Exploring lecturer's translations and negotiations of Inclusive Practice in post- 1992 English universities

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Candidate Declaration

I hereby declare that:

1. I have not been enrolled for another award of the University, or other academic or professional organisation, whilst undertaking my research degree.

2. None of the material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.

3. I am aware of and understand the University's policy on plagiarism and certify that this thesis is my own work. The use of all published or other sources of material consulted have been properly and fully acknowledged.

4. The work undertaken towards the thesis has been conducted in accordance with the SHU Principles of Integrity in Research and the SHU Research Ethics Policy.

5. The word count of the thesis is 58,161.

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Abstract

Since the Equality Act (2010), English universities have been compelled to address issues of inequality as experienced by groups of students with legally protected characteristics. Developing a policy of inclusive practice (IP) was one way in which universities tried to address this. However, despite this legislation and policy, differential outcomes have persisted for most disadvantaged student groups, with little improvement. Almost ten years on from the implementation of legislation, this research seeks to extend and contribute to academic debates on how to reduce differential outcomes and make English universities more equitable.

The aim of this research was to explore the enactment of IP as a policy from the perspective of lecturers as they negotiate university policy, structures and processes. The research explored the extent to which lecturers understand, interpret and implement IP and how they engage with university policy and processes aimed at supporting the development of IP.

Underpinned by a sociological policy enactment approach, the research design took a critical realist stance and used qualitative in-depth interviews to collect data with 19 lecturers at 3 universities across England.

Using thematic data analysis, the study found that lecturers experience everyday 'dilemmas of practice' involving inclusion which are often unresolved. Influencing those dilemmas are the contingencies of situated contexts that inform, constrain and shape lecturers' choices in how they practice. Themes revealed variable misunderstandings of IP based on deficit discourses, professional pragmatism (including a reliance on informal networks for professional development) and discomfort felt by policy actors. Furthermore, the research identified the important constraints of powerlessness, space and time on IP enactment. An unexpected theme emerged concerning affective responses from lecturers who appeared to experience anxiety, stress, feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt, and who felt unsupported in relation to the expectation placed upon them to achieve equality through their practice.

This study has made a significant contribution to informing professional practice surrounding IP policy, extending knowledge to give a nuanced understanding of the constraints of the practice across several higher education institutions in England. It has extended an original sociological understanding of how policy is played out in English universities. The conclusion of the research is that the capacity of the lecturer to enact IP policy is overestimated, and must be accompanied by changes to institutional culture, structures and processes to achieve improvements in equality for students.

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Abbreviations and Terms Used in the Study

B(A)ME	Black and minority ethnic
BERA	British Educational Research Association
CAQDAS	Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis
CR	Critical realism
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DSA	Disabled Student Allowances
ECU	Equality Challenge Unit
EDI	Equality or equity diversity and inclusion
HE	Higher education
HEA	Higher Education Academy; now known as AdvanceHE
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEI	Higher education institution
HEPI	Higher Education Policy Institute
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
IP	Inclusive practice
LGBT	Lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans
LSM	Learning support mechanism. This term has been developed in this thesis to cover the variety of ways universities develop documents or statements covering the reasonable adjustments required (see reasonable adjustments). Universities use a range of terms for this, including learning contracts, learning support plans and learning statements.
NSS	National Student Survey
OFFA	Office for Fair Access
OfS	Office for Students
Protected characteristics	Identity or group characteristics which have specific legal protections against discrimination, harassment, and victimisation. Nine characteristics are covered under the UK's Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation (Moody and Thomas, 2019).

Reasonable adjustments	Duty under the UK Equality Act 2010 requiring universities to avoid as far as possible by reasonable means the disadvantage which a disabled student experiences because of their disability. The duty requires you to take positive steps to ensure that disabled students can fully participate in the education and other benefits, facilities and services provided for students (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2019).
SRHE	Society for Research into Higher Education
TEF	Teaching Excellence Framework
UDL	Universal design for learning
UKPSF	UK professional standards framework
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UUK	Universities UK
WP	Widening participation

Chapter 1: Introduction, Background and Rationale to the Study

1.1 Introduction

The subject of this research is the policy concept of inclusive practice (IP) within English higher education institutions (HEIs). This research explores the enactment of this policy from one perspective, namely that of lecturers, as they negotiate university structures and processes aimed at improving inclusivity and equality. The work was conducted within the context of national government directives for universities to adopt IP to support social justice goals. This study grew out of a need to understand how IP policy was enacted in universities at the micro level (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and from the perspective of those tasked with its enactment. The research is primarily interested in the experiences of lecturers tasked with the translation of IP into teaching and learning practice, and how they engage with and are influenced by university systems and processes to achieve that. The research explores the complex interplay between IP policy as a concept, the lecturer as an enactor of policy and the university setting which provides structural context. It involves qualitative in-depth interviews with 19 lecturing staff in three post-1992 universities in England. The findings of this study will help inform professional teaching and learning practice, university management and leadership teams' approaches to IP in academic development, and future policies and practices to enable and support the improved enactment of IP within universities.

1.2 The aims of the study

The aims of the study are, in relation to inclusive practice policy in English Universities to explore the:

- experiences of academic teaching staff as they negotiate their teaching and learning practice; and the
- relationship between academic teaching staff and university policies, structures and processes.

Two specific research questions are posed:

1. To what extent do academic teaching staff understand, interpret and implement IP?

2. In what ways do academic teaching staff engage with university policies and processes aimed at supporting the development of IP?

1.3 The rationale for the study

The wider problem this research seeks to address is the existence of differential degree classification outcomes for protected groups of students graduating from English universities. Statistics identify unexplained negative differences in the final degree classifications that students with protected characteristics achieve when compared to other students. 'Protected' has a particular meaning and is outlined in the Equality Act (2010), which protects against discrimination and requires anticipatory action to promote equality on the basis of age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation. UK government attention through the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) and Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) has focused on the characteristics of age, gender, disability, ethnicity and educational advantage (which refers to levels of participation in higher education [HE] related to geographical location).

These organisations now form the Office for Students (2018), which recently published statistics relating to student outcomes showing that in 2016/17 young graduates gained higher degree classifications than mature graduates; more female graduates received what are termed good degrees than male graduates; disabled students (with or without disabled student support allowance) on average achieve grades 3 per cent lower than non-disabled students; Black students achieved lower degree classifications (by 22 per cent) than white students, whilst Asian students achieved lower classification degrees by 11 per cent. The gap between the lower and higher quintile of educational advantage is 10 per cent. The historical pattern of these statistics shows minimal improvement and remains relatively static, with gaps between ethnic and white students reduced by 1 per cent, with other categories remaining stable compared with 2013/14's statistics (HEFCE, 2015).

This problem was recognised by the UK Higher Education Academy at the time. Critical debates concerning race and HE were facilitated through academic bodies such as the Runnymede Trust (Alexander & Arday, 2015) which sought to illustrate the landscape of racial inequality in HE through issues related to Black and minority ethnic (BAME)

academic representation; attainment and curriculum; and access and participation. The Higher Education Commission launched an inquiry in 2019 to investigate why "disabled students continue to be underrepresented, frustrated by their experiences and achieve below their potential" (Higher Education Commission, 2019, p.1). Further debates emerged about lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) student experiences of HE (Equality Challenge Unit, 2009; Renn, 2010) and socio-economic educational disadvantage debates continued (Budd, 2017; Crozier, Reay, Clayton, Colliander & Grinstead, 2008; Reay, David & Ball, 2005).

