

The role of counsellor is linked to the support that can be given to those people experiencing emotional difficulties. Counselling is provided through talk. When people seek professional help to enable them to overcome problems counsellors mostly achieve this by identifying and talking through their issues. Counselling involves active listening without judgment or criticism and, through talking, counsellors may help the person set goals or strategies to address the identified issues (DfE, 2016).

Previous discussion (section 6.2) and Chapter 5 emphasises the SENCo's role in making trusted relationships with children and parents/carers. SENCos in the study revealed that once these relationships are formed parents/carers seek them out to help, gain some support or advice on matters either concerning their children or something else entirely. SENCos, Lily, Zara and Jess recounted examples of when they were asked by parents for professional advice to consider problems arising from their children's specific labelled needs, but there were also examples of other situations where the advice sought was entirely personal. It is another example of boundary-crossing a term given by Akkerman & Bakker, (2011) a study which focused on crossing socio-cultural boundaries including between professions. This is illustrated by the SENCos in this study exemplifying another dimension of a social worker as a counsellor. This finding reinforces a previous study of the social work dimension of the teacher's role by Webb and Vulliamy, (2002) whose findings highlighted the way

that families looked to primary schools for empathy and help with their needs after they had got to know and trust teachers.

Lily reported that when she made herself available to parents, at set times or meet and greet at the start of a school day or exercising an open-door policy she found that parents did avail themselves of a listening ear and sought some emotional support. Lily spoke of how informally chatting to parents led to greater involvement and trust and then found she was providing a role as a counsellor to the parents.

Lily: *so it's me being on the door to welcome the parents like I did this morning, and then a few of them saying, "No...Not so good morning this morning," or "This weekend's been tricky" so it's about having those little conversations that then can feed into the classroom and into the practice so it gives us a heads up about how the children are feeling (LI).*

"I'll chat to them and they feel like they can talk to me, and little things like that make an impact...Some of the staff laugh at me and they say that I'm like a counsellor sometimes with the parents and I do feel sometimes like I am like that. (LI)

Lily's example indicates the willingness of parents to use her as a listening ear, 'they feel like they can talk to me'. Lily describes the conversation as a chat but the willingness of parents to talk to Lily is providing some emotional support akin to that of a counsellor. Lily admits that this action places her in the role of a counsellor.

Zara, in this next example, explained that she does have a great deal of contact with the parents but feels the supportive role she can play is a main part of her SENCo role.

Zara: *I've done a lot of work with parents and a lot of them do feel like they can come and talk to me, and if they're anxious about something they often want to come and tell me about that ..I think they feel they can trust me and, they want to share that with me, so I feel that's one of the main parts of my role(ZI).*

The talking, sharing and trusting of personal information is all part of a counselling role and Zara suggests that this activity is 'one of the main parts of my role'. Zara continued, explaining that the parents made full use of her offer to come in and talk:

the parents know when my SENCo time is and if they want to come and talk about anything - and they quite often do! (ZI)

Lily maintained that one way to gain a connection and confidence with parents is through empathising and trying to see things through a parent/carer's perspective:

It's empathy with parents. It's being able to see things from their point of view, and I think often we used to dismiss parents as being, you know, illogical, or it's just all about their child. I think we've become much better, and I think me personally, I'm very good at being able to see things from other peoples' point of view and being able to then respond to what they say (ZI)

Jess told of how once the connection was made with parents, and trust was developed they increasingly came back directly to her for help and support rather than going elsewhere to get help with their worries.

Jess: *I think it's the fact that they've built the relationship. I had a parent last week come to see me, she's not got a child in my class but I've worked with her on social and emotional difficulties with her older child, so we've built that relationship, so when she came to see me about something to do with the other child, really it was an issue for class teacher, not for me, but I think she felt that she knew that I would look into it and deal with it (JI).*

My findings indicate that the participant SENCOs experienced the role of counsellor developing within the role when there was trust between the parents/carers and themselves. Caring in this sense goes beyond the concern for happiness and well-being of the children and extends into the family. This development is in line with Nias (1998) who found that teachers' caring is linked to their sense of moral responsibility towards the families. The counselling role is a way to assure some support and comfort to parents which SENCOs say is worthwhile in the maintenance of well-being of the parents because it impacts on the well-being of the child.

6.7 Summary

This chapter has explored the data which reveals that part of the personal and professional identity of a SENCO is the ethic of care and a strong belief in social justice. SENCOs in the study report to have altruistic principles of caring and social justice which I argue are closely aligned with those of a social worker. The participant SENCOs describe holistic a concern of care for the children for whom they are responsible and are seen to cross the boundaries between the structured world of the school and the private family.

The participant SENCOs report that developing trusting relationships with families has led to more social work demands being placed upon them. This move into social welfare support is an example of SENCOs entering territories which are both familiar yet unfamiliar, and one may question whether they are qualified to entertain such a transition (Suchman,1994). I argue, that in many ways SENCOs are qualified to exercise this boundary-crossing from education to social working (Akkerman & Bakker,2011). The combination of the ethic of care and a strong belief in social justice (Section 6.3) suggests that they are

combining an altruistic drive with both knowledge and awareness of the child within the context of the family, thus achieving what Suchman (1994, p319) terms a 'hybrid situation' which is SENCo as social worker

What has emerged from the data is the way that SENCos have found themselves at the sharp end of government policy in the position of 'street-level bureaucrats' (Lipsky 1971). They are positioned in the front line of implementing a top-down policy which they do not fully support, which is compromising their principles of social justice and inclusion, illustrated by Zara and Lilly in examples of SATS and maths mastery.

SENCos are seen to care sufficiently about the children and the well-being of the family to cross boundaries into the realms of social work. Tensions are reported both in relation to providing services that government policy has stopped from other sources and in managing tensions of other government policy arising between inclusion and performance. The perception of the role as social worker seems to be a combination of meeting gaps in services, managing the tensions ensuing from this frontline working and being alert to the mental health needs of both parents and children by providing support.

SENCos are indeed shown to be caught the crossfire of debates about 'standards, equity and entitlement' (Liasidou and Svensson 2014, p788) but with the added responsibility of plugging gaps in the social welfare system.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I draw together key findings of the study to help inform current knowledge of the perceptions of the primary school SENCo role linking these to the conceptual frameworks from the literature. I reflect on the research process and discuss the limitations of the study along with the implications for future research and policy. I conclude with personal reflections of the research process linking to my own learning journey.

7.2 Addressing the research question

These conclusions are based on a study of six primary school SENCos exploring what it means to be a SENCo by assembling the perceptions and experiences of a group of primary school SENCos in such a way as to recognise the complexities of the role in a changing environment.

Two research questions were used to address this aim:

1: How is the role of the primary school SENCo perceived by those who hold the position in primary settings?

2: What experiences and personal history influence how primary school SENCos perceive their role?

What emerges from the study is that the participant SENCos' perceptions of the role are constituted by the meaning they attach to their experiences, which in turn are influenced by the contexts and variety of these experiences. There are also the influences of the wider context to consider and the kinds of meanings SENCos construct about aspects of their own professional identity. This links

with literature considering the aspect of 'becoming a SENCo', (Pearson, Scott and Sugden, 2011, p.52) and illustrates the anxieties that SENCos express in crossing boundaries from novice to expert (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011) (Section 2.6). Participant SENCos also reveal the use of metaphors to describe their role as depicted in previous SENCo studies (Kearns, 2005; Ekins, 2012; Woolhouse, 2015) (Section 2.11). How participant SENCos express inclusive pedagogy is reflected in the ways SENCos perceive and use the models of disability (Section 2.3.2-2.3.6). The empowerment of stakeholder is revealed as a positive concern but by using the Anvardo-Ungar et al, (2014) model of empowerment (Section 2.9) there are indications of varying levels of empowerment exercised by the SENCos. The data discloses varying approaches to leadership which is reflected in the literature (2.8). Other influences impacting on the role are the curriculum, government policy, accountability and measured performance within a politicised environment valorising academic progress. These influences create the contexts to their experiences informing their overall perceptions which give meaning to the role of primary school SENCo.

The SENCo role is both universal and unique. English schools are obliged to appoint a SENCo (DfE & DoH, 2015) yet at the same time, the role is particular to the setting and to the person carrying it out. Literature centred on the SENCo role, reveals that the role cannot be generalised because there are great differences in interpretation which give rise to different experiences and different perceptions Norwich, (2010) and Peterson, (2010). What is meaningful to SENCos varies between individuals in different contexts but the difference in this study is that the role is being played out within a new landscape, one of

political uncertainty and economic austerity initiated by government cuts, underfunding and scarcity of family social workers. Findings from this study draw out some of the similarities found in the literature of the perception of the role in the current educational climate informing what it means to be a primary school SENCo today.

Findings discussed reveal the interrelated parts which constitute the experience of being a SENCo. The participant SENCos describe the role as composed of many elements which require juggling or plate spinning reflecting the studies of Kearns, (2005) Ekins, (2012 and Woolhouse (2015). The second of the data chapters Chapter 5, indicates the importance SENCos attach to the empowerment of stakeholders and describes ways in which SENCos depict the empowering of parents, children and staff. The findings expose the tension experienced when a SENCo encounters power in parents' hands suggesting that participant SENCos prefer empowerment of the stakeholders to be within controlled limits. Chapter 6 presents findings which suggest a shift in practice for some SENCos encompassing elements of social work in the support of families of children with the label of needs. This chapter also indicates the tension between the ethic of care and paternalism. SENCos also make known concerns about mental health issues emanating from anxiety in both children and parents.

The next section presents an overview of the study's main findings in relation to the two research questions as detailed above.

7.2.1 SENCo's' perceptions of what it means to be a primary school SENCo

Firstly, the SENCos in the study conveyed a sense of apprehension at the responsibility of taking on the role (Section 4.2). The move to becoming a SENCo was perceived as taking a shift in identity reflecting the Akkerman and Meijer (2011) concept of teacher identity shifting with time and context. The exception was the participant who had been a SENCo previously and reported that she knew what to expect. The participants perceived a sense of high expectation of the SENCo role from colleagues, parents, children and Ofsted. This was perceived as a heavy burden of responsibility and accountability for children with the label of needs (Section 4.2.4).

The participant SENCos revealed that they have personal perceptions of what they can achieve in the role but each spoke of a desire to use their knowledge and expertise fully supporting children with the label of needs, articulating a personal aspiration of making significant and beneficial changes to the lives of the children and their families. The data indicates that the participating SENCos have a strong sense of moral purpose and a belief in fairness, equality of opportunity and social justice along with a belief that they are in a position to make a difference to the lives of the children for whom they have a responsibility (Section 4.2 & Section 6.3). These findings of a strong moral purpose link with studies by Layton (2005) and Maher and Vickerman's (2017).

The participant SENCos identified the building of relationships as key to the role. This correlates with other studies of SENCos (Kearns, 2005; Cole, 2005a; Cowne, 2005), highlighting the importance of relationships. There was a recognition of the need to build relationships with all stakeholders and outside

agencies echoing the studies of Nias,(1989), Barber, (2002); O'Connor, (2008); Mackenzie, (2012) The SENCos in the study particularly emphasised the need to create trusting relationships with parents as a precursor to encouraging them to take a greater and more confident role in supporting their children in partnership with school (Section 5.2). However, the data suggest that, although SENCos in the study talked of supporting and empowering parents, I contend that in reality, it is an unequal partnership, the SENCos feeling more comfortable when retaining hold of power. The SENCos are shown to be well-meaning of intent but with an air of benevolent paternalism (Tomlinson,1982; Gerwitz,2001), deciding what is best, based on assumptions about parents' capabilities. This could also be construed as a form of control and limitation of full empowerment (Section 5.2).

Acceptance of the SENCo role is perceived by the participants to mean not only support for children with the label of needs but also support for families when the need arises. The participant SENCos indicated that they care sufficiently about the children and the well-being of the family to cross the boundaries between the structured world of the school and the realms of social work. The altruistic combination of the ethic of care and a strong belief in social justice (Section 6.3) reveal SENCos to be applying knowledge and awareness of the child within the context of the family, thus achieving a hybrid situation of SENCo as a social worker. This situation, my analysis claims, is caused by a combination of a scarcity of family social workers and SENCos being alert to the holistic health and well-being of the children and their families.

All but one of the participants talked about having expert knowledge of SEND and report using their expertise in different ways to enable and support stakeholders. A constituent part of the SENCo role is to support colleagues providing professional guidance (DfE & DoH, 2015. 6.89) and to take an important role in determining the strategic development of SEND provision in the school (DfE & DoH, 2015. 6.87). The participant SENCos perceived the task of remodelling approaches to teaching and learning in their settings as a major element in their role. They referred to the necessity of firstly expanding and developing staffs' individual knowledge, through collective professional development, enabling staff to feel more confident in providing learning strategies for *all* children. (Section 5.4.1). This transformative role has been discussed as a way forward for the role in previous studies by Cole, (2005 a & b); Layton, (2005); MacKenzie,(2007); Szwed, (2007a, 2007b); Hallett and Hallett,(2010) and Pearson,(2010) and this study gives examples of ways that the SENCos were transforming the teaching and learning approaches of colleagues. In some cases, the SENCos called it empowerment but when analysed closely it was revealed to be only partial empowerment. The SENCos in the study talk of empowerment of staff in the form of professional development but retaining the SENCo in the role of the expert.

In order to make effective change, the participant SENCos recognised the necessity of employing a variety of leadership approaches to support and move colleagues forward in their thinking (Section 4.2.3,). SENCos describe examples of situational leadership (Hersey & Blanchard,1969), coaching, transformational leadership (Northouse,2018) distributed leadership approaches (Leithwood & Mascal, 2008; Hallett & Hallett,2010) and uses of positional

power. Participant SENCOs talked of displaying flexibility and sensitivity depending on the requirements of the envisaged outcomes; recommending the necessity to make careful progress towards change and describing the difficulties of moving some staff too quickly towards new ways of working. They also admit to using their status and influence in leading staff towards an inclusive pedagogy.

Participant SENCOs worry about continued government demands of testing and assessing of children, creating barriers within a performative culture (Ball, 2003) thus continuing to put pressures on the process of inclusion. SENCOs are finding that there is continued conflict, dilemma and tension arising when working within curriculum demands of a normative model (Biklen, 2000; Lloyd, 2008) of children's learning whilst simultaneously trying to implement an inclusive environment. Other studies resonate and highlight similar issues (Clough and Nutbrown, 2004; Cole, 2005a and Glazzard, 2014 a & b). However, the findings from this study underline the persisting difficulties of working with these opposing agendas.

The SENCOs in the study have found themselves at the sharp end of government policy as 'street-level bureaucrats' (Lipsky, 1971) positioned in the front line of implementing a top-down policy which they do not fully support. This, I claim, compromises their principles of social justice and inclusion which are influenced by the conflicting models of disability (Section 2.3.2-2.3.6). SENCOs found the dichotomy between the medical and social models difficult to manage and spoke of wanting a more holistic attitude towards children with the

label of needs more in line with the capability approach of a combination of personal, social and circumstantial factors (Section 2.3.4).

There are tensions arising on two fronts:

- i) in managing tensions of government policy arising between inclusion and performance
- ii) in relation to providing services that government policy has severely cut

Many of the elements of the role such as lack of time, resources, leadership, accountability and the burgeoning of bureaucratic paperwork, are worries that are evident in other SENCo studies by Weddell, 2004; Layton, 2005; Cole, 2005a; Szwed, 2007b&c; Pearson, Scott & Sugden, 2011; Pearson Mitchell & Rapti, 2015; Maher & Vickerman 2018. This study indicates these concerns persist (Section 4.5).

In the next section, I continue by addressing the second question which brings more personal dimension to the findings.

7.2.2 What experiences and personal history influence how SENCos perceive their role?

The SENCos in the study revealed some very personal history and talked of the ways in which this had affected their approach to the role. In a light-hearted moment as we approached the close of the focus group discussion Ava and Gill had a brief exchange, discussing why teachers take up the SENCo role

Ava: *Yeah nobody said the money, did they?*
Gill: *No.*
Ava: *Or the company car...[laughs]*
Gill: *No, it's our need to be loved!*

This exchange emphasised to me the meaning of the role for two SENCos. The SENCo post may have a small financial benefit, dependent on the setting, but it does not have any particular monetary perks to it. Gill explained it as 'our need to be loved'. I interpret this exchange as indicating an emotional link to the role. The findings indicate that the personal narratives of the experiences of the participant SENCos lend insight and understanding into their perceptions of the role. The narrated scenarios throughout the study have allowed SENCos to reveal experiences which influence and give meaning to their perceptions of the role. Some participant SENCos also disclosed personal details which they claim made an enormous impact on how they approached the SENCo role. Gill and Ava recounted childhood experiences which gave them the drive to create a supportive role for children and parents, whilst Rob explains that his approach to the SENCo role is the result of his experiences in industry. Lily's approach, she explains, is governed by her previous experience of being a SENCo, when she recounted that not being a member of the senior leadership team thwarted her attempts to make changes. Her current role includes being Deputy Head and she commented 'I've got much more authority to do things now!' (LI)

Jess and Zara describe positive influential experiences whilst in the role, which, they reported as making an impact on their overall perceptions of it. For instance, Jess gave an example of a scenario that she regarded as successfully working with parents by providing beneficial outcomes for the child and the family. Zara also cited how working closely with the family of a child provided a critical learning experience for her (Section 4.2).