As this doctoral study commenced in 2016 it has allowed time to review and monitor the rates of differential outcomes over a period of years. The most recent studies demonstrate that outcome gaps, whilst showing improvement, are still of concern for universities. The Office for Students produced national figures for the academic year 2018/19 (Office for Students, 2018) which identify that there is a 22.1 per cent gap in degree outcomes (between First and 2:1 classifications) between Black and white students, which has decreased from 27 per cent in 2010/11. The statistics also show a 2.5 per cent gap in degree outcomes between declared disabled students and non-disabled students, reduced from 4.5 per cent in 2010/11. Clearly progress has been made by institutions, but these national figures hide institutional and regional differences, and differences within those headline groups (such as between ethnicities and disability types), and the Office for Students has identified both these indicators as strategic priorities.

There are differences in how students experience university, too. The Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) and AdvanceHE commissioned survey provides evidence it claims "help explain the attainment gap" (Neves & Hillman, 2019, p. 28). Students from BAME backgrounds were found to be significantly less likely than white students to state they received good value, learnt a lot, or enjoyed an experience more than they expected and are less likely to feel they have adequate access to teaching staff. The report also indicates the number of students who consider they have a disability is rising to almost 1 in 5 (2019) although their satisfaction levels are similar but not quite the same as amongst students without a declared disability. LGBT students also were seen to have identified lower levels of well-being and satisfaction (p. 46). Significantly for this doctoral research, teaching quality was highlighted as problematic for BAME

students, “In the context of a widely recognised BME attainment gap these differences in perceived teaching quality are a clear concern” (Neves & Hillman, 2019, p. 39). Teaching, and those who have professional responsibility for that activity, stands out as a key factor in contributing to the attainment gap. As such, improvements in teaching practice may hold the answer to narrowing that gap and improving student satisfaction.

The pressing problem for universities is that they have a duty to comply with the public sector duty requirement within the Equality Act (2010), to anticipate and act upon the needs of students with protected characteristics. The duty enshrined in this law requires “equality considerations to be reflected into the design of policies and the delivery of services, including internal policies, and for these issues to be kept under review” (Equality Challenge Unit, 2014, p. 2). The apparent lack of progress is a concern for universities and, although it was accepted that major change would take time (May & Bridger, 2010), there is increasing pressure from UK government for universities to take action, which is discussed in the next section. What is becoming clear through a discussion of this landscape is that teaching and learning practice is seen as an important factor in addressing inequalities arising in and from university experiences.

Policy guidance from the UK government urged universities to adopt inclusive practice (IP) as a solution to this differential gap (Disabled Student Sector Leadership Group, 2017; HEFCE, 2017; Office for Students, 2018):

> Realising equality of outcome for all is a real and pressing issue for UK higher education and we must work together and in partnership to deliver wide ranging and sustainable solutions. Central to this approach is the universal adoption of inclusive teaching and practice (Geoff Layer, Vice-Chancellor of University of Wolverhampton, Disabled Student Sector Leadership Group 2017, p.3).

Further pressure, in the form of linking tackling inequality to funding mechanisms through access and participation plans and Teaching Excellence Frameworks, is focusing attention on this issue in universities and creating a need for research to understand the phenomenon and support policy implementation (Beauchamp-Pryor, 2012a; Gibson, 2015). Government guidance strongly links definitions of IP with teaching practice:

> Teaching which engages students in learning that is meaningful, relevant, and accessible to all, embracing a view of the individual and of individual difference as a source of diversity that can enrich the lives and the learning of others (Disabled Student Sector Leadership Group, 2017, p.32).

The emphasis on IP as teaching practice was key to the development of the research aims, which have focused on lecturers and their experiences relating to the implementation of IP.

IP as teaching practice is not new policy guidance and was previously advocated by the Higher Education Academy as a way to tackle inequality and inclusion (Hockings, Brett & Terentjevs, 2012; May & Bridger, 2010; Waterfield, West & Chalkley, 2006). Many universities have stated that their adoption of IP is part the social model of disability they have used to meet their legislative and funding obligations since 2010. It can be seen that IP has been closely associated with disability, foregrounded and promoted by successive government advice and policy to directly address the needs of this particular group of students as part of those with legally protected characteristics. This study commenced from a personal and professional interest in supporting disabled students and this has been central to this study including a focus on the contribution of critical disability studies literature at the expense of other areas such as race and gender for example. However, it is recognised in this study that definitions of IP, as discussed in the literature review, include teaching and learning that is "meaningful, relevant and accessible to all students" (Hockings, 2010, p.1) including students with other protected characteristics and identities. This recognition is also becoming evident through the current emphasis from the Office for Students which firmly indicates the government's intention to maintain pressure on universities to tackle the problem of inequality as experienced by students from all protected groups and identities through inclusive teaching and learning practice. Chris Millward, Director of Fair Access and Participation stated, "We plan to apply greater pressure than before for every University to reduce the outcome gaps among their students" (Millward, 2018, p. 1). NUS UK (2019) research demonstrates the relevance of this social justice goal and identifies "a stronger call for positive action as a tool for increasing the pace of change" required by universities in England. Evidence was provided in that report which points to the importance of teaching-related contributing factors to ethnicity attainment gaps, such as "curriculum delivery" (NUS UK, 2019, p. 22) and the level of

"inclusive practice" (NUS UK, 2019, p. 23) as the most important barriers to closing the ethnicity attainment gap felt by HE institutions

IP is often seen as a solution and consequently its limited operationalisation is seen as contributing to the problem. It becomes, therefore, a critical area of investigation for universities who seek research on informed ways to respond to this call to action. There is a gap in our understanding of how teaching academics and lecturers are responding to the equality, diversity and inclusion agenda. It seems vitally important that knowledge concerning the teaching landscape and lived experiences for lecturers in universities is enhanced and extended, and a more granular understanding is achieved. This doctoral research aims to contribute to that understanding and focuses on lecturers' experiences of policies related to equality, diversity and inclusion – namely IP.

1.4 Positionality

I bring my personal experiences to this research and acknowledge that as a mother of a partially deaf child I have been particularly attuned to the personal challenges students with hidden disabilities experience in the education system. The existing system is often negotiated and endured rather than enjoyed by many who are not included in statistics which demonstrate persistent inequalities of outcomes and experiences. Exclusion of students is a wider problem than we are aware of and many (if not most) students need support to succeed (Madriaga et al., 2010). Practicing inclusively to support all students is an important goal for me.

This personal experience helped form my professional interest. My academic career has spanned 28 years. I have worked as a lecturer in one further education college and two English universities: as a lecturer teaching on undergraduate and postgraduate degrees; as a module leader developing curriculum, assessment strategies and supporting delivery; as a course leader devising and developing courses and programmes to meet the needs of university quality requirements, subject benchmark standards and appealing to and satisfying student demand. In the last seven years I have had a cross-faculty role which involved leading and developing academic practice related to inclusivity with a catch-all title of Disability Coordinator.

I was motivated by my professional values, which were that lecturing involved supporting students to achieve their potential, in addition to teaching them

knowledge. This was to prove both a source of personal job satisfaction and a source of significant tension and internal mental struggle. As with most new experiences I felt some self-doubt and I wondered whether I had the required skills, values and knowledge to do justice to such an important role in delivering faculty and university policy goals. At a time when national government and university policy agendas were focused on issues of inclusivity, disability, equality and widening participation, this seemed to me to be a crucial and valuable aspect of the role of a lecturer. I felt daunted and a little at sea by many aspects (not least the terminology) that appeared to be essential to get right.