These experiences are personal and highly contextualised and I make no claim to generalisations of the perception of all SENCos. However, it is possible to recognise, from the SENCos narratives, that personal history is a factor in their perception of the role along with positive and negative life experiences they accumulate while undertaking it.

The role continues to be full of complexities. New knowledge from the findings may not give rise to changes in policy or the award of any new monies to assist but these may raise awareness of changes in the role that are a direct result of government policy and the impact this has on the educational and social outcomes for children and their families.

The following section presents the main knowledge claims generated by both questions incorporating discussion of the implications for professional practice.

7.3 Claims to knowledge and implications for professional practice

1. Challenges

The study reveals that it is not a role that teachers readily accept because of the perceived challenges. The study identifies the ongoing challenges of the role. It shows how the SENCo role continues to be full of complexities which are bounded by the context of the setting. The complexities that SENCos encounter as frontline implementers (Lipsky 1971), putting government policy into practice, is demonstrated.

2. Tensions

The study identifies continued tension and frustration of SENCos, working with conflicting government policies in an arena of depleted provision due to austerity cuts. The conflict and dilemmas, resulting in tension, through working

within a landscape of competing agendas, continues. There still exists the previously identified tensions of medical versus social models (Mittler, 2000; Oliver and Barnes, 2012) and performativity versus inclusion (e.g. Ball, 2003; Rosen-Webb, 2011) but this study reveals new tensions arising in different areas such as:

i) The ethic of care vs paternalism

Participants are shown to have a strong ethic of care (Vogt, 2002) but this well-meaning intent is combined with an air of benevolence, deciding what is best based on a deficit model of capabilities (Tomlinson, 2017).

ii) Empowerment vs retaining power

The participant SENCos talked of the concept of the empowerment of parents, colleagues and children but when analysed these stakeholders had not yet achieved full empowerment as described in the literature as achieving greater control of their lives (Muijs & Harris, 2003; Hargreaves, 2007, Avidou-Ungar et al, 2014). The empowerment as described by the participants, I contend, is controlled empowerment which has yet to run its course into full empowerment. Empowerment is an area of study that can be pursued with a greater number of primary SENCos seeking more in-depth knowledge of how primary SENCos manage and interpret the concept of empowerment.

The findings in relation to empowerment offer interest and application beyond that of education and therefore offers a wider contribution to knowledge for social study.

iii) SENCo role vs social working role

The widening brief of the SENCo, encompassing elements of social work and supporting the mental health needs of both children and adults, is made explicit.

I argue that the contribution of these knowledge claims from this qualitative/interpretivist study will provide useful knowledge and a wider understanding of the continued challenges and frustrations of the role. New knowledge gained through the SENCos' perception of the implications of austerity cuts, the blurring of boundaries between education and social work, the continued complexities of the execution of the role and the challenges encountered through implementation of policy will lend greater understanding to those who appoint SENCos, those who inhabit the role, those with whom SENCos work, and those who train SENCos and will, in turn, impact on the teaching and learning of children with the label of needs.

7.4 Implications for future policy and practice

This study highlights the different perspectives of a small group of primary SENCos which lends insight into the changing boundaries of the role. The blurring of the boundaries of education and social welfare is reflected in the SENCos' perception of their role and their priorities for action. There are implications for the way the SENCo role is conceptualised and consequences for the support given to the children with the label of needs. Findings suggest that primary SENCos are supporting children with the label of needs by:

- a) actively leading and supporting staff in changing the pedagogy of the settings towards more inclusive practice

The implications for future practice for this finding, I suggest lies with the SENCos to continue to lead and support staff towards a whole-school teaching and learning approach consistent with High-Quality Teaching.

- b) encouraging parents in partnership and providing foundations for empowerment

Future practice in empowering of parents may mean that SENCos have to reassess what empowerment really means for parents in their setting. The study highlights that empowerment carries different meanings. I suggest if SENCos wish to move forward towards an empowering partnership with parents then there needs to be clarity from all stakeholders about what this exactly means.

- c) providing strategies for giving children a voice

SENCos in the study have been creative in their provision for children's voice in their settings. I suggest that pupil voice is something that should be a whole school strategy with an action plan involving children, parents and staff for its implementation. This implies that for the future, it may not be the SENCos responsibility but one of shared whole school involvement.

- d) plugging gaps caused by austerity and scarcity of family social workers.

This is not a tenable situation given the current workload of SENCos (Curran et al, 2018). In a future with perhaps less austerity, there may be funding which could be ring-fenced for home-school liaison.

There has been a number of significant recent national developments within the area of SEN. There have been reports on the time impact on SENCos, Curran et.al (2018) a report from the National Audit Office (NAO, 2019) and the House of Commons Education Committee's Report (House of Commons, 2019). All of which points to the current system's 'lack of ability to make transformative change' (House of Commons, 2019, p3). It is difficult to predict what may happen as a result of these reports, meanwhile, SENCos continue to carry out their role.

e) supporting the mental health needs of both children and adults

SENCos in the study were making provision for the mental health needs of children and their families but there are other sources of funding available that can help support this. Already schools are beginning to make provision for the mental health needs of children and families. It is to be mandatory in the curriculum from 2020 and there are suggestions that mental health should be embedded into school policy (Glazzard & Bligh, 2018).

This study will help in raising issues of the different ways in which the primary SENCo role is conceptualised. It will provide an understanding of the contextualisation of the role drawing attention to the way guidelines are interpreted thus giving an opportunity for issues to be aired and possibly addressed. I suggest that the best way forward for SENCos is to continue to give voice to their frustrations by feeding back to policymakers, through consultative opportunities, their perception of what it means to be a SENCo.

Any policy change that may occur will be restricted to policymakers and their ideological perspectives and priorities for special educational needs and mental health and social welfare, but SENCOs can lend their voice in a force for change.

7.5 Reflections on the research process

The enquiry set out to explore what it means to be a primary school SENCO using an interpretivist paradigm that drew upon a qualitative approach for the collection and analysis of data. In choosing three distinct methods of data collections, a focus group, semi-structured interview and drawings I was able to gather a wide range of data that dovetailed into the final analysis. I consider the use of drawing a positive influence on the study and the SENCOs' drawings allowed me to gain immediate insight into their perception of their role. This method allowed the participants to use powerful metaphors such as plate spinner and juggler to illustrate the role. I was able to further use metaphor within the chapters to exemplify the findings. I would advise other researchers to consider the use of drawing because it is a method that can surrender an in-depth insight.

7.6 Limitations of this research

As with any small study, the principal limitation of this research is its scale, with only a small number of participants and one researcher, but as argued earlier, although a small study it can still offer meaningful insights (Bryman,2016).

Another consideration is the study's trustworthiness. Researching an area with which I am particularly familiar has its challenges. It is a precarious balancing act. There has been the necessity of negotiating my own perceptions, prejudices and blind spots whilst simultaneously maintaining an awareness of how this impact on my positionality. I have achieved this by adopting a reflexive stance, endeavouring to enter into the research with sensitivity towards the participants and integrity towards the outcome. (Cohen, Manion & Morrison,2011, Flick,2014).

The sampling process also displayed its own limitations because the participant SENCOs were invited by me and it was their choice whether to agree to participate or not. Further study with a larger sample of primary SENCOs would be an interesting way forward to find any further correlations with the findings from this study.

The next and final section reveals my own reflections on the research process.

7.7 Implications for further research

During the course of the research, I became aware of some gender issues in the way the participant SENCOs approached the role. I decided not to pursue this line of enquiry nor draw any specific conclusions from this study because there was only one male in the sample. I suggest that this issue of gender and

how it may affect the approach to the SENCo role may be a worthwhile focus for any future research with SENCos

7.8 Personal Reflections

Any part-time doctoral student who sets out boldly on a study of this type does so knowing the path is unlikely to be smooth, but I was not quite prepared for the long and winding road that led to completion. I can say with alacrity that the experience of undertaking this doctoral research has been invaluable both professionally and personally. It has allowed me to expand, widen and refine those attributes required for the completion of a doctoral research study, such as reflexivity and development of communication skills but also the more personal skills of determination, perseverance and resilience. It has also given me the opportunity to create a space for personal reflection and professional learning, but most importantly it has offered me the opportunity to reflect on the challenges and pressures that face today's primary school SENCos in their quest to equitably support children with the label of needs.

References

- Acker, S. (1995). Carry on caring: the work of women teachers. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 16, 1 pp. 21-36.
- Ainscow, M. (1994). *Special Needs in the Classroom. A Teacher's Guide*. London: Jessica Kingsley/UNESCO
- Ainscow, M. (2005). Developing inclusive education systems: what are the levers for change? *Journal of Educational Change* Volume 6, Issue 2, pp 109–124.
- Ainscow, M., Booth, T., & Dyson, A. (2006). Inclusion and the standards agenda: negotiating policy pressures in England. *International Journal of Inclusive Education* Vol 10. No. 4-5 July-September 2006, pp. 295-308.
- Ainscow, M., & Miles, S. (2008). Making Education for All inclusive: where next? *Prospects* 38(1): pp 15-34 · March 2008 DOI: [10.1007/s11125-008-9055-0](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11125-008-9055-0)
- Ainscow, M., & Sandhill, A. (2010). Developing inclusive education systems: the role of organizational cultures and leadership. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*. 14:4 pp. 401-41.
- Akkerman, S. F., & Meijer, P. C. (2011). A dialogical approach to conceptualizing teacher identity, *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27 pp. 308-319.
- Akkerman, S.F., & Bakker, A. (2011). Boundary Crossing and Boundary Objects, *Review of Educational Research*, Vol. 81, No. 2, pp. 132–169, DOI: 10.3102/0034654311404435 19.
- Aldridge, H., Kenway, P., MacInnes, T. & Parekh, A. (2012) *Monitoring poverty and social exclusion* Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Retrieved from www.jrf.org.uk
- Allan, J., (1999). *Actively seeking inclusion: pupils with special needs in mainstream schools*. Basingstoke: Falmer Press
- Alger, C.L. (2009). Secondary teachers' conceptual metaphors of teaching and learning: Changes over the career span. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 25(5) pp. 743-751.
- Andrews, M., Squire, C., & Tamboukou, M. (2008). What is narrative research? In M. Andrews, C. Squire & M. Tamboukou. (ed.). *Doing Narrative Research*. London: Sage. pp. 1-21.
- Arnstein, S. (1969). A ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of American Planning Association*. 35.No4. pp. 216-224.
- Armstrong, D. (2003). *Experiences of Special Education re-evaluating policy and practice through life stories*. London: Routledge Falmer

Armstrong, D. (2005). Reinventing 'inclusion': New Labour and the cultural politics of special education, *Oxford Review of Education* Vol. 31, No. 1, March 2005, pp.135-151.

Asselin, M. E. (2003). Insider research: issues to consider when doing qualitative research in your own setting. *Journal for nurses in staff development: JNSD: official journal of the National Nursing Staff Development Organization*, 19 (2), pp. 99-103.

Attride-Stirling, J. (2001). Thematic networks: an analytic tool for qualitative research. *Qualitative research*. Vol (3) pp.385-405 London: Sage.

Attfield, R., & Williams, C. (2003). Leadership and inclusion a special school perspective, *British Journal of Special Education*, Vol 30, No1.

Avidov-Ungar, O., Friedman, I., & Olshtain, E. (2014). Empowerment amongst teachers holding leadership positions, *Teachers and Teaching*, 20:7, 704-720, DOI: [10.1080/13540602.2014.885706](https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2014.885706)

Avramidis, E., Bayliss, P., Burden, R. (2000). Student teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with special educational needs in the ordinary school. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 16 (3), 277-293.

Azzopardi, A., (2009). *Reading stories of Inclusion: engaging with different perspectives towards an agenda for inclusion*. Saarbrücken: VDM Verlage Dr. Muller.

Azzopardi, A. (2010). *Making sense of inclusive education: Where everyone belongs*. Saarbrücken: VDM Verlage Dr Muller.

Ball, S. J. (1990). *Politics and Policy Making in Education*. London: Routledge.

Ball, S.J., (2003). The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity, *Journal of Education Policy*, 18:2, 217-228 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0278093022000043077>

Ball, S.J. (2009). *The Education Debate*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Ball, S.J. (2015). What is policy? 21 years later: reflections on the possibilities of policy research. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 36:3 pp. 306-313, DOI: 10.1080/01596306.2015.1015279.

Bagnoli, A. (2009). Beyond the standard interview: the use of graphic elicitation and arts-based methods *Qualitative Research*, 2009, Vol.9(5) pp.547-570.

Banks, S. (2008). Critical Commentary: Social Work Ethics. *British Journal of Social Work*.38. pp.1238-1249.

Barber, T. (2002). A special duty of care: Exploring the narration and incidence of teacher caring. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 23(3), pp.383-395.

Barnes, C., (1991). Disabled people in Britain and discrimination: a case for anti-discrimination legislation. Hurst and Company. London. <https://disability-studies.leeds.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/40/library/Barnes-disabled-people-and-discrim-foreward.pdf>

- Bates, R. (2006). Educational Administration and Social Justice, *Education Citizenship and Social Justice* 1 (2) pp.141-156.
- Barton, L. (2006). 'Profile' In P. Clough & J. Corbett, (2006.) *Theories of Inclusive education a student's Guide*. Pp51-54 London: Paul Chapman.
- Beauchamp, C., & Thomas, L. (2009). Understanding teacher identity: an overview of issues in the literature and implications for teacher education, *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 39:2, pp.175-189.
- Beijaard, D., Verloop, N., & Vermunt, J.D. (2000). Teachers' perceptions of professional identity: an exploratory study from a personal knowledge perspective. *Teaching and Education*, 16, pp.749-764.
- Benjamin, S. (2002). *The Micropolitics of inclusive education: an ethnography*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Berger, P., & Luckman, T. (1967). *The social construction of reality: a treatise in the Sociology of knowledge*. London: Allen.
- Bierstedt, R. Analysis of Power, (1970). In Coser, L.A., & Rosenberg, B., (Eds) (1970) *Sociological Theory: A Book of Readings 3rd Edition*, London: Collier-Macmillan.
- Bignold, W., & Su, F. (2013). The Role of the Narrator in Narrative Inquiry in Education: Construction and Co-Construction in Two Case Studies. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*. 36(4) pp.400-414.
- Biklen, D. (2000). Constructing inclusion: lessons from critical, disability narratives. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 4 (4), 337-353
- Bines, H. (1993). Curriculum Change: The Case of Special Education. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*. Vol. 14, No. 1 (1993), pp. 75-90. Taylor & Francis. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1392980>
- Bines, H. (2000). Inclusive Standards? Current developments in policy for special educational needs in England and Wales, *Oxford Review of Education*, 26:1, 21-33, DOI: 10.1080/030549800103836
- Bold, C. (2012). *Using Narrative in Research*. London: Sage.
- Bogler, R., & Somech, A. (2004). Influence of teacher empowerment on teachers' organizational commitment, professional commitment and organizational citizenship behaviour in schools. *Teaching & Teacher Education: An International Journal of Research and Studies*, 20, pp.277-289
- Bogler, R. (2005). The power of empowerment: Mediating the relationship between teacher participation in decision making and their professional commitment. *Journal of School Leadership*, 15 pp.76-98.
- Booth, T., & Ainscow, M., Black-Hawkins, K., Vaughan, M., & Shaw, L. (2000). *Index for Inclusion: Developing Learning and Participation in Schools*. Bristol: CSIE.
- Bowyers, S., & Roe, A. (2015). *Social Work Recruitment and Retention*. Dartington: Research in Practice.

Bowleg, L. (2017). Towards a Critical Health Equity Research Stance: Why Epistemology and Methodology Matter More Than Qualitative Methods. *Health Education & Behaviour* Vol. 44(5). pp. 677- 68.4.

Boyatzis, R.E. (1998). *Transforming qualitative information: thematic analysis and code development*. London: Sage Publication.

Boylan, M, & Rycroft-Smith, L. (2019). Mastery in mathematics, *Cambridge Mathematics Espresso*. <https://www.cambridgemaths.org/espresso/view/mastery-inmathematics/>.

Bradbury, B., Feeney, A., Gager, A. (2010). Hearing the voice of the child ensuring authenticity In *Transforming the role of the SENCO*, F. Hallett, & G. Hallett, (Eds). (2010). Berkshire: OU Press.

Bragg, S., (2007). 'But I listen to children anyway!'—teacher perspectives on pupil voice, *Educational Action Research*, 17:4, 707-718, DOI: 10.1080/09770790701773973

Brantlinger, E. (1997). Using ideology: cases of nonrecognition of the politics of research and practice of special education. *Review of Educational Research* 67, No.4 pp.425-59.

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3. pp.77-101.

Brice Heath, S. (1983). *Ways with words-Language, life and work in communities and classrooms*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press

"British Association of Social Workers." (2019) retrieved from <https://www.basw.co.uk/>.

Brewster, C. Ailsback, J.R., (2003). *Building trusting relationships for school improvement: implications for principals and teachers*. Office of Planning and Service Coordination, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

Brinkmann, S., & Kvale, S. (2015) *Interviews Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. (3rd Ed.) London: Sage

Brinkmann, S., & Kvale, S. (2015). *Interviewing Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing* (3rd Ed.) London: Sage

Brooks, R., te Riele, K., & Maguire, M. (2014). *Ethics and Education Research*. BERA. London: Sage

Brundrett, M. (2011). 'The implementation of government policy on primary education: from analysis to action', *Education 3-13*, 39(4), pp. 339-342. doi:10.1080/03004279.2011.628885

Brundrett, M., & Rhodes, C. (2011). *Leadership for quality and accountability in education*, London & New York: Routledge.

Bruner, J. (1987). Life as Narrative. *Social Research* Vol.54. No.1 Reflections on the Self SPRING pp.11-37.

Bruner, J. (1991). The Narrative Construction of Reality. *Critical Inquiry*.18:1 pp.1-21.

- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social Research Methods*. (5thEd.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Burch, L.F., (2017). Governmentality of adulthood: a critical discourse analysis of the 2014 Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice, *Disability & Society*, 33:1, pp.94-114, DOI: [10.1080/09687599.2017.1383231](https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2017.1383231)
- Burns, J.M, (1978). *Leadership*. New York, NY: Harper Row.
- Burton, N, Brundett, M., & Jones, M. (2008) *Doing your Education Research Project*. London: Sage
- Bussis, A. M., Chittenden, E. A., & Amarel, M. (1976). *Beyond Surface Curriculum: An Interview Study of Teachers' Understandings*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.
- Cabinet Office (2010). *The Coalition: our programme for government*. London: Cabinet Office [[http:// programmeforgovernment.hmg.gov.uk/schools/](http://programmeforgovernment.hmg.gov.uk/schools/)].
- Cambron-McCabe, N., & McCarthy, M., (2005). Educating School Leaders for Social Justice. *Educational Policy* 19 (1) pp.201-222.
- Carr, D. (2003). *Making sense of education: An introduction to the philosophy and theory of education and teaching*. London: Routledge Farmer.
- Clandinin, D.J., & Connelly, F.M. (1990). Stories of Experience and Narrative Inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, Vol.19(5), pp.2-14.
- Clandinin, D.J. and Connelly, F.M. (2000). *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research*. Jossey-Bass.San Francisco.
- Clark, C., Dyson, A., Millward, A. & Skidmore, D. (1997). *New Directions in Special Needs: Innovations in Mainstream Schools*. London: Cassell.
- Clark, C., Dyson, A. & Millward, A. (1998). *Theorising Special Education*. London: Routledge.
- Clark, C. (2006). Moral Character in Social Work. *British Journal of Social Work*.36, pp.75-89.
- Clarke, D., & Hollingsworth, H. (2002). Elaborating a model of teacher professional growth. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 18(8), pp.947-967. doi:10.1016/S0742-051X(02)00053
- Clough, P. (2000). Routes to Inclusion, In P. Clough & J. Corbett, *Theories of Inclusive Education: a students' guide*. London: Paul Chapman.
- Clough, P. (2002). Narratives and Fictions in Educational Research: Doing Qualitative Research in Educational Settings. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Clough, P., & Nutbrown, C., (2004). Special Educational Needs and Inclusion; multiple perspectives of preschool educators in the UK. *Journal of Early Childhood Research* Vol 2(2) pp.191-211.

Coffey, A., (1999). *The ethnographic self: fieldwork and the representation of identity*. London: Sage.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research Methods in Education*. 7th edition Oxford: Routledge.

Coldwell, M', & Willis, B. (2017). Tests as boundary signifiers: level 6 tests and the primary-secondary divide. *The Curriculum Journal*, 28 (4), 578-597.

Cole, B. A. (2005a). 'Mission impossible? Special educational needs, inclusion and the re-conceptualization of the role of the SENCO in England and Wales.' *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 20, pp. 287–307.

Cole, B.A. (2005 b). Good faith and effort? Perspectives on educational inclusion. *Disability and Society*, 20, 3, pp.331–344.

Cole B.A., & Johnson, M. (2004). SENCO and the revised Code of Practice. Unpublished survey University of Sheffield and Keele University.

Coles, C. & Hancock, R. (2002). *The Inclusion Quality Mark*. Croydon: Creative Education.

Collinson, D. (2003). 'Identities and Insecurities: Selves at Work', *Organization* 10(3) pp.527–47.

Conlow, R. (1991). *Excellence in Management*. USA: Crisp Publications Inc.

Connelly, F.M., & Clandinin, D. (1990). Stories of Experience and Narrative Enquiry. *Educational Researcher*, 19(5), 2-13. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1176100>

Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1999). *Shaping a professional identity: Stories of educational practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (2006). Narrative inquiry. In J. L. Green, G. Camilli, P. Elmore (Eds.), *Handbook of complementary methods in education research* (3rd ed., pp. 477 - 487). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Cortazzi, M. (1993). *Narrative Analysis*. London: Falmer Press.

Corbett, J. (1996). *Badmouthing: The Language of Special Needs*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Cortazzi, M. (1993). *Narrative Analysis*. London: Falmer Press.

Court, D., Abbas, R (2013). Whose Interview Is It, Anyway? Methodological and Ethical Challenges of Insider–Outsider Research, Multiple Languages, and Dual-Researcher Cooperation *Qualitative Enquiry*. Vol 19, Issue 6, pp. 480-488. [10.1177/1077800413482102](https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800413482102)

Cowne, E. (2005). *The SENCO Handbook: Working within a Whole-School Approach*. London: David Fulton Publishers.

Creswell, J.W., (2009). *Research Design, Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approach*. (3rd Edn.). London: Sage.

Crilly, N., Blackwell, A.F. & Clarkson, P.J. (2006). 'Graphic Elicitation: Using Research Diagrams as Interview Stimuli', *Qualitative Research* 6(3) pp. 341–66.

Crotty, M. (2003). *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspectives in the Research process* (3rd Ed.). London: Sage.

Crow, L. (1992) *Renewing The Social Model Of Disability*. *Coalition News*. Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People.

Crowther, D., Dyson, A., & Millward, A. (2001). Supporting pupils with special educational needs: issues and dilemmas for special needs coordinators in English primary schools, *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 17:2, 87-97, DOI: 10.1080/08877270110040797

Creuss, R.L., Creuss, S.R., Boudreau, J.D., Snell, L., & Steinert, Y. (2014). Reframing Medical Education to Support Professional Identity Formation *Academic Medicine* Vol 89: No 11, pp.1446-1451.

Crisp, R., Lewis, A., & Robertson, C. (2006). Email forum usage as an identity maintenance strategy for educators working with pupils with special educational needs. *Educational Psychology*. 26 (5), pp. 599-613.

Croll, P. & Moses, D. (2000). Ideologies and utopias: education professionals' views of inclusion, *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 15:1, pp.1-12.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/088562500361664>

Crowther, D., Dyson, A., Lin, M., & Millward, A. (1997). *The Role of the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator in Schools: Analytical Report*. Newcastle upon Tyne: University of Newcastle upon Tyne, Centre for Policy Studies 2000.

Crowther, D., Dyson, A., & Millward, A. (2001). Supporting pupils with special educational needs: issues and dilemmas for special needs coordinators in English primary schools, *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 16:2, pp.85-97, DOI: 10.1080/08856250110040695

Cunliffe, A. (2009). *A Very Short, Fairly interesting and reasonably Cheap Book about Management*. London: Sage.

Curran, H. (2018). *Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Reforms 2014 – from policy to practice: SENCOs' perspectives of the first-year post implementation*. PhD. Bath Spa University.

Curran, H., Moloney, H., Heavy, A., Boddison, A. (2018). It's about time: The Impact of SENCO workload on the professional and the school *SENCO Workload Report*. National Education Union (NEU) NASEN & Bath Spa University. Retrieved from <https://www.bathspa.ac.uk/schools/education/research/senco-workload/>

Curran, H. (2019). Are good intentions enough? The role of the policy implementer during Educational reform, *PRACTICE*, 1:1, 88-93, DOI:0.1080/25783858.2019.1591764

Day, C., & Harris, A. (2003). Teacher Leadership, Reflective Practice and School Improvement In K. Leithwood & P. Hallinger (Eds.). In *International Handbook of Educational Administration*, pp 724-49. Dordrecht: Kluwer.

Denzin, N.K., & Lincoln, Y. (Eds.) (2000). *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Denzin, N.K. (2001). The reflexive interview and a performative social science. *Qualitative Research*. 1, pp.23-46.

Denzin, N.K, & Lincoln, Y.S., (2013). *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*. London: Sage.

Demster, N. (2009). What do we know about leadership? In J. MacBeath and N. Demster, (Eds.). *Connecting Leadership and Learning: Principles for Practice*. London: Routledge.

Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). (2006). *Primary National Strategy Leading on Intervention, Material for Presenters*. Local Authority School improvement and inclusion services. DfES publications. Retrieved from, <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110506021833/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/04039-2006DOM-EN%20Web%20book.pdf>

Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). (2008a) *Personalised learning – a practical guide*. 00844-2008DOM-EN. Retrieved from https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/8447/7/00844-2008DOM-EN_Redacted.pdf

Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). (2008b). *Education (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators) (England) Regulations 2008*. Nottingham: DCSF Publications.

Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). (2009). Lamb Inquiry Special Educational needs and parental confidence. Report to the Secretary of State on the Lamb Inquiry Review of SEN and Disability Information. dera.ioe.ac.uk

Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). (2010). *The New Primary Curriculum*. Retrieved from, <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100202100434/http://curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/key-stages-1-and-2/subjects/index.aspx>

Department for Education (DfE). (2011). *Support and Aspiration: A New Approach to Special Educational Needs and Disability*. A Consultation. (The 'Green Paper'). London: TSO. Retrieved from, <http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/Green-Paper-SEN>.

Department for Education (DfE) (2011). *Teachers' Standards*. London: Department for Education. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-standards>

Department for Education (DfE) and Department of Health (DoH) (2015) *Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice: For 0 to 25 Years. Statutory Guidance for*

Organisations Who Work with and Support Children and Young People with SEN. London: Retrieved from <http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>.

Department for Education (DfE) (2015). *Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools: Departmental advice document.* Retrieved from, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-inschools->

Department for Education (2016). *Counselling in schools: a blueprint for the future Departmental advice for school leaders and counsellors.* Retrieved from, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/497825/Counselling_in_schools.pdf

Department for Education (DfE) (2018). *Special Educational Needs in England (2018,)* Data Insight and Statistics Division, Data Group, Department for Education, Darlington.

Department for Education (DfE) (2018). *Working Together to Safeguard Children A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.* Crown.DFE-00195-2018. Retrieved from, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779401/Working_Together_to_Safeguard-Children.pdf

Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). (1994). *Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs.* London. Department for Education and Employment. London: DfE

Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). (1997a) *Excellence for All Children. Meeting Special Educational Needs.* Green Paper. London: Department for Education and Employment. Retrieved from <http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/pdfs/1997-green-paper.pdf>

Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) (1997b) *Excellence in schools.* London: HMSO. Retrieved from http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/wp1997/excellence_in_schools.html

Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). (1997). *The SENCO Guide.* London: DfEE Publications

Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). (1999). *The National Curriculum. Handbook for primary teachers in England.* HMSO. Retrieved from <http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/pdfs/1999-nc-primary-handbook.pdf>

Department for Education and Science (DES). (1978). *Special Educational Needs: Report of the Enquiry into the Education of Handicapped Children and Young People.* London: HMSO.

Department for Education and Skills (DfES). (2001). *Special Educational Needs Code of Practice.* Annesley. Department for Education and Skills Publications.

Department for Education and Skills (DfES). (2003). *Every Child Matters,* Norwich: The Stationery Office.

Department for Education and Skills (DfES). (2004). *Cabinet Office Regulatory Impact Unit.*

Department for Education and Skills (DfES). (2004a). *Removing Barriers to Achievement: The Government's Strategy for Special Educational Needs*. London: Department for Education and Skills.

Department for Education and Skills (DfES). (2004b). *Every Child Matters*. Norwich: The Stationery Office.

Department for Education and Skills (DfES). (2004c). *Working Together: Giving Children and Young People a Say*. Retrieved from http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/7197/8/Final%20PDF%20April%2004_Redacted.pdf

Department for Education and Skills (DfES). (2004d). National Curriculum. Handbook for Primary School Teachers in England. Annesley DfES Publications.

Department for Education and Skills (DfES). (2005). Excellence and Enjoyment: Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning Primary National Strategy. Retrieved from [https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130323075217/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/SEAL%20Guidance%](https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130323075217/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/SEAL%20Guidance%202005.pdf)

Department for Education and Skills. (DfES). (2006). Primary National Strategy. Primary Framework for literacy and mathematics Crown copyright Retrieved from. <http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/pdfs/2006-primary-national-strategy.pdf>.

Department for Education and Skills (DfES). (2007). Every Parent Matters. Retrieved from. <https://docplayer.net/73014433-Every-parent-matters.html>

Department of Health and Social Care and Department of Education (2017) *Transforming children and young people's mental health provision: a green paper* Crown Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk>.

Derrington, C. (1997). A case for unpacking? Redefining the role of the SENCO in the light of the Code of Practice. *Support for Learning*, 12, 3, pp.111–5.

Dimmock, C. (2002). 'Educational leadership: taking account of complex global and cultural contexts.' In A. Walker & C. Dimmock (Eds.). *School Leadership and Administration: Adopting a Cultural Perspective*. pp.33–44. London: Routledge Falmer.

Dobson, G.J., & Douglas, G. (2018). Who would do that role? Understanding why teachers become SENCOs through an ecological systems theory, *Educational Review*, DOI: 10.1080/00131911.2018.1556206.

Dunne, L. (2009). Discourses of Inclusion: a critique. *Power and Education*. Volume 1 Number 1. pp.42-56.

Dyson, A. (1993). 'Do we really need special needs coordinators?' in J. Visser and G. Upton (Eds.). *Special Education in Britain after Warnock*. London: David Fulton Publishers.

Dyson, L. (1997). An ethic of caring: conceptual and practical issues. *Nursing Enquiry*. 4 (3), pp.196 – 201.