My 20 years' experience at that time did not *feel* adequate, having successfully completed the Higher Education Academy fellowship and senior fellowship professional accreditation schemes. This spawned a desire to find out more and develop my own knowledge and skills. It became the start of my interest in this field and therefore was pertinent to my choice of research area. It sparked an initial question in my mind: if I felt unsure about my skills and knowledge about inclusivity or the concept of IP, did other academics also have these doubts? I very quickly realised through conversations, training events and meetings that, despite my fears, my knowledge of inclusive teaching practice and diligence in supporting students including those groups identified in the Equality Act 2010 was considerably further developed than many colleagues in my faculty. What I had become familiar with as IP was often misunderstood, ignored, confused and contested by academic colleagues and colleagues with management responsibilities.

One obvious problem that presented itself as I tried to develop a programme of academic information and development was a lack of staff engagement in any planned activities. Such activities, although desired (but not directly enforced) by faculty teaching and learning leadership teams, were optional activities for lecturers. Many workshops I organised were attended by only one member of the teaching academy, and this was frequently the same member of staff. Faculty professional support staff were keen to attend my workshops to discuss issues they encountered with students requiring support, either through the learning support system or in general.

The role developed into a dispute-resolution service between students who were experiencing issues with their university learning support system and the lecturing

staff responsible for delivering measures designed to support students. I was often called by professional student support officers to find ways forward that supported students who were having problems fulfilling the needs identified in their university-derived learning support mechanisms (LSM) (see glossary). I wondered what was going on for the lecturing academy, who seemingly found it a problematic area. There seemed to me to be a tension between delivering inclusion for all students through IP policy agendas and the practice of delivering the requirements of individual learning support. I was curious to know more about the experiences lecturers were having in this complex and fractured realm. This formed the impetus for this thesis and provided a purpose and direction for my research. I am seeking to find answers to my questions surrounding the experience and practice of lecturers in matters relating to inclusivity and equality. These personal professional experiences and thoughts have helped stimulate and formulate the direction and scope of this doctoral research.

Although the original impetus and thoughts behind this research are based upon my individual personal and professional experiences, there was significant support from wider sources – including colleagues, students, national statistics and professional bodies. This was taking place at a time of heightened public awareness and national interest in issues related to widening participation, inclusion and equality as a consequence of the changes to the funding model for students entering HE, which allowed inflation-based raises to a base level of £9,000 per year tuition fees. Public and therefore political concerns were about groups that were more likely to be disadvantaged by these fees. How were underrepresented groups to be encouraged to attend and be supported more effectively whilst at university? I will return to these points to discuss the historical relevance and significance of this context raised here.

There was anecdotal evidence from my discussions with colleagues who shared my role as a disability coordinator in other faculties within my institution that they too shared my experience regarding lecturing staff's lack of engagement with IP agendas. Conversations frequently covered how seminars or information-giving sessions were poorly attended, and colleagues also felt that they – through their IP – were seen as taskmasters, rather than curriculum-development practitioners.

In my capacity as an external examiner at a five other HEIs I was able to scrutinise working practices other than those at my institution. I was able to discuss with a wide

range of colleagues their appreciation of and attitude towards IP. I noticed varying degrees of attention paid to IP and related issues within curriculum and teaching practice, methods of supporting students which furthered my interest/concerns for how this issue is dealt with.

Universities have made attempts to tackle the problem of achieving inclusivity by creating teams, often termed 'academic development teams', or 'teaching and learning teams' (Boud & Brew, 2013). In my experience with cross-university academic development teams and their initiatives to promote IP I had many conversations with academic development leads and disability support leads about the issues they faced in their efforts to promote IP. These often concluded in conversations about why IP-themed workshops were so poorly attended, and usually only by the same group of motivated academics. There seemed to be no clear answer to the problem of achieving wider adoption of policy and practice from these teams. The issue appears to be national rather than an institutional, as evidenced by the National Association of Diversity Practitioners:

> Ensuring quality of support for disabled higher education students has never been so important; there are several initiatives around inclusive practice, but implementation is slow and patchy in the sector (Worthington, Stanley & Lewis, 2014, p. 1).

The research topic I had been mulling over was gaining wider significance and importance from these conversations with colleagues. Questions concerning the efficacy of inclusivity policies and practice were being raised by students in my institution, at least in relation to disability. There was evidence that my experience regarding the problematic daily task of dealing with inclusivity through the implementation of individual learning contract support was a dominant concern for students within my institution. An annual institution-wide internal disabled student satisfaction survey consistently reported the poor experiences of students when negotiating their studies in relation to teaching and learning, highlighting academic teaching staff as sources of dissatisfaction and mirroring national statistics produced by Neves and Hillman (2019) for the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI). It seemed to me to point to an issue for universities that merited further exploration to determine possible avenues of focus to improve these statistics. Whilst my personal and professional experiences are shaped by issues related to disability this has

inevitably directed my research approach and reading towards this field of studies. I accept and acknowledge that IP is a policy which is intended to reduce inequality for all groups of students. The extent to which other lecturers base their translations of IP to disabled students solely became an important part of the research findings.

1.5 Approaching the research problem

I did not intend this study's goal to perform the task of explaining 'how to do IP'. This study is interested in the policy activity of lecturers, which for Colebatch (2006) is an appreciation of policy as what happens on the ground when people come to work with policy. This felt especially relevant to my professional problem. Blame often seemed to fall on the lecturer for the failure or poor outcomes of IP policy in my university. I was certainly involved in conversations with university managers and leaders about how to improve the practice of academics, and many times heard the question, why can't academics do this better? I was complicit in viewing lecturers as part of the problem, despite appreciating through my own experience that successful IP was complicated, misunderstood and almost impossible for many lecturers. This was the impetus for the focus of this research. Three elements of interest emerged: lecturers, how they negotiated the policy concept of IP, and the way IP policy is 'done' in universities including the enablers and constraints for lecturers to practice IP. This study aimed to understand the interpretations and agentic experiences of lecturers as they negotiate IP in their everyday practice – influenced, supported or limited by the university structures they find themselves in. The approach taken draws on the concepts of structure and agency and the resulting relations to be found in the work of critical realist Margaret Archer (2000, 2013) especially her articulation of the 'internal conversation' as a window into those inner conversations that we have with ourselves about what is reality:

> This 'interior dialogue' is not just a window on the world, rather it determines our being in the world though not in times and circumstances of our choosing. (Archer, 2000, p.318)

It is those inner conversations of lecturers that I sought to uncover in this study as windows into understanding lecturers teaching and learning practice accepting that there are sets of practices that each agent creates and prioritises in their lived experience. Those sets of practices, or a "modus vivendi;" are "a set of practices

which…. matters most to the person concerned." (Archer, 2003, p.149) and are of primary concern in this research.

My approach to the research is also aligned to an emerging move for policy research towards a more nuanced and granular analysis of policy, such as the more interpretative theoretical position taken by Colebatch (2006), Coburn (2005), Ozga (1999), Yanow (2000) and Ball, Braun and Maguire (2012). Mason (2016) has questioned the suitability of thinking in terms of effective implementation of policy, which may never be achieved; rather turning to complexity theory to explore what is going on with policy for individuals in context. For these authors, policy is about how it is interpreted by those who enact the policies in the everyday context, rather than the evaluation or implementation of policies, policy cycles and recipes for how to do it more effectively.