- Dyson, A. (2003). Special Needs education as the way to equity: an alternative approach? *Support for Learning*, Vol16.Issue 3.Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9604.00199>
- Dyson, A., & Gains, C. (1995). The Role of the Special Needs Coordinator: Poisoned Chalice or Crock of Gold? *Support for Learning* Vol.10. (2) 50-56.
- Dyson, A., & Millward, A. (2000). *SENCOs as Decision Makers*. Manchester: Conference Proceedings ISEC 2000.
- Dyson, A., & Gallannaugh, F. (2008). Disproportionality in Special Needs Education in England. *The Journal of Special Education*, Vol 42, Issue 1, and pp.36 – 46. <https://doi-org.lcproxy.shu.ac.uk/10.1177/0022466907313607>.
- Dyson, A., & Kozleski E. (2008). Disproportionality in special education: A transatlantic phenomenon. In *Dilemmas and alternatives in the classification of children with disabilities: New Perspectives*. (Ed.). L. Florian & M. McLaughlin pp.170-190.Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Education Policy Institute [EPI] (2018). *Written evidence from the Education Policy Institute* (SGP0007). Retrieved from Health and Social Care Committee, UK Parliament Retrieved from, <http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/health-and-social-care-committee/transforming-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-provision/written/76777.pdf>
- Ekins, A. (2012). *The Changing Face of Special Educational Needs Impact and implications for SENCOs and their schools*. Oxford: Routledge.
- Elbaz, F. (1990). 'Knowledge and Discourse: The evolution of research on teacher thinking' In C. Day, M. Pope & P. Denicolo (Eds.). *Insights into Teachers' Thinking and Practice*. London: Falmer Press.
- Engeström, Y., Engeström, R., & Kärkkäinen, M. (1995). Polycontextuality and boundary crossing in expert cognition: Learning and problem solving in complex work activities. *Learning and instruction*, 5, 4, pp.319-336. doi: 10.1016/0959-4752(95)00021-6.
- Etzioni, A. (1993). *The Spirit of Community Rights, Responsibilities and the Communitarian Agenda* New York: Crown Publishers, Inc.
- Evans, J. (2002). Cautious caregivers: Gender stereotypes and the sexualisation of men nurses' touch. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 40, pp.441–8.
- Evans, R., Docking, J., Bentley, D., & Evans, C. (1995). *Special Educational Needs: Review of policy and practice in five authorities*. London: Roehampton Institute Research Centre.
- Farrell, M, (2004). *Special Educational Needs: A Resource for Practitioners*. London: Sage.

- Field, F. (2010). *The Foundation Years: Preventing Poor Children Becoming Poor Adults. The Report of the Independent Review on Poverty and Life Chances*. London: Cabinet Office. Retrieved from <https://www.creativitycultureeducation.org/publication/the-foundation-years-preventing-poor-children-becoming-poor-adults/>
- Fisher, H. (2012). Progressing towards a model of intrinsic inclusion in a mainstream primary school: a SENCos experience, *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 16:12 pp.1273-1293.
- Fitzgerald, J., & Radford, J. (2017). The SENCO role in post-primary schools in Ireland: victims or agents of change? *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 32:3, 472-477, DOI: 10.1080/08877277.2017.1297739
- Flick, U. (2014). *Introduction to Qualitative Research*, 5th Edition, London: Sage.
- Florian, L. (2008). Special or inclusive education: future trends. *British Journal of Special Education*, Vol 35, 4.
- Francis, B., Mills, M., Lupton, R. (2017). Towards social justice in education: contradictions and dilemmas. *Journal of Education Policy*, 32:4 pp414-431.
- Frederickson, N. & Cline, T. (2009) *Special Educational Needs, Inclusion and Diversity*. Berkshire: Open University.
- Frost, N. (2011a). *Qualitative Research Methods in Psychology Combining Approaches*. Berkshire: McGraw-Hill.
- Frost, N. (2011b). *Rethinking Children and Families. The relationship between Childhood, Families and the State*. London: Continuum.
- Fulcher, G. (1989). *Disabling Policies? A comparative Approach to Education, Policy and Disability*. London: Falmer.
- Fullan, G. (1989). *Disabling Policies? A comparative Approach to Education Policy and Disability*. London: Falmer.
- Fullan, M. (2001) *Leading a culture of change*. San Francisco. California: Jossey-Bass.
- Fullan, M. (2016). Implementation: amplify change with professional capital. *Journal of staff development*. Oxford Vo. 37. Issue 1. Feb, pp.44-48.
- Gardner, H. (1993). *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. London: Fontana.
- Gardner, P. (2001). What is the weight of a badger? In Wearmouth, J. (Ed.). *Special Educational Needs in the Context of inclusion*. London: David Fulton.
- Gauntlett, D. (2007). *Creative explorations: New approaches to identities and audiences*. London. United Kingdom: Routledge.
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books.

- George, B., (2003). *Authentic leadership: Rediscovering the secrets to creating lasting value*, San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Gewirtz, S. (2001). 'Cloning the Blairs': New Labour's programme for the re-socialisation of working-class parents, *Journal of Education Policy*, 16, pp.365–378.
- Gibbs, G. (2007). *Analysing Qualitative Data*. London: Sage.
- Gibson, S. (2009). Chapter 1 Inclusion versus Neo-Liberalism: Empowering the 'Other' In Gibson, S. (Ed), (2009) *Perspectives on Participation and Inclusion*, London, Bloomsbury.
- Gilligan, C. (1993). *In a Different Voice*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Gillian, C., & Attanucci, J. (1998). Two moral orientations: gender differences and similarities, *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, Wayne State University Press. 34. pp. 223-238.
- Gillis, C., & Johnson C. L. (2002). Metaphor as renewal: re-imagining our professional selves. *The English Journal*, 91(6). pp.37-43
- Gilbert N. (2008). *Researching social life*. (3rd ed). London: Sage.
- Gilbert, C. (2012). *Towards a self-improving system: the role of school accountability*. Nottingham: National College for School Leadership. DfE.
- Giroux, H. (2012). *Education and the Crisis of Public Values*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Glazzard, J. (2013). Resourced provision: Impact of inclusive practices on a mainstream primary school, *Support for Learning, British Journal of Learning Support*. 28 (3). pp.92-96. NASEN. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9604.12025>
- Glazzard, J. (2014a). A school under scrutiny: A personal account of the impact of inclusion on a small primary school in England. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*. Vol 9 (1) pp.95-106.
- Glazzard, J. (2014b). The standards agenda: reflections of a special needs coordinator. *Support for Learning*. Vol.29. Issue 1 pp.39-53. NASEN. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9603.12044>
- Glazzard, J. (2016). A Critical Interrogation of Integration, Special Educational Needs and Inclusion. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research* Vol.15, No12, pp31-47.
- Glazzard, J., & Bligh, C. (2018). *Positive Mental Health. Meeting the Mental Health Needs of Children 4-11years*. St Albans: Critical Publishing.
- Glazzard, J., Hughes, A., Netherwood, A., Neve, L., & Stokoe, J. (2010). *Teaching Primary Special Educational Needs*. Exeter: Learning Matters.
- Goldstein B.S.C. (1995). Critical Pedagogy in Bilingual Special Education Classroom. *Journal of Learning Disabilities* 28(8) pp.463-475.
- Goodley, D., & Tregaskis, C., (2006) Storying Disability and Impairment: Retrospective Accounts of Disabled Family Life. *Qualitative Health Research*, Vol. 16 No. 5, May 2006 630-646 DOI: 10.1177/1049732305285840 © 2006 Sage Publications.

- Goodley, G., & Runswick-Cole, K. (2016). Becoming dishuman: thinking about the human through dis/ability, *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 37:1, 1-15, DOI: 10.1080/01596306.2014.930021
- Goodson, I., (2001). The story of life history: origins of life history method in sociology. *Identity: International Journal of Theory and Research*. 1,2,129-142.
- Goepel, J., Childerhouse, H., & Sharpe, S. (2015). *Inclusive Primary Teaching: A Critical Approach to Equality and Special Educational Needs*. (2nd Edn.) Northwich: Critical Publishing.
- Grbich, C. (2009). *Qualitative data analysis*. London: Sage.
- Graham, L. J. & Slee, R.(2007). An illusory interiority: interrogating the discourse/s of inclusion. *Educational Philosophy And Theory*, 40(2), pp. 277-293.
- Griffith, A. (1998). Insider/outsider: Epistemological privilege and mothering work. *Human Studies*, 21, 361–376.
- Gross, J. (2000). Paper promises? Making the code work for you. *Support for Learning*. 15(3) pp. 126-133.
- Gross, J. (2008). *Beating Bureaucracy in Special Educational Needs*. NASEN. London: Routledge.
- Guba, E.G., & Lincoln, Y.S. (1998). Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research. In N. K., Denzin, & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.). *The Landscape of Qualitative Research: Theories and Issues*. pp.195-220. London: Sage.
- Guillemin P., & Gillam, L. (2004). Ethics and Reflexivity and Ethically Important Moments in Research. *Qualitative Inquiry* 10(2) 261-80.
- Gunter, H. (2006). 'Educational leadership and the challenge of diversity.' *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 34, pp. 257–268.
- Habermas, J. (1972) *Knowledge and Human Interests* (Translated J. Shapiro). London: Heineman.
- Hallett, F., & Hallett, G. (2010). Leading Learning: The Role of the SENCo. In F. Hallett & G. Hallett, (Eds.). *Transforming the Role of the SENCO*. Berkshire: Open University Press.
- Hammersley, M. (1995). *The Politics of Social Research*. London: Sage.
- Hammersley, M. (2008). *Questioning qualitative inquiry*. Critical Essays. London: Sage.
- Hargreaves, A. (1996). Revisiting Voice. *Educational Researcher*. 25 (1) pp.12-19.
- Hargreaves, A. (1998). The emotional practice of teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 14, pp.835–854.
- Hargreaves, A. (2000). Mixed emotions: teachers' perceptions of their interactions with students. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 16, pp.811-826.

- Hargreaves, A., (2004). Inclusive and exclusive educational change: emotional responses of teachers and implications for leadership, *School Leadership & Management*, 24:3, 287-309, DOI: 10.1080/1363243042000266936
- Hargreaves, A., (2007). Educational Change takes ages: Life, career and generational factor in teacher emotional responses to educational change. *Teacher and Teacher Education*, 21 pp277-983.
- Hargreaves, A., & Fullan, M. (2013). *Professional capital: Transforming teaching in every school*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Hargreaves, A., & Shirley, D. (2009). *The fourth way: The inspiring future for educational change*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781452219523>
- Harris, A. (2002). *School Improvement: What's in it for Schools?* London: Farmer
- Harris, J., & White, V., (2018). *A Dictionary of Social Care* (2nd Ed). Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Hart, R. A. (1992). Children's participation. From tokenism to citizenship. *Innocenti essays*, No. 4. Florence: UNICEF, United Nations Children's Fund.
- Hart, C. (2018). *Doing a Literature Review* (2nd Ed) London: Sage.
- Hatch, A.J., Wisniewski, R. (1995). *Life History and Narrative*. London: Falmer
- Hersey, P., & Blanchard, K.H. (1969). Life cycle theory of leadership, *Training & Development Journal*, 23(5), pp.26–34.
- Hirsch, D., & Smith, N. (2010). Family Values-Parents' views on necessities for families with children. *Research Report 641*. London: Department for Work and Families.
- Hirsch, D. (2013). *An Estimate of the Cost of Child Poverty in 2013*. Centre for Research in Social Policy, Loughborough University.
- Hjörne, E., and Säljö, R. (2012). 'Institutional labelling and pupil careers: Negotiating identities of children who do not fit in'. In C. Cole, H. Daniels, & J. Visser, (Eds.). *The Routledge International Companion to Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*. London: Routledge.
- Hodge, N. (2007). *Disabling families: how parents experience the process of diagnosing autism spectrum disorders*. EdD dissertation available online at Sheffield Hallam University.
- Hodge, N. & Runswick-Cole, K. (2008). Problematising parent-professional partnerships in education. *Disability and Society*, 23.6. pp.638-648.
- Hodkinson, H., & Hodkinson, P. (2004). Rethinking communities of practice in relation to schoolteachers' workplace learning. *International Journal of Training and Development*, 8(1), 21-32.
- Hodkinson, A., & Vickerman, P. (2009). Key issues in Special Educational Needs and Inclusion. London, Sage Publications. Chapter 1.

Hodkinson, A. (2010). Inclusive and Special Education: Inclusive and Special Education in the English educational system: historical perspectives, recent developments and future challenges *British Journal of Special Education*, Vol 37, Issue 2, pp. 61-67.

Hodkinson, A. (2012). Illusionary inclusion-what went wrong with New Labour's landmark educational policy? *British Journal of Special Education*. NASEN. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Hodkinson, A. (2016). *Key Issues in Special Educational Needs and Inclusion*, 2nd Edition, London: Sage.

Hollway, W., Jefferson, T. (2008). The free association narrative interview method. In: L.M. Given (Ed) *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*. (pp 296-315). Sevenoaks, California: Sage

Hopper, E. (2001). The social unconscious: theoretical considerations. *Group Analysis*. Mar 2001. Vol.34(1). pp.9-27.

Hopper, T., & Rossi, T. (2001) Using personal construct theory and narrative methods to facilitate reflexive constructions of teaching physical education. *Australian Educational Researcher*.28(3). pp. 87-116.

Horkheimer, M. (1972). *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*. (Translated, Connell, M.J.2002). New York: Continuum Publishing. http://freudians.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Horkheimer-Authority-and-the-Family.compressed.pdf?source=post_page.

Horne, M., Masley, S., & Allison-Love, J. (2017). Drawing as a research tool: what does it add? *White Rose Research* online: <http://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/118506/>

House of Commons Education and Skills Select Committee (2006). Special Educational Needs, *Third Report of Session 2006*. Volume 1: HC478-1. London: HMSO. Retrieved from <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmselect/cmeduski/478/478i.pdf>

House of Commons Education Committee (2019). Special Educational Needs and Disabilities First report of Session 2019 HC20. Retrieved from <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201919/cmselect/cmeduc/20/20.pdf>

Huang, R., Leung, F.K.S., (2005). Deconstructing Teacher-Centeredness and Student-Centeredness Dichotomy: A Case Study of a Shanghai Mathematics *The Mathematics Educator* 2005, Vol. 15, No. 2, 35-41. Retrieved from, http://math.coe.uga.edu/tme/issues/v15n2/v15n2_Huang.pdf

Humphrey, C. (2012). Dilemmas in doing insider research in professional education. *Qualitative Social Work* 12(5) 572–586 D. OI: 10.1177/1473325012446006

Irwin J.W. (1996). *Empowering ourselves and transforming schools: Educators making a Difference*. Albany, NY: State University Press.

Johnson, G. C. (2004). Reconceptualising the visual in narrative enquiry into teaching. *Teaching and teacher education*, 20(5), pp.423-433.

- Jones, P. and Welch, S. (2010). *Rethinking Children's Rights: Attitudes in Contemporary Society*. London. Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Jones, P. (2004). 'They are not like us and neither should they be': issues of teacher identity for teachers of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. *Disability and Society*, 19 (2), pp.160-70.
- Josselson, R. (2007). The ethical attitude in narrative research. In D.J. Clandinin (ed.). *The handbook of Narrative Inquiry: Mapping a Methodology*. London: Sage.
- Katz, C. (1992). All the world is staged: intellectuals and the projects of ethnography. *Environment and Planning. Society and Space* 10, pp.495-510.
- Kearns, H., (2005). Exploring the experiential learning of special educational needs coordinators, *Journal of In-service Education*, 32(1) pp.131-150.
- King, N. (1994). The Qualitative Research Interview. In C. Cassell & G. Symon (ed.). *Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research*. London: Sage.
- Knights, D. & McCabe, D. (2003). 'Governing Through Teamwork: Reconstituting Subjectivity in a Call Centre, *Journal of Management Studies* 40. pp.1587-619.
- Knowles, G., & Holmstrom, R. (2013). *Understanding Family Diversity and Home School Relations. A Guide for Students and practitioners in early years and primary settings*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Krueger, R.A. (1994). *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research*. London: Sage.
- Krueger, R.A., & Casey, M. A. (2009). *Focus Groups a Practical Guide for Applied Research* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Kugelmass, J. & Ainscow, M. (2004). Leadership for inclusion: a comparison of international perspectives. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*. 4 (3), pp.133-141.
- Kvale, S. (2007). *Doing Interviews*, London: Sage.
- Labov, W. (1982). Speech actions in personal narrative. In Tannen (Ed) *Analysing discourse: text and talk*. pp219-247. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Laisidou, A. & Stevenson, C. (2014). Educating leaders for social justice: the case of special educational needs coordinators. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*. 18:8 pp.783-797.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980) *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Lauchlan, F., & Boyle, C., (2007). Is the use of labels in special education helpful? *Support for Learning* Vol 22, No 1.
- Lave, J. & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Lawson N.H., Parker, M. & Sikes, P. (2006). Seeking stories: reflections on a narrative approach to researching understandings of inclusion. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 21, 1, pp.55-68.
- Layton, L., (2005). Special educational needs coordinators and leadership is role too far? *Support for learning* 20. pp.53-60.
- Leathwood, C., & Hayton, A. (2002). Educational inequalities in the United Kingdom: A critical analysis of the discourses and policies of New Labour. *Australian Journal of Education*, Vol 46, No2. pp.138-153.
- Leithwood, K. & Mascal, B. (2008). Collective leadership effects on student learning *Educational Administration Quarterly*. 44 (4) pp. 529-561.
- Letherby, G., (2014). Objectivity and Subjectivity in Practice. In *Objectivity and Subjectivity in Social Research*. Gayle Letherby, John Scott & Malcolm Williams. pp.127-150. London: Sage DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781473913929>
- Lewis, A., Neill, S., & Campbell, R.J. (1996). *The implementation of the Code of Practice in Primary and Secondary Schools. A National Survey of the Perceptions of Special Needs Co-ordinations*. London. National Union of Teachers.
- Liasidou, A. & Svensson, C. (2014). Educating leaders for social justice: the case of special educational needs coordinators. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*.18:8, pp.883-898.
- Lindqvist, G., Nilholm, C., Almqvist, L., & Wetso. (2011). 'Different agendas? The views of occupational groups on special needs education'. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 26 (2) pp143-157.
- Lipsky, M. (1971). 'Street-level bureaucracy and the analysis of urban reform', *Urban Affairs Quarterly*, 6, pp. 392–409.
- Lipsky, M. (1980). *Street-level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services*. NY: Russell Sage.
- Litosseliti, L (2003). *Using Focus Groups in Research*. London: Continuum.
- Llewellyn, A., & Hogan, K. (2000) The Use and Abuse of Models of Disability. *Disability & Society* 15(1):157-165 DOI: [10.1080/09687590025829](https://doi.org/10.1080/09687590025829)
- Lloyd, C. (2008). Removing barriers to achievement: A strategy for inclusion or exclusion? *International Journal of Inclusive Education*.12: 2, pp.221-236.
- Lupton, R., Heath, N., & Slater, E. (2009). Education: New Labour's Top Priority. In J. Hills., T. Sefton., & K. Stewart, *Towards a More Equal Society? Poverty, Inequality and Policy since 1997-2008*. (Eds.). CASE Studies on poverty, place and policy. pp.71-90. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Liotard, J. F. (1984). *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, Vol. 10. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Macleod, G. (2006). 'Bad, mad or sad: constructions of young people in trouble and implications for interventions'. *Emotional and Behaviour Difficulties*. 11(3). 155-167.
- Macdonnell, D. (1986). *Theories of Discourse*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Macfarlane, B. (2009). *Researching with Integrity, The Ethics of Academic Enquiry*. Abingdon: Routledge.

MacKay, D.A., & Marland, P.W. (1978). Thought processes of teachers. *Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association*. Toronto.

Mackenzie, S. (2007). A review of recent developments in the role of the SENCo in the UK, *British Journal of Special Education*. 34 (4) pp. 212-218.

Mackenzie, S. (2012.) 'It's been a bit of a rollercoaster': special educational needs, emotional labour and emotion work, *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 16:10, pp.1067-1082. DOI: [10.1080/13603116.2010.538869](https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2010.538869).

Maher, A.J., & Vickerman, P. (2018). Ideology influencing action: special educational needs co-ordinator and learning support assistant role conceptualisations and experiences of special needs education in England. *Journal Research Special Educational Needs*, 18: 15–24. doi:10.1111/1471-3802.12389

Mann, C., & Stewart, F. (2000). *Internet communication and qualitative research*. London: Sage.

Marks, H. M. and Louis, K. S. (1997). Does teacher empowerment affect the classroom? The implications of teacher empowerment for instructional practice and student academic performance. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 19: 247–277.

Marks, S.U. (2011). Special Education: More about social justice, less about caring. *Phi Delta Kappan Magazine*. September Vol 93(1) pp 80-80.

Martinez, M., Sauleda, N., Huber, GL. (2001). Metaphors as blueprints of thinking about teaching and learning. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 17 pp.965–977.

Maslow, A.H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*.50 (4) pp.370-96. <https://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Maslow/motivation.htm>

Mason, J. (2002). *Qualitative Researching*. London: Sage.

McKay, J., & Garratt, D. (2013). Participation as governmentality? The effect of disciplinary technologies at the interface of service users and providers, families and the state, *Journal of Education Policy*, 28:6, 733-749, DOI: 10.1080/02680939.2012.752869.

Mercer, J. (2007). The challenges of insider research in educational institutions: Wielding a double-edged sword and resolving delicate dilemmas. *Oxford Review of Education*, 33(1), 1–17 10.1080/03054980601094651 Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/03054980601094651>

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *Phenomenology of perception*. In Smith, C. translated (Ed.). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul (Original work published in 1945). Retrieved from <http://alfa-omnia.com/resources/Phenomenology+of+Perception.pdf>

- Merrill, B., & West, L. (2009). *Using biographical methods in social research*. London, Sage.
- Merriman, B., & Guerin, S. (2006). Using children's drawings as data in child-centred research *The Irish Journal of Psychology*. Dublin. Vol.27, Issue.1-2, .48-57. Retrieved from <http://www.tara.tcd.ie/handle/2262/56338>.
- Merton, R. (1972). Insiders and outsiders: A chapter in the sociology of knowledge. *American Journal of Sociology*, 78(July), 9–47
- Meyer, A.D. (1991). 'Visual Data in Organizational Research', *Organization Science* 2(2) pp. 218–36.
- Mental Health Foundation. (2016). *Fundamental Facts about Mental Health*. London. Mental Health Foundation. <http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk>
- Miles, M.B., & Huberman, A.M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks.CA: Sage.
- Mittler, P. (2000). *Working towards Inclusive Education: Social contexts*. London: David Fulton Publishers. Chapter 1 From Exclusion to inclusion.
- Morewood, G. D. (2008). *The 21st Century SENCo. SENCO Update*, 100. London: Optimus Publishing.
- Morewood, G. D. (2012). 'Is the "inclusive SENCo" still a possibility? A personal perspective.' *Support for Learning*, 27, pp.73–6.
- Morgan, D.L. (1988). *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.
- Morgan. P. (1998). 'An endangered species? pp.64-82' In M. David (Ed.). *The Fragmented Family: Does it matter?* London: Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) Health and Welfare Unit.
- Morgan, H. (2012). 'The social model of disability as a threshold concept: Troublesome knowledge and liminal spaces in social work education'. *Social Work Education*. 31(2). pp.215-226.
- Morgan, G. (1989). Empowering human resources. In C. Riches & G. Morgan (Eds.). *Human resource management in education*. pp.72-91. Philadelphia, PA: Open University.
- Morrow, V. (1998). 'If You Were a Teacher, It Would Be Harder to Talk to You: Reflections on Qualitative Research with Children in School'. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology. Theory & Practice* 1(4) pp.297–313
- Morrow, G., & Malin, N. (2004). Parents and professionals working together: Turning the rhetoric into reality. *Early Years*, 24(2), 174–177.
- Muijs, D., & Harris, A., (2003). Teacher *Leadership*-Improvement through Empowerment An overview of the literature, *Educational Management & Administration* 31,437-448.
- Muijs, D., & Harris, A. (2005). Improving schools through teacher leadership. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Muijs, D., Ainscow, M., Dyson, A., Raffo, C., Goldrick, S., Kerr, K., Lennie, C., & Miles, S., (2010). Leading under pressure: leadership for social inclusion, *School Leadership and Management*, 30: 2, pp.143-157, DOI: 10.1080/13632431003663198.

Munby, H. (1986). Metaphor in the thinking of teachers: an exploratory study, *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 18(2), pp.197–209.

National Association Head Teachers (NAHT). (2016). *School Recruitments Survey*. Sussex, NAHT

National Association of Head Teachers Survey (NAHT). (2018). *Empty Promises: The Crisis in supporting children with SEND*. Sussex. NAHT. www.naht.org.uk

National Audit Office (2014). Government Report by Comptroller and Auditor General. *Local Government. The Impact of funding reductions on local authorities*. National Audit Office. Retrieved from <https://www.nao.org.uk/report/report-of-the-comptroller-and-auditor-general-whole-of-government-accounts-2014-15/>

National Audit Office (2019) Support for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities in England HC2636. Retrieved from, <https://www.nao.org.uk/report/support-for-pupils-with-specialeducational-needs-and-disabilities/>

National College for School Leadership (2006). *Impact & Evaluation Report 2004/5*. Nottingham, NCSL.

National College for Teaching and Leadership (2014). *National Award for SENCO Co-ordination learning outcomes*. Gov.uk. Retrieved from https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/354172/nasc-learning-outcomes-final.pdf

National Health Service (NHS). (2016). Five Year Forward View for Mental Health for NHS in England. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Mental-Health-Taskforce-FYFV-final.pdf>.

Nespor, J., & Barylake, J. (1991). Narrative Discourse and Teacher *Knowledge* *American Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (winter, 1991), pp.805-823.

Newman, E. P., Berg, M. J., Rodriguez, C., & Morgan, D. (2010). A case study of participatory action research in a public New England middle school: Empowerment, constraints and challenges. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 46, 179–194.

NHS (2016). Five Year Forward View for Mental Health for NHS in England. Retrieved from <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Mental-Health-Taskforce-FYFV-final.pdf>.

Nias, J. (1998). Would schools improve if teachers cared less? *Education 3-13* 25:3 pp.11-22.

Nias, J. (1999). Primary teaching as a culture of care, in Prosser, J, (Ed.) *School Culture* London: Paul Chapman.

Nind, M., (2005). Inclusive Education Discourse and Action. *British Educational Research Journal* Vol 31. Issue 2 pp.265-275. Retrieved from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1080/0141192052000340251>.

- Noddings, N. (1992). *The Challenge to Care in Schools: an alternative approach to education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Northouse, P. (2018). *Leadership Theory and Practice*. 8th Edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Norwich, B. (2010). 'What implications do change practices and concepts have for the role of the SEN coordinator?' In F. Hallett & G. Hallett (Eds.). *Transforming the Role of the SENCO*. pp. 37–50. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- O'Brien, K. (1993). Improving survey questionnaires through focus groups. In Morgan D.(ed) *Successful Focus Groups: Advancing the State of the Art*. pp.105-18. London: Sage.
- O'Connor, K.E. (2008). 'You choose to care', Teachers, emotions and professional identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education*.24(1). pp.117-126.
- Oldham, J., & Radford, J. (2011). Secondary SENCo leadership: a universal or specialist role? *British Journal of Special Education*. Volume 38, Issue 3. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8578.2011.00513.x>
- Oliver, M. (1990). *The politics of disablement*. London: Macmillan.
- Oliver, M. (1996). *Understanding disability, from theory to practice* London: Macmillan.
- Oliver, M. (2004). If I had a hammer: The social model in action. In C. Barnes & G. Mercer (Eds.) *Implementing the Social Model of Disability: Theory and Research* (pp.18-31). Leeds: The Disability Press.
- Oliver, M. (2013). 'The social model of disability: thirty years on'. *Disability and Society*. 28(7) pp.1024-1026.
- Oliver, M. & Barnes. (2012). *The New Politics of Disablement*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Park, G. (2012). "I Am Never Afraid of Being Recognized as an NNE": One Teacher's Journey in Claiming and Embracing Her Non-native-Speaker Identity. *TESOL Quarterly*, 46(1), pp.127-151.
- Parker, I. (2005). *Qualitative psychology: introducing radical research*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Parkin, E. (2018). *Mental Health Policy in England, Briefing Paper. No CBP 07547 04/09/2018*. House of Commons Library. Retrieved from www.parliament.uk/commons-library I intranet.parliament.uk/commons-library paper@parliament.uk\commons library
- Patton, M. (1990). *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage
- Peacock, A. (2007). Raising standards: what do we really want? *Forum for promoting 3–19 comprehensive education*, 47(2/3), 91–97.

Pearson, S. (2001). Inclusion: a developmental perspective. In T. O'Brien (Ed.) *Enabling inclusion, blue skies ... dark clouds?* London: Stationery Office.

Pearson, S. (2008). 'Deafened by silence or by the sound of footsteps? An investigation of the recruitment, induction and retention of special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs) in England. ' *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 8, pp. 96-110. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-3802.2008.00107.x>

Pearson, S. (2010). The role of the Special Educational Needs Coordinator: 'To be or not to be' *The Psychology of Education Review*. 34 (2) pp. 30-38.

Pearson, S. & Ralph, S. (2007). 'The identity of SENCOs: insights through images.' *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*. 7 pp. 36-45.

Pearson, S. Scott, P. & Sugden, D. (2011). Applying metaphors for learning to continuing professional development (CPD), in the context of a course for Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, Vol 11 Issue 1 pp.42-54.
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1471-3802.2010.01186.x>

Pearson, S. & Mitchell, R. (2013). The recruitment, induction and retention of Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs). *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs* 15 pp.48-56. <http://www.nasen.org.uk/uploads/publications/269.pdf>

Pearson, R., Mitchel, R. & Rapti, R., (2015). 'I will be fighting even more for pupils with SEN': SENCOs role predictions in the changing English policy context *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs* 15(1)pp.48-56 · January 2015. DOI: [10.1111/1471-3802.12062](https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-3802.12062)

Perry, C., & Cooper, M. (2001). Metaphors are good mirrors: Reflecting on change for teacher educators. *Reflective Practice*, 2, pp.41-52.

Peters, S. Johnstone, C. & Ferguson, P (2005). A Disability Rights Educational Model for evaluating inclusive education. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 9, (2), pp.139-160.

Peterson, L. (2010). A National perspective on the training of SENCOs' In F. Hallett, & G. Hallett, *Transforming the role of the SENCo: Achieving the National Award for SEN Coordination*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Pinkus, S. (2003). All talk and no action: transforming the rhetoric of parents-professional partnership into practice. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*. Volume 3, Number 2. doi: 10.1111/1471-3802.00004

Podsakoff, P., MacKenzie, S., Moorman, R., & Fetter, R., (1990). transformational leader behaviours and their effects on followers' trust in leader satisfaction and organizational citizenship behaviours, *Leadership Quarterly*, 1 (2): 107-42.

Polkinghorne, D. E. (2005). Language and meaning: Data collection in qualitative research. *Journal of Counselling Psychology*, 52(2), 137-145. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.52.2.137>

Plummer, K. (1995). *Telling Sexual Stories: power, change and social worlds*. London: Routledge.

Plummer, K. (2001). *Documents of Life 2. An invitation to critical humanis*. London: Sage.

Pullen, A., & Simpson, R. (2009). Managing difference in feminized work: Men, otherness and social practice. *Human Relations*.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726708101989>

Quicke, J. (2003). 'Educating the Pupil Voice', *Support for Learning*, 18(2), 71–77

Reissman, C.K. (1993). Narrative Analysis, *Qualitative Research Methods*. Series 30. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Reindal, S.M. (2008) A social-relational model of disability: a theoretical framework for special needs education?, *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 23:2, 135-146, DOI: 10.1080/08856250801947812 To link to this article:

<https://doi.org/10.1080/08856250801947812>

Reissman, C.K., (2007). *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Reitung, U. (1994). A Case Study of Empowering Principal Behavior
American Educational Research Journal Summer 1994, Vol. 31 No. 2, pp. 283-307.
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Rieser, R. (2006). Inclusive education. or special educational needs: Meeting the challenge of disability discrimination in schools. *Education, Equality and Human Rights*. pp 175-197.

Rice, M.E. and Schneider, G. T. (1994). A decade of teacher empowerment: An empirical analysis of teacher involvement in decision-making, 1980–1991. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 32: 43–78.

Richards, G. (2014). Perspective on special educational needs and inclusive practice. Whose views Count. In J. Cornwall & L. Graham-Metheson (Eds.). *Leading on inclusion: dilemmas, debates and new perspectives*. Retrieved from <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com>

Roaf, C. (1988) The concept of a whole-school approach to special needs. In O. Robinson & G. Thomas (Eds.). *Tackling Learning Difficulties*. London: Hodder& Stoughton.

Robertson, C. (2012). 'Special educational needs and disability coordination in a changing policy landscape: making sense of policy from a SENCo's perspective.' *Support for Learning*, 27, pp.77-83.

Robertson, C.& Cowne, E. (2005). 'Editorial', *Support for Learning*, 20(2), pp.50-52.

Rodgers, C. & Scott, K. (2008). The development of the personal self and professional identity in learning to teach. In M. Cochran-Smith, S. Feiman-Nemser, D.J. McIntyre, & K.E. Dempster (2009). (Eds.). *Handbook of research on teacher education: Enduring questions and changing contexts* pp.732-755. New York: Routledge.

Rodriguez, T. L., & Hallman, H. L. (2013). Millennial Teacher: A Storied Landscape of Diversity in "New Times". *Multicultural Perspectives*, 15(2), 65-72.

Rose, P. (1985). *Writing on women: Essays in a renaissance*. Middletown CT: Wesleyan University Press.