This policy approach offered a way to see how IP policy emerged through the actions, interpretations and conversations of lecturers, and the way context influences and shapes those interactions. Influential for orientating the direction of this research is the policy enactment concepts put forward by Ball, Maguire, Braun and Hoskins (2011). The usefulness of Ball et al's framework to this study is in foregrounding the policy actors role in enactment of policies which helped me to identify the lecturer as a key focus for gathering data to answer the research questions. I sought a closer and more critical way to analyse how policy is experienced by those lecturers responsible for enacting it within their context which is not observable in the empirical strata of the social world. It was found in the analysis stage of the study that Ball et al's (2012) policy concepts were useful as ways of understanding participants responses.

Policy actors of interest to this study are lecturers who *do* policy. It is accepted that there are a range of actors within universities who act out inclusion related policies, but the scope of this study covers lecturers and their inclusive teaching and learning practices. It is also assumed that there are a range of identities and experiences to be found within the category of lecturers (Clegg, 2008; Henkel, 2000) and that these will result in the presentation of multiple positions and realities that are contingent and situated and, according to CR principles, inherently fallible. This had an influence on the recruitment strategy for participants which allowed lecturers with different levels of experience, responsibility and identities within different English post-1992

universities to be part of the study. It is accepted that whilst efforts to recruit participants who were the best placed to provide evidence to answer the research questions the study was only going to be able to document the realities of those lecturers and would not, in the tradition of CR research, be able to generalise to lecturer's in different university contexts and with different identities. The aim was to provide a plausible (Archer, 2012) account of how IP is enacted in the post 1992 university context. How these particular actors *interpret* IP policy to understand what it means, how they decode it using their own knowledge and position and translate it to practice are concerns for the research questions posed. This doctoral study is interested in and seeks to explore the 'minute and mundane negotiations and translations which go on at points of connection." (Ball et al, 2012, p.3) within English HE institutions to answer the research aims, and in doing so presents an original approach to inclusion studies and policy research in HE. Studies which explicitly acknowledge the influence of this approach to policy are limited, but the value of using this lens is beginning to be seen. For example, Evans, Rees, Taylor, and Wright (2019) used this perspective to research policy enactment of widening access policy and its role in the reproduction of university hierarchies. Mitterle, Wurman and Bloch's (2015) study used the framework to understand the influence of policy on how lecturers teach in German universities.

1.6 Summary

This chapter has introduced and outlined the research problem which this doctoral study contributes to understanding. The problem of inclusion in educational settings was outlined as an important social justice issue for national and international governments. Within the university sector in England the issue of unexplained differential attainment gaps for groups of students with legally protected from discrimination characteristics is a strategic priority driven by social justice agendas in wider society and national government direction.

This issue is further evidenced by research demonstrating persistently worse student experiences at university for the same students. Despite attempts to improve this, inequality is still an issue that universities need to address. One factor which has been seen to contribute to, or at least has been unable to improve, has related to teaching and learning practices of lecturing staff. In particular, the policy response which

professional bodies, governments and universities have turned to improve inclusion has been IP.

This chapter outlined my professional motivation for researching this topic as an experienced lecturer with a managerial responsibility to improve academic colleagues' use of IP. My positionality leads me to seek a greater understanding about what is going on in universities at a chalk-face level with IP policy enactment. This is an underresearched area and a there is a gap in academic understanding of how IP is negotiated and played out, which this doctoral study contributes to by developing and extending knowledge in the English context and across a wider number of universities. Finally, the approach to this study was discussed outlining the importance of Archer's (2000,2003) structure and agency and the internal conversation as a guide to the research gaze and the contribution of the policy enactment approach to influence this study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the current literature and conceptual thinking related to inclusion and inclusive practice (IP) in higher education (HE). The review initially points to the complexity of this thinking and attempts to understand definitions of inclusive education and IP historically in educational contexts and the unique problems of addressing inclusion in HE are discussed. There has been an attempt to include literature related to the broader concept of inclusion and related studies however given the range of student identities it has been inevitable that there had to be some decisions made regarding the focus in this review. Literature selected demonstrates and foregrounds the centrality of the critical disability studies literature to issues of inclusion.

In this review inclusion and IP are initially considered from an operational perspective. This is done whilst bearing in mind the development of philosophical and theoretical discourses and dominant neoliberal and rights-based social justice ideologies which have influenced current understandings of inclusion and IP for HE. A historical review of the political and legislative framework follows and guides the discussion to question the enactment and implementation of IP, raising concerns that IP policy is a rhetorical

device in English universities. Possible ways of understanding why this is the case are identified and discussed. Whilst there is much literature in this field which highlights poor experiences from a student perspective in universities, there is limited literature which seeks a deeper understanding of the way IP plays out, especially literature which seeks to explore lecturers' experience of the enactment of IP policy. Studies in Australia and Scotland which explore this perspective are discussed in this chapter. This limited number of studies contributes to our understanding of why IP appears to be problematic for professionals working in universities.

This doctoral study explores this understanding in the English context and across a larger number of universities to bridge this gap in the literature.

2.2 Defining inclusive practice in higher education

IP in HE is multifaceted and may be seen as a professional activity, as an orientation or value, as an educational policy or an institutional strategy or goal. It requires consideration of the principles or concepts of inclusion and equality in educational contexts. I found in my reading for this doctorate study that these were not easily defined or understood, perhaps because of the multiple ways that they have been and could be interpreted by different actors in the historical policy-formation process. My understanding of inclusion and my subsequent approach to it in this thesis is that it is a principle and social justice goal to which HE aspires. One way that policy makers in government and HE have addressed this operationally is through the policy concept of IP. My research interest is in the enactment of IP in HE in England within the wider social justice goal of inclusion, and both terms are discussed here.

Brown (2016) points to the multiplicity of definitions of inclusion which makes it difficult to pinpoint or understand what inclusive education means in practice. Although inclusion is now seen as a "high status buzz word" (Hodkinson and Vickerman, 2016, p.7) its meaning is not commonly accepted by practitioners, leading Hodkinson and Vickerman to ask "what is this 'inclusion' of which we all speak" (2016, p. 7). Atkins (2016, p.7) identifies it as a "slippery" concept whilst drawing on the concepts and principles of social justice to explore its underpinnings. Changing approaches to social justice which form the basis of conceptions of inclusion and IP are discussed in this literature review through the historical development of inclusion and IP in political thought and legislation in the UK.

Taking a different approach to defining inclusion, Clough and Nutbrown (2013) point out that inclusion should be viewed in an operational rather than a conceptual sense, because of the many prevalent versions of inclusion. It could be seen that opportunities for differing interpretations and a muddying of the waters occurs with lecturers, university leaders, policy makers and politicians each having space to decide for themselves what version of inclusion and IP they refer to. This has relevance for this research as it seeks to explore the spaces where enactment of inclusion policy goals takes place. A discussion of the operational definitions of IP can be found in section 2.2.3 of this literature review, whilst the next section focuses on conceptual definitions.

The inclusion of students in educational settings and the subsequent creation of IP as policy in HE has been defined by policy and legislation makers in government and related organisations. Academic perspectives evident in the literature on inclusion have been drawn from how inclusion is defined by legislation. Hewett, Douglas, McLinden and Keil (2017) put forward work where inclusion is defined by key legislation in the UK, such as the Equality Act (2010) and the removal of Disabled Student Allowance by the Department of Business and Innovation (2016). Similarly, O'Donnell (2012; 2016) puts forward a view that universities have developed their approaches to IP based upon legislative drivers.