Rose, G., (1997). Situating knowledges: positionality, reflexivities and other tactics. *Progress in Human Geography*, 21(3), pp. 305-320.

Rose G (2007). *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials*. Second edition. London: Sage

Rosen-Webb, S. M. (2011). 'Nobody tells you how to be a SENCo.' *British Journal of Special Education*, 38, pp.159-68.

Runswick-Cole, K., & Hodge, N. (2009). Needs or rights? A challenge to the discourse of special education. *British Journal of Special Education*, 36 (4), pp.189-203.

Runswick-Cole, K. (2011). Time to end the bias towards inclusive education. *British Journal of Special Education*, 112-119. NASEN. London: Blackwell

Russell, T. (1988). From pre-service education to the first year of teaching: a study of theory into practice. In J. Calderhead (Ed.) *Teachers' professional learning*. pp.13–34. London: Falmer.

Rutter, M., Madge, N. (1976). *Cycles of disadvantage*. New York: Heinemann.

Sachs, J. (2010). Teacher professional identity: competing discourses, competing outcomes, *Journal of Education Policy*, 16:2, pp.149-161.

Sacks, H. (1992) *Lectures on Conversation* (2 volumes), edited by Gail Jefferson with an Introduction by Emmanuel Schegloff. Oxford: Black-well. In Silverman, D. (2007, p.41). *A very short and fairly interesting and reasonably cheap book about qualitative research*. London: Sage

Safilios-Rothchild, C. (1981). Towards a social psychology of relationships. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 5(3), pp.377-384. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.1981.tb00580>

Sanderson, H (2013). Personalisation: three steps to transform practice, *Learning Disability*, Vol17, Issue 7, 34-37.

Sarason, S., B., (1997). *Revisiting the Culture of the School and the Problem of Change*, Teachers College Press New York In C., Day, P., Sammons, K., Leithwood, D., Hopkins, Q., Gu, E., Brown, & E., Ahtaridou, E., (2011) *Successful School Leadership, Linking with Learning and achievement*, Chippenham: UP McGraw-Hill Education.

Sargent, P. (2001). *Real men or real teachers? Contradictions in the lives of men elementary school teachers*. New York: Men's Studies Press.

Schwandt, T.A. (2007). *The Sage Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry*. 3rd Edn. London: Sage.

Schon, D. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner: How professionals think in Action*. New York: Basic Books.

Sevenhuijsen, S. (2003). *The place of care*. *Feminist Theory*. 4 (2), pp.179-197.

Shakespeare, T., (2000). *Help*. London: Venture.

Shah, S. (2004). The researcher/interviewer in intercultural context: A social intruder! *British Educational Research Journal*, 30(4), 549–575.

Sharples, J, Webster, R., & Blatchford, P. (2015). *Making Best Use of Teacher Assistants. Guidance Report*. London. Education Endowment Foundation. Retrieved from educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/tools/making-best-use-of-teaching-assistants/

Shor, I. (1992). *Empowering Education critical teaching for social change*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Shuttleworth, V. (2000). *The Special Educational Needs Coordinator. Maximising your potential*. London: Pearson Education.

Sikes, P., Lawson, H., & Parker, M. (2007). Voices on teachers and teacher's assistants talk about inclusion. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 11 (3), pp.355-370

Sikes, P., & Potts, A. (Eds.). (2008). *Researching education from the insider: Investigations from within*. London: Routledge

Sikes, P. (2010) 'The Ethics of Writing Life Histories and Narratives in Educational Research' In Bathmaker, A. & Harnett, P. (Eds.). *Exploring Learning, Identity and Power Through Life History and Narrative Research*. London, Routledge/Falmer pp. 11 -24.

Silverman, D. (2005). *Doing Qualitative Research*. 2nd Edn. London: Sage

Silverman, D. (2006). *Interpreting Qualitative Data* 3rd Edn. London: Sage

Silverman, D. (2007). *A very short and fairly interesting and reasonably cheap book about qualitative research*. London: Sage

Slee, R. (1997). Imported or Important Theory? Sociological interrogations of disablement and special education. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 18: 3, pp.407-419.

Slee, R. (2001a). Inclusion in practice: does practice make perfect? *Educational Review*, 52(2), pp.113–123.

Slee, R. (2001b). Social justice and the changing directions in educational research: the case of inclusive education, *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 5(2–3), pp.167-177.

Slee, R. (2011). *The Irregular School: Exclusion, Schooling and Inclusive Education*. London: Routledge.

Smart, C. (2007). *Personal Life*. Cambridge: Polity.

Smith, A. (1996) *Accelerated Learning in Practice*. Stafford: Network Educational Press

Spencer, S. (2011). *Visual Research Methods in the Social Sciences*. Oxon: Routledge.

- Squire, C. (2005). Reading Narratives. *Group Analysis*, March 2005, Vol.38(1), pp.91-10.
- Stainton-Rogers, W. (2006). Logics of enquiry. In: S. Potter, *Doing postgraduate research*. London: Sage.
- Steier, F. (1991). *Research and Reflexivity*. London: Sage.
- Strand, S. (2011). The Limits of Social class in Explaining Ethnic Gaps in Educational Attainment. *British Educational Research Journal* 37(2) pp.197-229.
- Suchman, L. (1994). Working relations of technology production and use. *Computer Supported Cooperative Work*, 2, pp.21-39.
- Sumsion, J. (2002). Becoming, being and unbecoming an early childhood educator: a phenomenological case study of teacher attrition. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 18(2), pp. 869–885.
- Sutton Trust. (2015). *Subject to Background*. London: Sutton Trust.
- Sylva, K., Melhuish, E., Sammons, P., Siraj-Blatchford, I., Taggart, B.B., (2004). *Effective-school provision*. London: Institute of Education.
- Szwed, C. (2007a). 'Managing from the middle? Tensions and dilemmas in the role of the primary school special educational needs coordinator', *School Leadership & Management*, 27 (5), pp.437–451.
- Szwed, C. (2007b). 'Reconsidering the role of the primary special educational needs co-ordinator: policy, practice and future priorities', *British Journal of Special Education*, 34 (2), pp.96-104.
- Szwed, C. (2007c). Remodelling policy and practice: the challenge for staff working with children with special educational needs, *Educational Review*, 59:2 pp.147-160.
- Teacher Training Agency (TTA). (1998). *National Standards for Special Educational Needs*. TTA.
- Training and Development Agency (TDA). (2009). *Standards for the National Award of SEN Coordination*. London: Training and Development Agency for Schools
- Thomas, G., and Loxley, A. (2001). Deconstructing special education and constructing inclusion. *Inclusive Education*. Buckingham: Open University.
- Thomas, G. & Vaughan, M. (2004). *Inclusive Education: Readings and Reflections*. Berkshire: Open University Press.
- Thomas, C., & Beauchamp, L. (2011). Understanding new teachers' professional identities through metaphor. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 27, pp.762-769.
- Tierney, W.G. Lincoln, Y.S. (1997). *Representation and the text: re-framing the narrative voice*. Albany: State University of NY Press.

- Tilley, S., & Powick, K. (2002). Distanced Data: Transcribing Other People's Research Tapes. *Canadian Journal of Education / Revue Canadienne De L'éducation*, 27(2/3), 291-310. doi:10.2307/1602225
- Tissot, C. (2013). 'The role of SENCos as leaders.' *British Journal of Special Education*, 40, pp. 33-40.
- Tomlinson, S. (1982). *A Sociology of Special Education*. London: Routledge.
- Tomlinson, S. (2017). *A sociology of Special and Inclusive Education. Exploring the manufacture of ability*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Training and Development Agency (TDA). (2009) *Standards for the National Award of SEN Coordination*. London: Training and Development Agency for Schools.
- Tripp, D. (1993). *Critical Incidents in Teaching. Developing Professional Judgements*. London: Routledge.
- United Nations Commission on Human Rights
(1946) <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CHR/Pages/CommissionOnHumanRights.aspx>
- Viens, A.M. (2013). Disadvantage, Social Justice and Paternalism. *Public Health Ethics*, Vol 6, No.1 pp.28-34.
- Vince, R. (1995). Working with emotions in the change process: Using drawings for Team Diagnosis and Development. *Organisations and People*, 2(1) pp.11-17.
- Visser, J. & Stokes, S. (2003). Is Education Ready for the Inclusion of Pupils with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties: A rights perspective? *Educational Review*, 55(1). pp.65-75.
- Visser, B. A., Ashton, M.C., & Vernon, P.A., (2006). g and the measurement of Multiple Intelligences: A response to Gardner. *Intelligence* 34 (2006) 507–510.
- Vogt, F. (2002). A caring teacher: explorations into primary school teachers' professional identity and ethic of care. *Gender and Education*, 14 (3), pp.251-264.
- Warnock, M. (1978). Warnock Report *Special Educational Needs*. London: HMSO.
- Warnock, M. (2005). *Special Educational Needs: A New Look*. Impact No.11.London: Philosophy of Education and Society of Great Britain.
- Warnock, M., & Norwich, B. Terzi, L. (Ed.). (2010). *Special Educational Needs. A New Look*. London. Continuum.
- Waterhouse, L. (2006). Inadequate Evidence for Multiple Intelligences, Mozart Effect, and Emotional Intelligence Theories, *Educational Psychologist*, 41:4, 247-255, DOI: 10.1207/s15326985ep4104_5
- Watson, T.J. (2008) Managing Identity: Identity Work, Personal Predicaments and Structural Circumstances, *Organization*, 15(1) pp.121-143 DOI: [10.1177/1350508407084488](https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508407084488)

- Wearmouth, J. (2009). *A beginner's guide to Special Educational Needs*. Maidenhead: OUP Mc Graw-Hill.
- Wearmouth, J. (2016). *Effective SENCO; Meeting the Challenge*, Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Wearmouth, J. (2017). *Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in Schools, A critical Introduction*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Webb, R., & Vulliamy, G. (2002). The social work dimension of the primary teacher's role. *Research Papers in Education*, 17:2, pp 165-184.
- Weber, S. Mitchell, C., (1995). *'That's funny you don't look like a teacher' Interrogating Images and Identity in Popular Culture*. London: Falmer Press.
- Webster, L., & Mertova, P. (2007.) *Using Narrative Enquiry as a Research Method: An Introduction to Using Critical Event Narrative Analysis*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Weddell, K. (2004). Points from the SENCo Forum: Life as a SENCo: *British Journal of Special Education*, Vol 31, No.2.
- Wedell, K. (2005). Dilemmas in the quest for Inclusion. *British Journal of Special Education*, 32, (1), pp. 3-10.
- Weddell, K. (2006). Points from the SENCo Forum: SENCos role in implementing inclusion policy. *British Journal of Special Education*, 33(4) pp.220-220.
- Weddell, K., (2008). Points from the SENCo Forum: Policies and real life. *British Journal of Special Education*, Vol. 35 No.2
- Weddell, K. (2015). The SENCo Forum-a virtual community for mutual support. *British Journal of Special Education*, Vol 42, Issue 1. pp.119-121.
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Werstz, F.J., Charmaz, K., McMullen, L.M., Josselson, R., Anderson, R., & McSpadden, E. (2011). *Five Ways of Doing Qualitative Analysis, Phenomenological Psychology, Grounded Theory, Discourse Analysis, Narrative Research and Intuitive Enquiry*. London: Guildford Press.
- West, C. & Fenstermaker, S. (1993). Power, inequality, and the accomplishment of gender: An ethnomethodological view. In P. England, (Ed.). *Theory on Gender? Feminism on Theory*. pp151-162. New York: Aldine de Gruyer.
- Wetzelhütter, D., & Bacher, J. (2017). How to Measure Participation of Pupils at School. Analysis of Unfolding Data Based on Hart's Ladder of Participation,(1992) *Methods, Data and analysis Vol 9(1)p111-137*. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.12778/mda.2017.004>
- Willig, C. (2003). *Introducing Qualitative Research in Psychology: Adventures in Theory and Method*. Buckingham: Open University Press
- Wolcott, H. (2009). *Writing up qualitative research*. (3rd ed). London: Sage

Wood, P. & Jeffery, R. (2002). The Reconstruction of Primary Teachers Identities. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*.23 (1) pp.89-106.

Woodhouse, J. (2012). The use of visual methodology in nursing. *Nurse Research*, 19, 3, pp.20-25.

Wooffitt, R. (2005). *Conversation analysis and discourse analysis: A comparative and critical introduction*. London: Sage.

Woolhouse, C., (2015). Teachers performing gender and belonging: a case study of how SENCos narrate inclusion identities, *Gender and Education*,28:2 pp.131-148.

Yin, H., Lee, J Jin, Y.& Zhan, Z. (2013). Exploring the relationship among teachers' emotional intelligence, emotional labor strategies and teaching satisfaction. *Teaching and Teacher Education*.35:137-145. DOI 10.1016/j.tate.2013.06.006

Zembylas, M. (2003). Caring for teacher emotion: Reflections on teacher self-development. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*,22. pp.103-125.

Appendices

Appendix 1	Table 1. Diagram to show the organisation of themes into main categories and chapters.	viii
Appendix 2	Table 2. Emerging themes from drawings and interviews	ix
Appendix 3	Gill's drawing of her perception of the SENCo role	xxiii
Appendix 4	Rob's drawing of his perception of the SENCo role	xxv
Appendix 5	Lily's drawing of her perception of the SENCo role	xxviii
Appendix 6	Zara's drawing of her perception of the SENCo role	xxix
Appendix 7	Jess' drawing of her perception of the SENCo role	xxxi
Appendix 8	Email to participants requesting volunteers	xxx
Appendix 9	Example of the Information sheet for participants	xxxiii
Appendix 10	Participant Consent Form	xxxv
Appendix 11	Example of questions to SENCos	xxxvi

List of tables

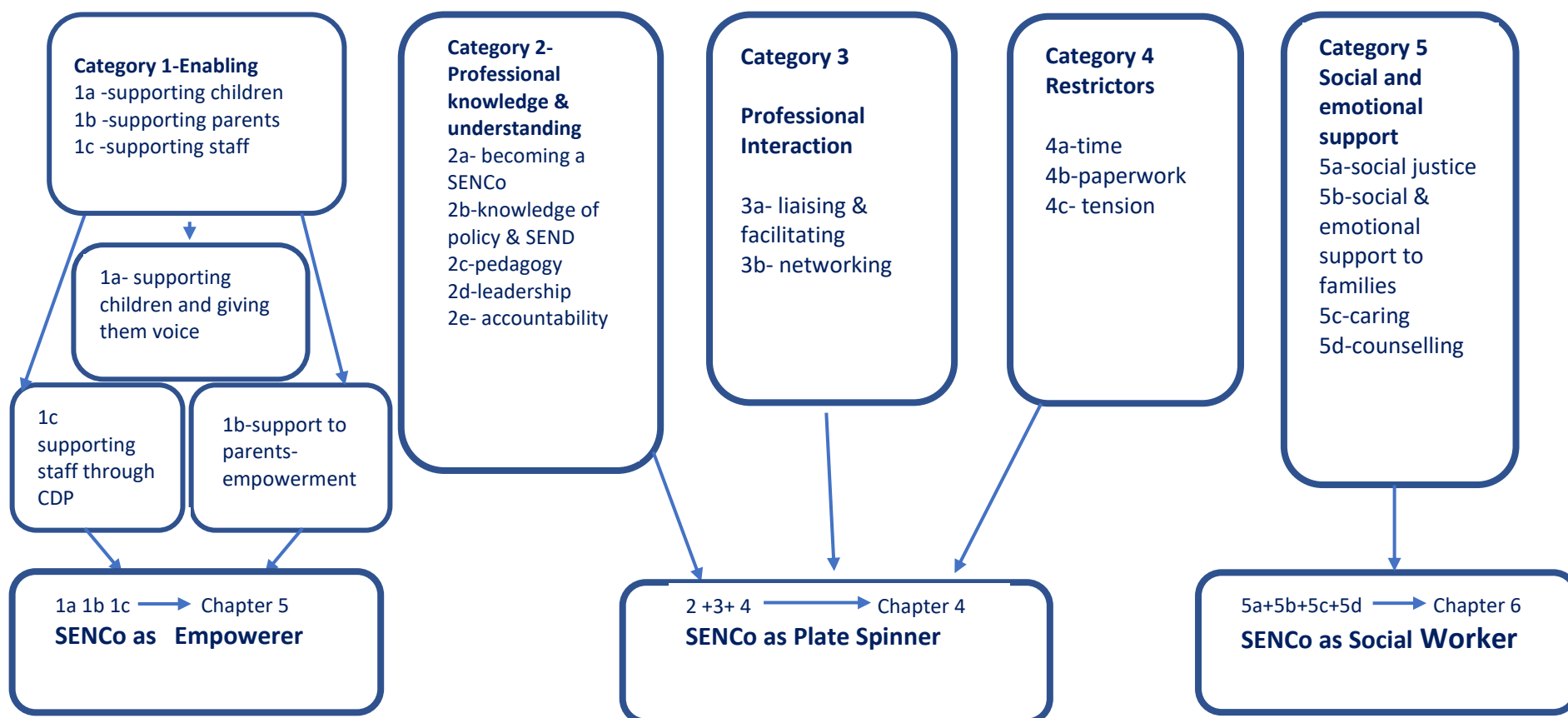
Table 3.1	Possible methods for data gathering	94
Table 3.2	The positioning of the SENCos in the context of their settings	121
Table 3.3	Data distilled from Ava's drawing and narration	134
Table 3.4	Extract from Table 2, Appendix 2	137