Internationally, governments and educational organisations have sought to provide and develop the principles and definitions of inclusive education. Originally aimed at the compulsory education level, but no less relevant for post-compulsory education, the Salamanca Statement and framework (UNESCO, 1994) attempted to create a universally accepted political definition of inclusive education. This historically significant statement placed inclusion principles firmly in the wider realm of social justice agendas concerning health, social welfare and vocational training and employment (Daniels & Garner, 1999). Its principles outlined an operational understanding of inclusion and outlined four requirements:

- All learners should learn together wherever possible
- Staff to recognise and respond to the diverse needs of students
- Staff to accommodate to students' different styles and rates of learning
- Staff to ensure quality of education for all students through

- Appropriate curricula
- Organisational arrangements
- Teaching strategies
- Use of resources

(Salamanca Framework – UNESCO 1994, p.7)

The understanding put forward by these principles promotes the core concept that an inclusive environment should be flexible and encouraging to different learners, who should be accommodated together, removing the idea of segregation, especially within schools. For the HE environment, this meant more positive efforts needed to be made to improve the diversity of the student body (Ahmed & Swain, 2006; Hurtado, Clayton-Pedersen, Allen, & Milem, 1998; Stevenson, Clegg, & Lefever, 2010). The Salamanca Framework places emphasis on *staff* and their *practice* requiring proactive responses to teaching based upon recognition of the diverse needs of the student body. This is made more challenging, as the student body is becoming more diverse because of the widening participation (WP) schemes adopted by many universities as a result of government policy in the UK. It also supports the emphasis that this doctoral research places on exploring the key actors in inclusive HE.

More recently and more specifically, AdvanceHE, an educational professional body in England, developed definitions which move from identifying staff responsibilities for IP to calls for large-scale institutional change to promote and achieve more inclusive HE environments (Hockings, 2010; May & Bridger, 2010). The discussion of these definitions of inclusion so far suggests that it is a complex area to research, but that an operational set of policies or guidelines have been developed internationally from governmental legislation and educational policies, and that academic staff have a responsibility for the achievement of inclusion and IP.

To discuss inclusion requires a discussion of who we are meant to be including, and what we are including them in. For this thesis, my focus is IP in the context of HE in England. Intuitively, inclusion in practice feels like it should be part of an educator's values, involving bedrock assumptions that "all pupils are welcomed and valued by all people, at all times for all that they do." (Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2016, p. 7). Whilst these authors use the word *all*, frequently it is not always obvious in academic literature that IP refers to all students. Often, literature in this field has focused on the

inclusion (or otherwise) of very specific groups of students, for example, the *disabled* student in HE (Beauchamp-Pryor, 2012; Cameron, 2016; Fuller, Healey, Bradley, & Hall, 2004; Liasidou, 2014; Madriaga, 2007; Madriaga, Hanson, Kay, & Walker, 2011). There are good reasons for this, as the critical disability movement has been influential in academia and successful in influencing legislation to develop protections from discrimination. Literature has become more nuanced and focused – specifically on different types of what might be labelled 'disability', evidencing the difficulties of inclusion for students with, for example, dyslexia (Busgeet, 2008; Mortimore & Crozier, 2006; Mortimore, 2013) or visual impairments (Hewett, Keil, & Douglas, 2015; Hewett et al., 2017; Lourens & Swartz, 2016).

Appreciating the complexity of disability has enabled a wider view of excluded groups to be taken. Waterfield and West put forward a criticism of previous practices of placing focus on particular groups which encourages a contingent approach to inclusion (Waterfield, West & Chalkley, 2006). Higher education institutions (HEIs) are focused on contingent adjustments to practice when it can be argued that the definition of IP should involve moving beyond these minimal adjustments (Hockings, 2010; Madriaga & Goodley, 2010). Consequently, the perspective that I have taken in this thesis is more encompassing and accepts definitions which extend the concept of IP to all students who might not be seen as a traditional part of the dominant hegemony within HE (Hodkinson, 2012; Lawrie et al., 2017; O'Donnell, 2016; O'Shea, Lysaght, Roberts, & Harwood, 2016; Reupert, Hemmings, & Connors, 2010). Inclusion should be thought of as accommodating diversity in all its forms rather than just groups protected by legislation (O'Donnell, 2016). It considers not only inclusion in terms of accessibility and disability, but broader issues of a cultural, ethnic and social nature (Foreman, 2001). Furthermore, it is appreciated in this research that IP is a wider concept than reasonable adjustments to practice required by anti-discrimination legislation.

Critical perspectives on the effectiveness of UK anti-discrimination legislation and its interpretation in HE have come to the fore. Gibson (2015) locates a critical discussion of inclusive education in HE and rights-based legislation, questioning its ability to fully promote inclusion and bring to the forefront questions about difference and the concept of creating 'other' groups outside of existing HE structures and hegemony. As

outlined above, academic literature which looks at definitions of IP require us to consider the groups which the practice is intended to include (Allan &Tremain, 2005; Allan,2010a; Graham and Slee, 2008; Hodkinson, 2012).

Terms like 'othering' and 'hegemony' bring us to the point where we critically discuss who is being referred to by inclusion. Who is to be included? And into what? This is problematised by many authors who recognise the asymmetrical power relationships associated with one group needing to be included into the dominant practices of another (Graham & Slee, 2008). Hodkinson and Vickerman observe that inclusion in education "invests power in those who are to include and… removes power from those who are to be included" (Hodkinson and Vickerman , 2016, p. 9). Inclusion in terms of asymmetrical power relations and the related debates about social justice found in much academic literature involving inclusion and IP are important concepts informing this research. The extent to which these concepts framed lecturers' understandings of IP is of key importance to the research aims; this theme is developed in section 2.4.

Whilst the various perspectives and definitions of inclusion and IP made researching the concept challenging, it also helped to shape the direction of this doctoral study. I was keen to explore how lecturers interpreted and understood this concept and, because of the wide range of academic perspectives, I wanted to put emphasis on an exploratory interpretative study that would allow a full picture to emerge of the 'speak' surrounding IP policy in HE. The research gaze was directed towards the intersectionality between policy, university contexts and the lecturer as policy actor.

2.2.1 A brief history of inclusive education

The terms 'inclusion' and 'inclusive' have been used in educational settings and contexts across all age groups. In the schools sector, Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2006) recognise the importance of inclusion as a global priority for educational institutions, suggesting that institutions should "concern themselves with increasing the participation and broad educational achievements of all groups of learners who have historically been marginalised" (Ainscow et al., 2006, p. 295). This view originated from the publication of the Warnock report (1978). Subsequent legislation began with the 1981 Education Reform Act and most recently includes the adaption of the 2001 SEND Act to the *SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years* published in 2014 (Department of Education, UK Government, 2014).

Inclusion was conceived to be a better option for pupils deemed uneducable prior to such progressive thinking. This version of the concept of inclusion required schools to support and augment their standard provision to allow for additional levels of support to those students who required it, as outlined in the 1981 Education Reform Act. Whilst representing an important shift in attitude towards the education of students, the use of the term inclusion in this way was criticised for its divisive and limited application to only those students with special educational needs. Dyson (2005) provides evidence that the implementation of the policy in practice often led to discrimination and segregation. Much work was directed at the over-reliance on inclusion into physical concepts of space and location. Inclusion into mainstream schools for these students was only part or the beginning of the journey to inclusion. However, UK government policies related to inclusion of so-called special needs pupils in mainstream education have been criticised by scholars in the schools arena (Benjamin, 2002; Clough, 1998; Lloyd, 2008; Thomas & Loxley, 2007). According to Lloyd (2008, p. 221), "there is a failure to recognise the complex and controversial nature of inclusion". There are others that object to the problematic implementation of such policies (Dyson, Howes, & Roberts, 2002; Lloyd, 2008; O'Hanlon, Thomas, & Skidmore, 2004).

From the perspective of critical policy analysis, subsequent and frequent policy documents published by governments muddied the water about what inclusive education meant. For example, the national curriculum policy (QCA, Department of Education and Employment, 2004) explicitly addressed the principles of inclusion and what this meant, but subsequent changes of direction of the policy shifted the initial intentions as outlined in *Support and Aspiration: A new approach to special education needs and disability* (Department of Education, 2011). This new direction focuses on general notions of inclusion, whilst more emphasis is placed on specialised provision, suggesting a drawing back from the idea of inclusive education as including students within established schooling.

A lack of coherence and consistency of policy development in the UK is problematic for institutions and practitioners who struggle to understand the notion of inclusion of all students, as highlighted by Hardy and Woodcock (2015). These policies are based on deficit models of disability and require affirmative action to make up for that deficit by

including and enabling students to access the 'normal' school and established educational systems. Many take issue with this as a premise. A broader interpretation of 'inclusion' to incorporate 'internal' considerations was suggested by Ainscow (1999), who appreciated that inclusive education should also be associated with and concerned about "overcoming barriers to participation that may be experienced by any pupil" (Ainscow, 1999, p. 218). This theme resonates with many contemporary writers (Coates & Vickerman, 2010; Florian, 2014; Robinson, 2017) who seek and suggest actions to realise inclusion in the school environment, whilst others reject the inclusion of students into a system that replicates inequality and injustice and favours the 'abled' students without a radical change to that system (Hardy & Woodcock, 2015; Lloyd, 2008; Thomas& Loxley, 2007).

The Equality Act 2010 harmonised several separate pieces of anti-discrimination legislation to afford greater legal protections, not only against unequal opportunity, but for unequal treatment. There was now a legal duty on providers, including education providers, employers and service providers, to make anticipatory, reasonable adjustments so that groups of people with protected characteristics can take part in education, use services and work. It made it illegal to disadvantage or discriminate against groups named in the Equality Act. Protected characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. The Equality Duty section of the Act ensured that organisations such as educational establishments now had three aims, namely to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not (Equality and Human Rights Commission 2019).

This therefore required positive action as opposed to simply ensuring discrimination did not occur. Educational establishments must now be involved in "tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups" (HM Government, 2010). This should involve putting in place policies and strategies which

involve treating some people more favourably than others. Many institutions in the university sector responded with student-facing policies to improve wider participation through positive recruitment initiatives, policies to support individual students with disabilities through adjustments to practice, adoption of the principles of the social model of disability and – of key interest for this research – the adoption of inclusive teaching and learning practice as policy. Each initiative does come somewhat short of a coordinated and systematic change of practice and operation to meet the three key aims of the Equality Act for *all* students in each of the protected characteristic groups. For example, adjustments to disabled students' programmes omit students of colour, and do not help those who experience exclusion because of their sexuality.

There seems to be a parallel relationship in the development of inclusive education principles in schools and the subsequent debate on how to effectively achieve it and the debate concerning inclusion in HE – this is discussed in the next section.

2.2.2 Inclusive education in higher education

Ainscow (1999) and (Dyson et al., 2002) suggested an interesting notion for the inclusive education debate. They suggested that the success of inclusion policies relies upon large-scale and widespread institutional change and management rather than the adaption of existing practice. Similarly and concurrently, researchers were arguing the same applied to inclusion in HEIs. Fuller et al.'s (2004) seminal study called for similar institutional change but recognised that inclusion was not yet being achieved in universities. Whilst HEIs in the UK are making significant progress towards equality and inclusion, these goals have clearly yet to be fully attained (Fuller et al., 2004, p. 315).

Discussions concerned ideas about what to do about it, largely at the time articulated from the critical disability movement perspective, focused on calls for embedding inclusion into all aspects of university policies and procedures (Tinklin, Riddell, & Wilson, 2004). Many researchers point out concerns that the process of what is essentially culture change within universities would be a long one, and that change to existing practice would come slowly, if indeed it would ever be complete (Goodley, 2007; Knight & Trowler, 2000; Madriaga et al., 2010; Riddell et al., 2007; Thrupp et al., 2005). The continuation of research being published in this field attests to the importance of striving towards inclusion despite some reservations about the enormity of the task for large institutions such as universities whose range of learner identities

and backgrounds render the task almost impossible. Lawrie et al. (2017) are sceptical and suggest we may have to accept that "absolute inclusivity can only exist in the ideal" (2017, p. 3)

At the time of the Equality Act 2010 in the UK, the Higher Education Academy was providing evidence that progress had been made towards improved inclusive practices. Case studies of initiatives taking place across the sector demonstrated a willingness on the behalf of universities to confront the challenges that were faced in trying to be better at inclusion (Hockings, 2010; Wray, 2013). These case studies of good practice initiatives, whilst supporting the goal of inclusion, seemingly fell short of the wholesale institutional change called for by many academics outlined in the previous paragraph. For Thomas et al. (2005) these were still marginal activities operating in pockets within universities rather than part of the mainstream structures, policy and practices. May and Bridger (2010) concluded that IP required more than just adjustments to practice:

> It necessitates a shift away from supporting specific student groups through a discrete set of policies or timebound interventions, towards equity considerations being embedded within all functions of the institution and treated as an ongoing process of quality enhancement. Making a shift of such magnitude requires cultural and systemic change at both the policy and practice levels. (May & Bridger, 2010, p. 4)

Sustainable and effective inclusive cultural change will only come about through institutions focusing simultaneously on both institutional and individual factors. "They cannot be seen in isolation of one another, as they operate as two sides of the same coin." (May & Bridger, 2010, p. 10). This report moved the debate on further by concluding that HEIs needed to engage the individual academic more effectively: a tension which requires exploration and evaluation of progress and influenced my approach to this research.

Institutional factors put forward in the case studies showcased by the HEA (May and Bridger, 2010, Wray , 2013) were found to include forming policy and procedures statements, conducting equality impact assessments, revising performance management and data analysis. Individual factors identified by universities in May and Bridger's review seemed to revolve around engagement of individuals with a professional development process: forming advisory or working groups; working with known advocates/champions; providing or supporting the processes of continuing professional development; providing opportunities for dialogue; disseminating

effective practice; changing management processes; conducting research and developing resources and materials. Whilst the case study institutions did identify with a commitment to inclusive principles, the activities they were engaged were primarily continuing with the same activities but with a notional recognition of the difficulties of some students. It could be argued that there is much more fundamental change to be made, and May and Bridger recognise this: “To embed widening participation and equality could arguably be not about doing different things, rather it involves doing things differently” (2010, p. 7).

Doing things differently suggested a more radical change and became identified as ‘mainstreaming’ inclusion (Bridger & Shaw, 2012). Mainstreaming is a move away from treating inclusion as a periphery, added-on activity or doing the minimum required by law, and bringing IP within the everyday culture and functions of the university. Shaw et al. (2007) identify that the sector is becoming increasingly aware of the benefits of inclusive approaches to learning teaching and assessment, and that “a discernible shift in the attitudes, approach and understanding within departments (can) be seen” (Shaw, 2007, p. 229).