List of Figures

Figure A	Diagram to show data collection process	96
Figure B	Ava's drawing of her perception of the SENCo role	133
Figure C	The illustrated perception of parents by the SENCos	136
Figure D	Diagram overview of the analytical research process	129
Figure E	SEnCo as Plate Spinner	146
Figure F	Split role	180 & 224
Figure G	Extracts from drawings to depict tensions in the role	181
Figure H	Parents draining	235

Appendices

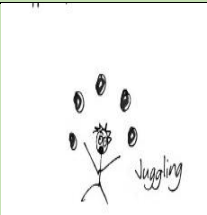

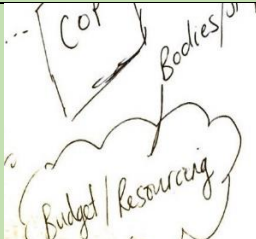

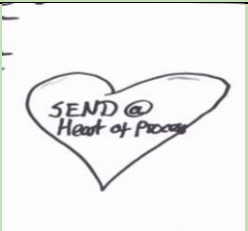
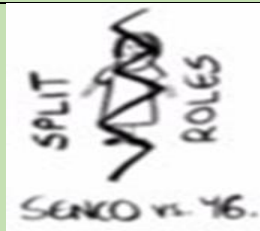
Appendix 1 Table 1 Diagram to show organisation of themes into categories and



Appendix 2 Table 2

Table 2 Step 1 -Emerging themes from drawings and interviews which were then filtered into categories. Colours denote grouping of themes.						
	Ava	Gill	Jess	Lily	Rob	Zara
These themes 1a,1b,1c feed into the main category of Enabling which formed the database for the Chapter SENCo as Empowerer?						
1a. Supporting children & giving children a voice	Support for children	Having knowledge of the children and meeting their needs Working towards giving pupils' a voice	Including children in the SEND process Working towards giving pupils' voice	Spoke of making it better for the children with needs. PCP approach	Providing a system that works for all children. Giving children a voice in review meetings- 'Let's listen to what the child has to say'	Spoke of providing 'Comfort for the children' Providing children with worry box to voice concerns
1b. Supporting families & parents through empowerment	Supporting families- 'parent bit is massive'	Working with parents. Helping them to help their children'	Parents being included in the process	Regular checks with parents maintaining reassurance	Working with parents on pupil's voice	Supporting parents re mental health issues
1c. Supporting staff through CDP for staff development	Steering CDP through school training, learning and understanding.	Staff training	CDP for making everyone aware	CDP for staff-enlisting and supporting	'Class teachers re the experts' It's my job to support them.'	CDP for staff seen as important because responsibility now lies with teachers
Category 2 – professional knowledge and understanding include themes 2a,2b,2c,2d,2e which formed part of the database for Chapter 4 SENCo as Plate Spinner.						
2a Becoming a SENCo	'Slight panic. Fear of not knowing what I need to know'.	'Rabbit in the headlights!'	'A little bit terrified'.	'I had previous experience. I knew what the job entails. I know how difficult it is'	'Poacher turned gamekeeper'	'I don't know anything about it!'

2b Knowledge of policy frameworks & SEND	'Knowledge of frameworks and policy'	'Knowledge of labels attributed to children'. Knowing about needs.	'Interpreting policy into practice.' Disseminating	'Lots of questions demanding solution.	Sharing knowledge	Open to new ideas and sharing that knowledge
2c Pedagogy	Innovative practices	Inclusively led	Learning community	Inclusive, person-centred approach to learning	Inclusive approach	Open to new ideas to support children's learning
2d Approach to leadership	Controlled leadership (illustrated by dog lead)	Spoke of advisory role. Building good relationships	Sees it as a 'joint venture' with direction, making sure 'everybody is working together and pulling in same direction'	Talk of variety of approaches to leadership according to context of school- 'manages' SEN.	Supports but devolves the role to teachers	Talks of facilitating rather than leading.
2e Accountability	Being accountable Ofsted.	Ticking boxes- being accountable to Ofsted	Creating systems for recording, logging information	More meetings with parents required-not enough	Integrated system Avoids ticking boxes	
Category 3 Professional interaction- these themes 3a,3b, form part of the data base for Chapter 4 SENCo as Plate Spinner						
3a Liaising & facilitating	Links with outside agencies, EP, ASD, MAST, Safeguarding	Working with other professionals medics, liaison between teachers	Outside agencies giving expertise, liaising and networking	Liaise with EPs, OTs.	Links with outside agencies EPs, OTs	Locality meetings and moderation meetings.
3b Networking	Locality SENCo requires lots of network meetings	LA and time taken up with meetings	LA Network meetings	Local Networking	LA in connection with expertise support	Confusion with LA moderation and changes within SEN documentation

Category 4 Restrictors 4a,4b,4c, formed part of data base for Chapter 4 SENCo as Plate Spinner.						
4a Time	'Quite a lot more than days in the week 'Juggling' Time management	'Plates in the air' 'Juggling lots of different things'	Joint venture with colleagues	'Create a balance of work'. 'Enlisting colleagues to help manage the role'.	Integrated into everyday practice to save time. Compressed the role	Always rushing
4b Paperwork	Telling the story for Ofsted (creating a paper trail of evidence) 'I hate the paperwork!'	Paperwork EHCP, referrals, records for measurement of outcomes. 'Ticking boxes' Tracking pupils progress	Creating systems, logging evidence	Spoke of practice rather than paperwork	Attempts to beat bureaucracy of paperwork by requiring integrated approach	Burgeoning paperwork required for moderation
4c Tensions Tensions in the role as illustrated in drawings						
Category 5 Social and emotional support 5a,5b,5c,5d, forms the database for Chapter 6 SENCo as Social Worker.						
5a Social justice	'To see that children are getting a good deal'	'Giving everybody fair chances'.	'Everything needs to happen to make sure that children are getting their entitlement.' JI	'All children should have equal access to learning'	'Inclusion's not as add on..it's actually who we are'.	'Making sure that everybody is included in the class..happy and feel valued'

5b Emotional support to families	'It's about helping children and their families'.	'She's a mum on her own, ...she needs somebody to speak for her'.	'You get to know your families and they build trust with you'.	'I think the most important thing is empathy with the parents'.	Parents, I'm ready there to support and advise. RFG	Giving emotional support comes at a cost – 'it's draining'.
5c Caring	'Building relationships with families and being able to help'.	'It's about building relationships for the best for the child and the families'.	Expressed worries about children with mental health issues caused by anxiety	'We seem to be doing a lot more nurturing in schools with children with anxieties'.	When county came to us and said' You need to put that child in a nurture unit we went OK, Where's that going?	Programmes were established in school for increased anxieties
5d Counselling	, It's a case of someone that can be there and listen and talk'.	'Parents like the opportunity to talk and to share, but not in a meeting'.	'I think it's the fact they've built the relationship with you'.	'I'm like a counsellor sometimes with the parents. They feel they can talk to me.'	Did not mention counselling per se but open to talking to parents where ever.	'A lot of them (parents) do feel they can come and talk to me'.

Appendix 3

Gill's drawing of her perception of the SENCo role



Gill's interpretation

"I see it as keeping lots of plates in the air and juggling lots of different things at once. I do tend to work in an advisory role. I also work quite a lot with the parents and other professionals. I do a lot of liaison between teachers and the other professionals. I build up those relationships.

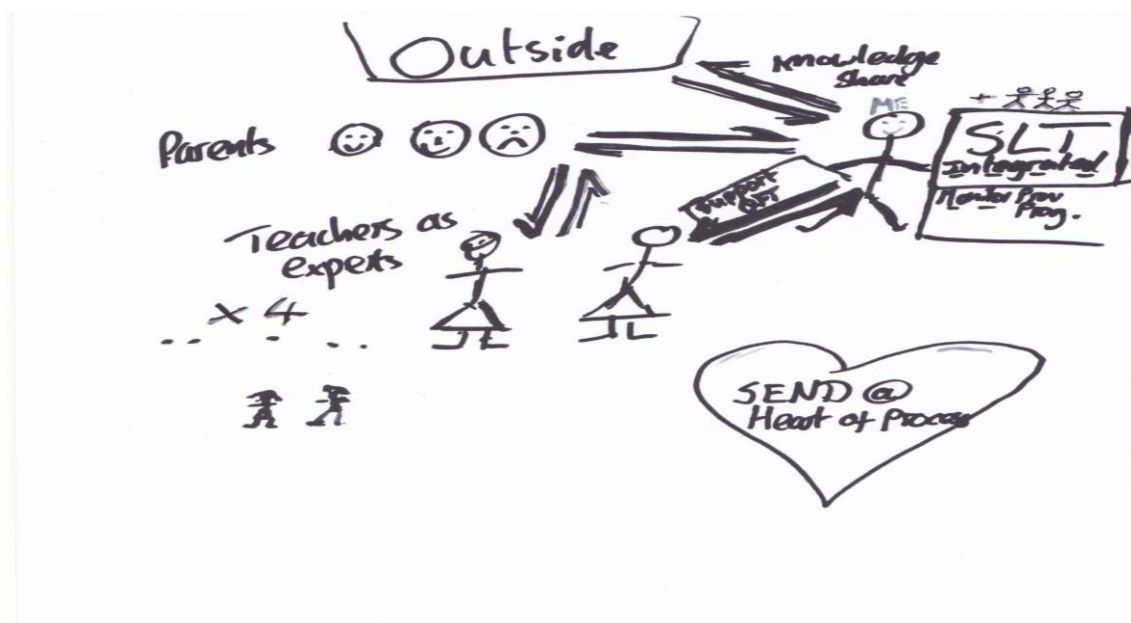
I see the role of the SENCo as a kind of balancing act between knowing about all the different needs of the children and doing staff training but also kind of ticking the boxes and filling in the commitments that Ofsted require.

Making referrals to different agencies, putting in EHCP (Education and Health Care Plan) applications, doing things in a timely manner, supporting parents and reassuring them, helping them to help their children. The whole thing is like one big relationship and that's what SENCo is to me, building relationships with a vast number of people. Building good relationships". (FG)

Category	Data distilled from Gill's drawing and narration
1a,1b Supporting families	Supporting families- reassuring, helping them to help their children Building relationships
1c supporting staff	Advisory role. Doing staff training
2b knowledge of SEN	Knowing about different needs
2d leadership	An advisory role
2e accountability	Ticking boxes filling in boxes for Ofsted requirements
3a- liaison	Liaison between teachers and other professionals Building relationships
4a- time	Keeping lots of plates in the air Juggling lots of different things at once Balancing
4b paperwork	Making referrals EHCP in timely manner
5b-emotional support to families 5c -caring	Building relationships-supporting parents Building relationships

Appendix 4

Rob's drawing of his perception of the SENCo role



Rob's interpretation.

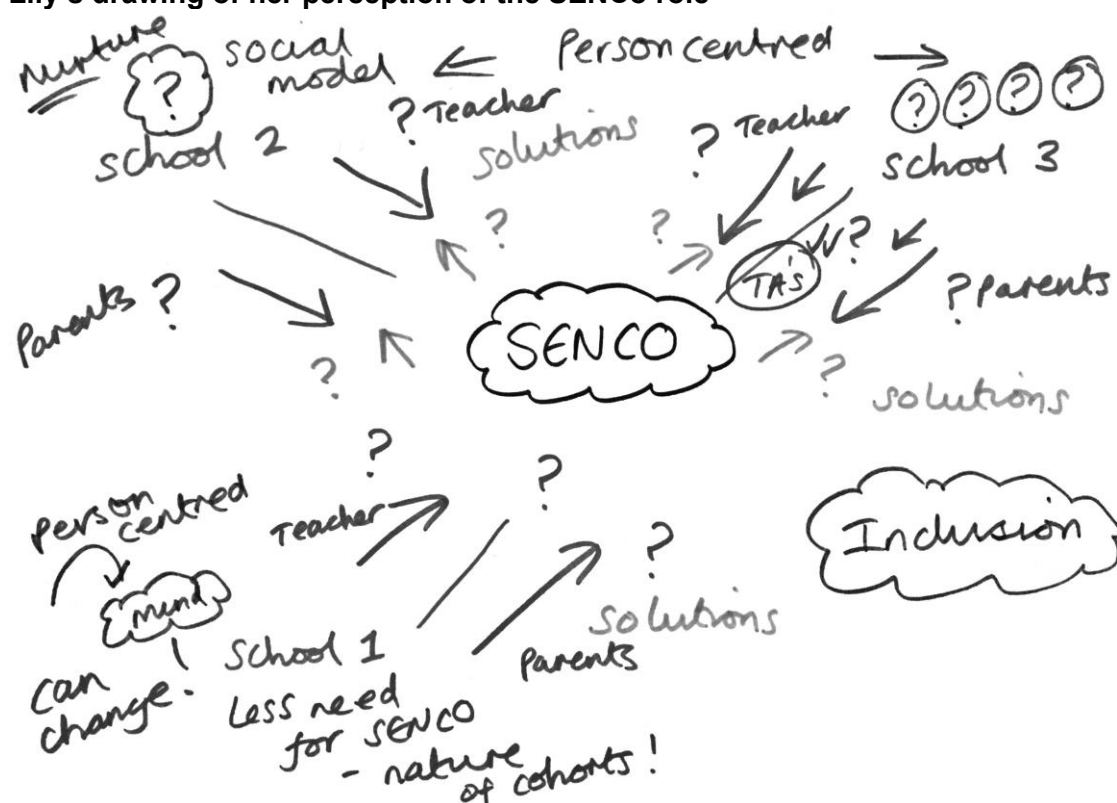
"The first bit Helping them when they need help with it. The second bit I am on the SLT. It's quite small but I make sure that whatever we do, whenever we change our systems, that it's inclusive for everybody, so it isn't an add-on.....it is integrated, it's not something we fill forms in to pretend we are doing, it's actually who we are. It's quality first teaching. I will often go outside to our contacts in county and our support services, but I also encourage the teachers to go outside (make contact with support services). The assessment is the same for everybody, there isn't an IEP that's forgotten about in a cupboard

We run Pupil Voice with the parents-we invented our own pupil voice. I sit on meetings if they need me or it's a particularly difficult thing, but we try to avoid that, so I've got more happy parents than sad looking parents. We've tried to compress my role so that it doesn't pull me out of class all the time. I couldn't do that...I teach full time as well"(FG)

Category	Data distilled from Rob's drawing and narration
1a- supporting children	Inclusive for everybody-integrated Quality first teaching Assessment same for everybody
1b- supporting families	More happy than sad parents
1c-supporting staff	My job to support them
2b- knowledge of policy and SEND	I see it as the class teachers as experts I don't see my job as SENCo being responsible for children with special educational needs
2d-leadership	I am on the SLT
3a-liaising & facilitating	I will often go outside to support services Encourage teachers to make own contact with support services
4a- time	Compress role so not pulled out of class
4b-paperwork	Assessment same for everybody

Appendix 5

Lily's drawing of her perception of the SENCo role



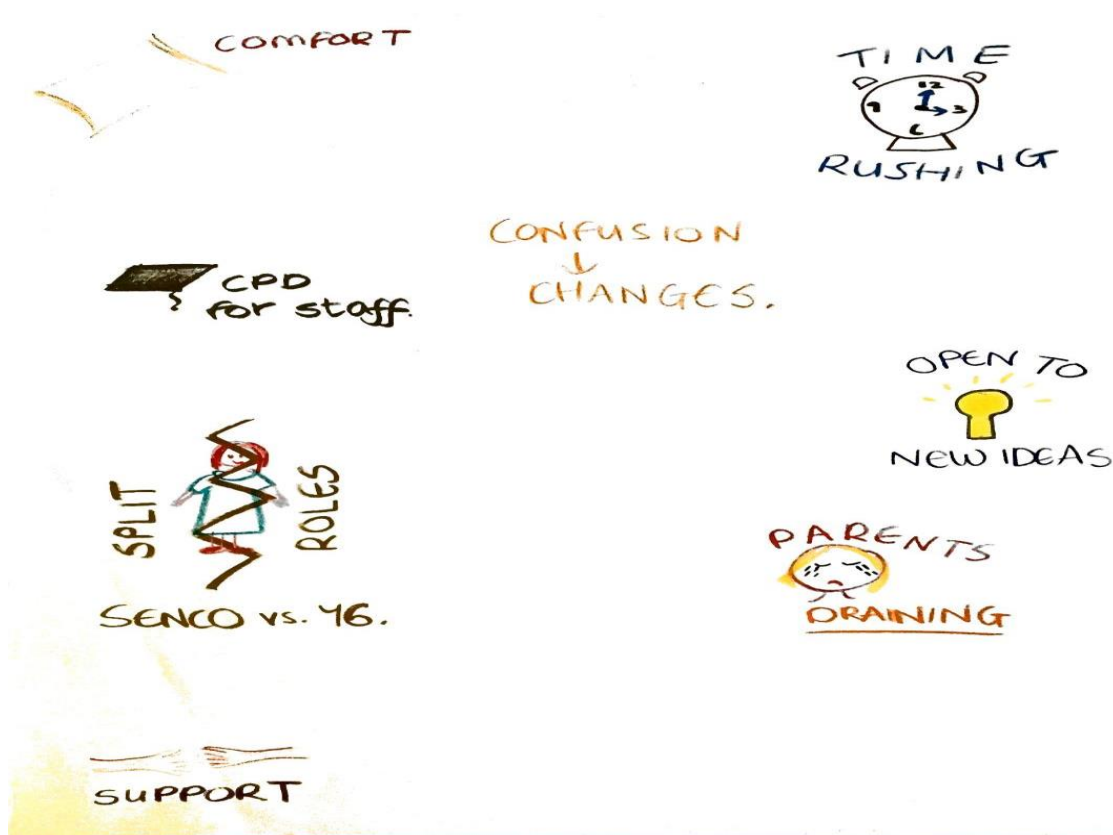
Lily's interpretation is an amalgamation of the linked schools. They are labelled 1,2,3 in the diagram.