Legislative and political changes in England have created conditions for universities which increase the importance of effective teaching and learning practice for inclusion. The Conservative government in 2014 proposed a major reform to reduce and remove Disabled Student Allowances (DSA). The Minister of Universities, David Willetts, announced a review of DSA (a financial or equipment-based allowance for eligible students), and commenced a review period in 2014 (Willets, 2014). This led to a reduction in the numbers of students entitled to DSA in 2015/16, and in 2016/17 it was reduced further. The onus and responsibility for equality and inclusion was being transferred firmly to HEIs: “Equality Act duties on HE providers have been in existence for over five years, and the government considers that HE providers have now had adequate time to understand and comply with them” (Willets, 2014, p.383).

Taking this issue further, the government announced its intention to introduce specific and measurable targets and frameworks in the implementation of disability rights, and placed the responsibility firmly in the HEI’s domain via performativity measures: “We recognise that respondents would also welcome some form of national standard or

quality assurance framework for accessibility and inclusivity and will take this work forward with the appropriate stakeholders" (Willets, 2014, p. 383).

Policy guidance from the UK government urges universities to adopt inclusive teaching and learning practice as a way to reduce the differential outcome gap (Disabled Student Sector Leadership Group, 2017; HEFCE, 2017; Office of Students, 2018):

> Realising equality of outcome for all is a real and pressing issue for UK higher education and we must work together and in partnership to deliver wide ranging and sustainable solutions. Central to this approach is the universal adoption of inclusive teaching and practice. Geoff Layer, Vice-Chancellor, University of Wolverhampton (Disabled Student Sector Leadership Group, 2017, p. 2).

Further pressure, in the form of linking tackling inequality to funding mechanisms through Access and Participation Plans and TEFs, focused attention on this issue in universities and created a need for research to understand the phenomenon to support policy implementation. English government guidance strongly links teaching practice with inclusion and adapts Hockings (2010) definition of IP as "Teaching which engages students in learning that is meaningful, relevant, and accessible to all, embracing a view of the individual and of individual difference as a source of diversity that can enrich the lives and the learning of others" (Disabled Student Sector Leadership Group, 2017, p. 32).

Bringing inclusion policy from the political arena, which mostly concerned university strategists and leaders, to the micro level of individual academic practitioners, now made it explicit that individual lecturers were responsible for the implementation of this policy. The emphasis on IP as teaching practice formed a key part of the focus of this research, which foregrounds lecturers and their experiences relating to the implementation of IP.

Many universities have stated that their adoption of IP is part of their strategies to meet their legislative and funding obligations to become more accessible. UK government attention through the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) and Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) has focused on characteristics of age, gender, disability, ethnicity and educational advantage (which refers to levels of participation in HE related to geographical location). These organisations now form the Office for Students. The current emphasis from the Office for Students firmly indicates the government's

intention to maintain pressure on universities to tackle the problem of inequality. Chris Millward, director of Fair Access and Participation states, "We plan to apply greater pressure than before for every university to reduce the outcome gaps among their students" (Office for Students, 2018, p. 1). IP is a tool which is being used as part of that pressure and becomes a critical area of investigation for universities who seek research-informed ways to respond to this call to action. This doctoral research is timely in exploring IP and the way it has been implemented within HE almost a decade from legislation requiring universities to act upon inequality. Moreover, it has the potential to make a significant contribution to the understanding of an aspect of HE that has become a priority in the last decade.

2.2.3 Operational definitions of inclusive practice in higher education

This section of the literature review returns to operational models of IP which are to be found in professional body-commissioned work and in the definitions held by organisations who have an interest in promoting inclusion and IP. These definitions and recommendations form the policy language of IP and are used in HE as policy artefacts which help universities and lecturers 'do' the policy work of inclusion.

2.2.3.1 A continuum model

May and Bridger's work (Bridger & Shaw, 2012; May, & Bridger, 2010) operationalises IP along a proposed continuum of IP activities, as shown in Table 1. They suggest a framework to evaluate how far universities have moved towards creating an inclusive culture. It also provides a useful indication of what might be considered IP activities. The model encourages whole staff responsibility for inclusion, which sets the principle for IP to be embedded and an ongoing part of practice for lecturers.

Table 1 A continuum model of equality and widening participation (May & Bridger, 2010, p. 88)

Alternative provision	Inclusive provision
Aiming to increase support for particular student groups and/or within particular institutional functions	Aiming for cultural change where equality and WP is embedded within all institutional functions
Equality and WP treated as series of discrete and definable activities or considerations	Equality and WP treated as an ongoing process and as part of quality enhancement
Equality and WP covered through separate policies and processes	Equality and WP embedded as part of all institutional policies and processes

Staff are engaged who have equality and WP as part of their role or remit	Whole staff responsibility for equality and WP is operationalised
Students consulted or views sought to fulfil a predefined purpose around equality and WP	Students established as partners and agents for change in an ongoing enhancement process

A key part of this conceptualisation of IP is that inclusive provision for universities should be mainstreamed (Bridger & Shaw, 2012) in the curriculum activities of the university – that is as a teaching activity. This is acknowledged as a difficult task for universities who will need to shift their institutional cultural thinking to incorporate embedded inclusion.

2.2.3.2 The Equality Challenge Unit

A more practice targeted definition of IP is proffered by the Equality Challenge Unit, an independent charity with a mission to support equality in HE. It produced what Ball et al. (2011) call "policy texts" to create professional discourses around IP. Its definition moved thinking away from particular types of students, especially disabled students, to discourses which recognise that all students need to be considered in IP:

> Inclusive practice is an approach to teaching that recognises the diversity of students, enabling all students to access course content, fully participate in learning activities and demonstrate their knowledge and strengths at assessment. Inclusive practice values the diversity of the student body as a resource that enhances the learning experience. (Equality Challenge Unit, 2013, p. 1)

These practically orientated text documents were produced which outlined a framework which the unit proposed for modelling academic practice. These included suggestions such as reflecting on your teaching practice, encouraging interaction, modifying course content, meeting disabled students' access requirements, using flexible teaching and assessment methods, accommodating other needs (Equality Challenge Unit, 2013).

2.2.3.3 AdvanceHE

In 2018 the Equality Challenge Unit became a part of AdvanceHE and now has a stronger focus on influencing academic practice within the sector. The goals of the merged organisations are to influence lecturers and organisations through publication of guidelines and academic research and they have been at the forefront of the development of the operational concept of IP. Christine Hockings seminal and often

used research summary and recommendations for IP were published in 2010 for the Higher Education Academy, previously HEA now AdvanceHE, as the Equality Act (2010) came into force:

> Inclusive learning and teaching in higher education refer to the ways in which pedagogy, curricula and assessment are designed and delivered to engage students in learning that is meaningful, relevant, and accessible to all. It embraces a view of the individual and individual difference as the source of diversity that can enrich the lives and learning of others (Hockings, 2010, p. 1)

This is widely accepted by researchers and features in much literature concerning this topic, as well as in government-sponsored advisory reports (Disabled Student Sector Leadership Group, 2017; Lawrie et al., 2017; May, & Bridger, 2010; O'Donnell, 2016). Her definition was pivotal as it did not focus on one group of students as a focus for inclusion. Previous definitions have often been based on disability. Hockings' synthesis of research identifies four main areas for attention as part of a blueprint for institutions interested in a concerted IP strategy: (1) inclusive curriculum design; (2) inclusive curriculum delivery; (3) inclusive assessment; and (4) institutional commitment to and management of inclusive learning and teaching. In 2010, Hockings was optimistic but cautious about the ways universities could meet their challenges, and the HEA provided reports about the success and progress of case studies within HE.