"I feel at the moment that there are lots and lots of questions, sometimes directed at me partly because I am not always at the schools on a day to day basis. Sometimes it feels like firefighting. I'm trying to embrace staff and get them asking the questions as well so that they are part of that. They tend to be questions about how we can make it better for the inclusion of all the children in the class. This school here is looking at the nurture approach and how we can adapt what we do. The school here is still in the early stage, so there's lots of questions and maybe more, little more resistance. But there are some people in this school, some of the TAs, that I'm enlisting to support me in my mission. I have to make sure that I'm enlisting and supporting colleagues, but also making sure that there are other people in schools that can kind of run my role as well. This school here there is less need for SENCo support due to the nature of the cohorts. It's about getting a balance between me being able to manage the SEN but also make sure I'm doing a good job of my teaching as well. It's trying to manage the inclusivity and the curriculum, and that balance is very, very tricky. It's also making sure that I have regular checks with the parents because sometimes just meeting every term is just not enough" (LI).

Category	Data distilled from Lily's drawing and narration
1a supporting children	Looking at the nurture approach and how we can adapt what we do.
1b-supporting families	I have regular checks with the parents because sometimes just meeting every term is just not enough.
1c-supporting staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lots and lots of questions -Sometimes it feels like I'm firefighting -Embrace staff and get them asking the questions -I have to make sure that I'm enlisting and supporting colleagues, -Tend to be questions about how we can make it better for the inclusion of all the children in the class.
2b knowledge of policy and SEND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -It's trying to manage the inclusivity and the curriculum - This school here there is less need for SENCo support
2d leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Some of the TAs, that I'm enlisting to support me in my mission - making sure that there are other people in schools that can kind of run my role as well
4a time	-Getting a balance between me being able to manage the SEN but also make sure I'm doing a good job of my teaching as well
5c caring	- Looking at the nurture approach and how we can adapt what we do

Appendix 6

Zara's drawing of her perception of the SENCo role



Zara's interpretation

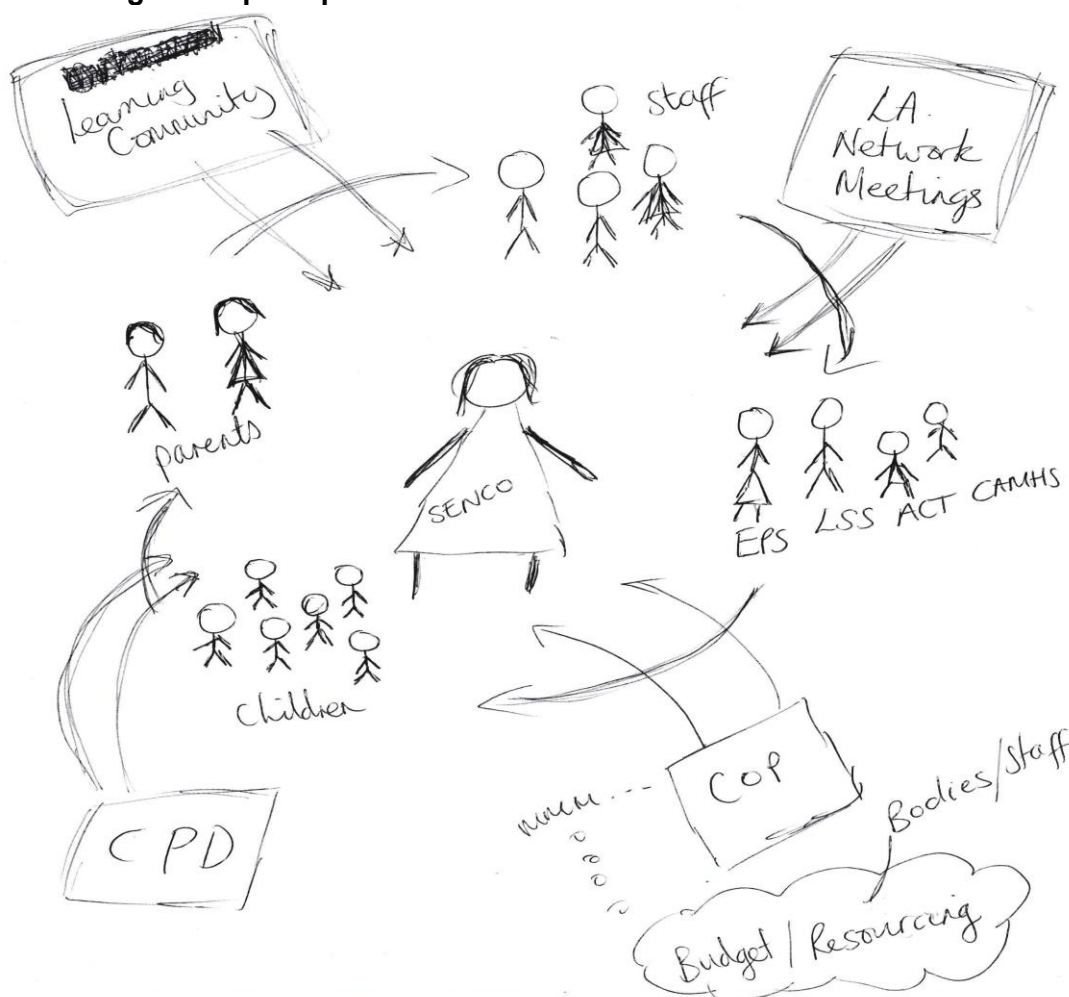
"So, I start with the comfort I see myself as being a comfort to the children. Whether it's the children in my class, or the children on the SEN register, a lot want to talk to me and see me throughout the day. Especially for the autistic children that we've got ...I've done a lot of support work with parents....and a lot of them do feel like they can come and talk to me, and if they are anxious about something they often want to come and tell me about that. I think they feel they can trust me., they want to share with me, that's one of the main parts of my role

The next one is time- It's a lot better this year I was constantly rushing. This year I've got two days out, which is really good because there's a lot more meetings now with the family (referring to family of schools) we have a lot of locality meetings. Then there's the new moderation now, it's been in a mess and there's a lot of confusion. I probably should have put the new changes on as well. The CDP for the staff's really important because obviously with the First Quality teaching...the responsibility is with the teachers who are delivering. Pressure from parents-they really want the EHCP and if it doesn't go through you feel responsible" (ZI).

Category	Data distilled from Zara's drawing and narration
1a- supporting the children	-I see myself as being a comfort to the children
1b-supporting the families	-I've done a lot of support work with parents. -Parents draining
1c-supporting staff	-The CDP for the staff's really important because obviously with the First Quality teaching-
2b- knowledge of policy & SEND	-Pressure from parents-they really want the EHCP and if it doesn't go through you feel responsible -open to new ideas
3a liaising & facilitating	
3b networking	-We have a lot of locality meeting
4a-time	-It's a lot better this year I was constantly rushing
4b-paperwork	- There's the new moderation now, it's been in a mess and there's a lot of confusion.
4c- tension	-Split role as SENCo and Y6 teacher
5c- caring	-a lot want to talk to me and see me throughout the day.
5d-counselling	-if they are anxious about something they often want to come and tell me about that.

Appendix 7

Jess' drawing of her perception of the SENCo role



Jess' interpretation

"it needs somebody who can take an objective view. This is me making sure that everybody is working together and pulling in the same direction. I'm not an expert in everything but to liaise with the people that can give expertise in different areas, whether its parents, the children themselves or your outside agencies just to make sure that everybody's included in that process. It's disseminating, the Code of Practice and other documentation, it's someone to accumulate all those ideas and make sure everyone is aware of it. CDP meetings and so on. At first, I was setting up a system and gathering evidence making sure it's all logged and documented. It's more of a joint venture now between everybody involved. We also have a learning community. We wrote the policy together and adapted it for our schools."(JI).

Category	Data distilled from Jess' drawing and narration
1a -supporting children	-CDP with staff to support children
1b-supporting families	-Liaise with parents
1c-supporting staff	-CDP meetings
2b knowledge of policy and SEND	-I'm not an expert in everything but to liaise with the people that can give expertise in different areas -disseminating the CoP& other documentation, -it's someone to accumulate all those ideas -needs someone with an objective view
2d leadership	-This is me making sure that everybody is working together and pulling in the same direction. -It's more of a joint venture now between everybody involved -wrote policy together -we have a learning community
2e accountability	- gathering evidence making sure it's all logged and documented.
3a-liaising and facilitating	-liaise with the people who can give expertise in different areas- EPS, LSS, ACT, CAMHS
3b- networking	-LA network meetings
4b-paperwork	- setting up a system and gathering evidence making sure it's all logged and documented.
4c- tensions	-budget requirements

Appendix 8

Initial email requesting volunteers

University Logo

Dear xxxxxx

I am contacting you because I am looking for Primary and EY SENDCos to take part in a piece of research that I am doing about what it means to be a SENDCo

It would mean giving a little of your time, to first come to the university to take part in a focus group with other SENDCos and then a one -one interview with me which would be done separately. The interview could take place at the university or I could come to you, whichever is best for you. The interview would take about 90 mins.

I am in the stage of contacting SENCos whom I know and when I have a sufficient number, (only need about 5/6 in this instance) I can then fix a date. I am hoping to get started on the data collection before the end of the term. This means that you may have to come to the university for the focus group after school between now and the end of the term. So, I would be grateful for an immediate response.

I do hope that you will agree to take part. I would love to hear what you have been doing since the SENDCo course! I am anticipating that the research will shed light on the role of the SENDCo also what it personally means to you to be a SENCos.

Regards

Sheila Sharpe

Email: s.sharpe@shu.ac.uk

Tel: mobile xxxxxxxxxx

Information Sheet for Participants

You are invited to take part in a study about becoming a SENCo and what it means to be a SENCo in the current climate focusing on SENCos in the primary and early years' age phase. The research will explore through the use of narratives, how the role of SENCO is perceived and managed by those SENCos who have successfully completed the PG Cert SENCo Award course. I want to investigate what it means to be a SENCO and how SENCos perceive and negotiate their role as a qualified SENCO using past, present and future perceptions of the role.

The research study is for completion of a Doctorate in Education

The Title of Project An exploration into the role of a SENCo

I am asking you to volunteer to participate because I am looking for SENCos who studied and achieved the PG SENCo Cert and are currently working in the primary or early years' phase as a SENCo. I am looking for 6-10 participants. I am hoping to obtain more than eight and then randomly select them.

What will participants be required to do?

Those SENCos who agree to the request to take part will be invited to attend three meetings.

The first is a focus group meeting at the university. At this initial meeting, any questions can be answered and the signed consent forms that you will be sent can be collected. At this first meeting you will be asked to:

- 1) Draw your own picture of 'what it is to be a SENCo in your setting'. These drawings will be a focus for an initial discussion about what it means to be a SENCo. This task is linked to research question 1: 'How is the role of SENCo perceived by those who hold that position in primary settings? '
- 2) Consider' What it means to be a SENCo. Your perceptions and experiences. This is intended to be a focus group discussion that will be recorded and used as data.
- 3) The second meeting will be to meet you individually in a place of your choice, in order for you to further talk further about your role as SENCo and what it means to you. We will pick up on any themes that the drawings and focus groups has identified.

The conversation will be digitally recorded and later transcribed. It is planned that there will be one individual interview lasting approximately one hour.

The participants' narratives will be transcribed by an independent transcriber. The scripts and recordings will form the basis of the data alongside any notes that were made as the recordings took place.

When will I have the opportunity to discuss my participation?

You may contact me, by phone if you wish to discuss your participation

You will be sent copies of the transcript to read through and delete anything you feel that you do not want to be included., changed or added to your transcripts. You will then be asked once again if you wish to continue.

What steps will be taken to maintain confidentiality?

The research will conform to data protection legislation and if you agree to participate you will be free to withdraw consent to participation at any time. All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that confidential details are secure and great care will be taken if the data collected is also considered for use for the main study. However, it should be recognised by the participants that there may be comments made that could reveal their identity to others and to colleagues who may object to what is said. Any details that would allow individual SENCos to be identified will not be published or made available, to anybody not involved in the research unless explicit consent is given by the individuals concerned, or such information is already in the public domain.

What will happen to the data?

All data will be stored in accordance with the data protection legislation. All electronic data will be stored on a PC that is password protected and any hard copies kept a locked cabinet. The study will be available for participants and others to read should it be requested. The final thesis will be available in the library and there may be opportunities to disseminate findings in chosen publications. There may also be opportunities to present findings in a seminar and or conference presentation.

Thank-you

Sheila Sharpe

email: s. sharpe@xxxxxxxxxx

mob: number given

Sheffield Hallam Institute of Education



PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF RESEARCH STUDY:

Exploring the post-qualification experiences of primary school SENCOs

Please answer the following questions by ticking the response that applies

	YES	NO
1. I have read the Information Sheet for this study and have had details of the study explained to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction and I understand that I may ask further questions at any point.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study within the time limits outlined in the Information Sheet, without giving a reason for my withdrawal or to decline to answer any particular questions in the study without any consequences to my future treatment by the researcher.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I agree to provide information to the researchers under the conditions of confidentiality set out in the Information Sheet.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I wish to participate in the study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I consent to the information collected for the purposes of this research study, once anonymised (so that I cannot be identified), to be used for any other research purposes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Participant's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Participant's Name (Printed): _____

Contact details:

**Researcher's Name (Printed): SHEILA
SHARPE**_____

Researcher's Signature: _____

Researcher's contact details:

Sheila Sharpe
Sheffield Institute of Education
Charles Street
Sheffield S1
Mob xxxxxxxxxx

Please keep your copy of the consent form and the information sheet together

Examples of Questions to put to SENCos

Talk me through your drawing of a SENCo- why did you present it so?

What was your first reaction when finding yourself in the position of SENCo?

What qualities do you think you need to be a SENCo? What uniquely qualifies you for the role?

What is the most important aspect of the SENCo role to you?

Describe your approach to the role.

Tell me, what being a SENCo means to you?

Tell me about the challenges you face as a SENCo?

What do you enjoy most about being a SENCo? Least?

Describe an experience of the role that gave you a sense of accomplishment

How do you see your role developing?

Why are you a SENCo?

How do you describe your role to a parent?

What advice would you give to new SENCos?