Hockings recommended 11 broad and interrelated principles upon which inclusive policy and practice in universities are based. These are shown in Table 2. This table has been created to demonstrate the spaces of influence which are related to each principle identified by Hockings. A heavy burden of responsibility is placed on lecturers in Hockings' model. Six of the principles are related to the spaces occupied by lecturers and their teaching and learning activities and develop ideals of student individuality, recognition, anticipation and the valuing of student needs. Clearly outlined here are four principles which direct universities to support lecturers' teaching and learning practice in important ways. Firstly, through a change in practices and systems which inhibit the participation of students or constrain lecturers to develop their IP. And secondly through the provision of adequate time and resources for lecturers to meet their responsibilities.

Table 2 Adapted from Hockings (2010)

Realm of influence	Inclusion principle
1. Lecturers responsibility to support IP teaching and learning processes	The need to see students as individuals, to learn about and value their differences and to maintain high expectations of all students.
2. Lecturers responsibility to support IP teaching and learning processes	The need for teachers to create safe learning environments in which students can express their ideas, beliefs, requirements, and identities freely in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect, empathy and open mindedness.
3. Lecturers responsibility to support IP teaching and learning processes	The need to establish at the outset clear rules of what is expected from students with tight control and close monitoring in order to develop confident learner identities and behaviours.
4. Lecturers responsibility to support IP teaching and learning processes	The need for teachers to create student-focused 'universal' programmes, modules and lessons that engage all students meaningfully by encouraging them to draw on and apply their own and others' knowledge.
5. Lecturers responsibility to support IP teaching and learning processes	The need for teachers to anticipate, recognise and provide for individuals' specific physical, cultural, academic and pastoral needs, particularly at critical periods (e.g. transitions, examinations).
6. Lecturers responsibility to support IP teaching and learning processes	The need for shifts in negative beliefs about, and attitudes towards, student diversity that currently inhibit the development of inclusive learning and teaching.
7. University responsibility to support IP teaching and learning processes	The need to challenge and change policies, practices, systems and standards that inhibit the participation of students in any subject or constrain teachers' capacity to engage all their students.

Realm of influence	Inclusion principle
8. University responsibility to support teaching and learning practices	The need for greater involvement of students in the negotiation of the curriculum, assessment and in the development of teachers.
9. University responsibility to support teaching and learning practices	The need for adequate time, resources and a safe environment in which staff at all levels can develop a shared understanding and commitment to student diversity and IP. Such understanding and commitment should be a key component of staff recruitment, training, development, and reward.
10. University responsibility to support teaching and learning practices	The need for adequate and relevant central services to support students and staff; integrating strategies for teaching and learning, WP and disability; and coordinating the efforts of academics and specialist support staff in central service centres.
11. University responsibility to support teaching and learning practices	The need for collection and analysis of institutional, quantitative, and qualitative data for the evaluation and improvement of inclusive learning and teaching strategies, policies and practices.

For Hockings, this is a difficult and challenging process which requires focus and determination on the behalf of institutions and should involve a focus on institutional structures and processes but also on the individual academic to bring about progress. Nevertheless, the clear intention was that these are the principles that universities in England were directed to and expected to work towards achieving.

2.2.3.4 Universal design for learning

It is worth noting that Hockings, in point 4 in Table 2, argued that teachers need to develop universal programmes (2010). This may have been a reference to a model of operating which has found favour in the United States, but has been slow to be adopted globally. The Universal Design for Learning Guidelines (Bracken & Novak, 2019) sets out a practical framework for educationalists to consider and apply to their

teaching. This model develops operational models further than considering what should be achieved and who is responsible. It is a blueprint approach to help support practice. Essential principles of 'multiple means' of doing things related to the why, what and how of learning place importance on flexible approaches to teaching and learning practice. The UK Department of Education advisory document to HE leaders, *Inclusive Teaching and Learning in Higher Education as a Route to Excellence* (Disabled Student Sector Leadership Group, 2017) identifies universal design for learning (UDL) as a recommended approach to facilitate organisational change. It is widely accepted, despite recognition of its potential, that UDL has not gathered traction within the UK HE sector. Layer (2019) makes this case, but is optimistic that there is now a positive climate for change as universities are "more open and receptive to developing their curricula and pedagogy in order to improve experience and outcomes for all their students" (Layer, 2019, p.35).

To summarise, operational definitions and models seek to identify who should be changing their practice and how. They focus on how universities as institutions should bring about cultural change whilst emphasising how difficult this is to achieve. The next section of this literature review addresses the conceptualisation of inclusion and moves to examine its historical and political development through a social justice lens.

2.3 A brief historical review of the political and legislative framework for inclusive practice policy in relation to social justice

A key concept which informs and frames much literature on inclusion and inclusive education is social justice and the development of human rights for all groups of people. Theories of social justice are multifarious and relate to ideas about equality: what this is and how can it be achieved in society. Social justice commonly assumes the desirability of an improved society for all members of that society, but perspectives differ on the way to achieve it, especially when some of us are unfairly disadvantaged. Michael Sandel summarises what social justice might be:

> To ask whether a society is just is to ask how it distributes the things we prize – income and wealth, duties and rights, powers and opportunities, offices and honours. A just society distributes these goods in the right way; it gives each person his or her due (Sandel, 2010,p.18).

For Sandel, a fundamental question for governments is: what is the *right* way to allocate those goods? In my professional life as a lecturer, I am interested in the right

way to allocate those goods (by which I mean resources related to teaching and learning) within HE educational systems to ensure the fairest distribution for all students. What I am interested specifically in is: how do we make HE more equitable for students and ensure that we all benefit and thrive whatever our advantages or disadvantages according to socio-economic backgrounds, race, educational attainment, gender assignment and so on? Attempts to answer this question in the UK have generated different policy directions from successive governments, aimed at supporting the educational system to overcome discrimination and disadvantage. These attempts have influenced thought on how that system should be organised.

The first part of this section will look at the historical development of approaches to social justice in relation to HE for UK governments. It will become clear that the relationship between the concept of equality and the concept of inclusion was not always thought of as being connected. It was not until human rights movements in the late 20th century that the idea of *including* people became synonymous with equality.

2.3.1 Thatcherism, neoliberalism and social justice as harmony and opportunity

The principle of Utilitarianism, as put forward by John Bentham and extended later by John Stuart Millis, is one line of thought on social justice which sees the welfare of society as the most important concern for politicians and citizens. Most recent and current political and social thought has not used this principle to underpin policies and legislation. Philosophical debates have moved from welfare notions of social justice to consider the rights of individuals as more central to achieving equality. The next section of this literature review charts the change in views of social justice and locates it within the development of UK government policy from 1979 onwards.

The achievement of equality within society through education, and more specifically *within* education, has been a key policy focus for recent UK governments. Simply put, political parties in the UK are divided on the lines of the role of the state and the importance of the individual in promoting forms of social justice. All parties seem agreed that education has a role to play in promoting social justice and social mobility, but they have differed significantly on ideas of the best way to achieve it (Smith, 2018).

The Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher (1979–1990) had a dominant and lasting impact on UK society and attitudes to education. For Thatcher there was “no such thing as society” (Thatcher, 1987) and her conception of social justice was

underpinned by individualistic rights rather than collective ones. The central principle is that everyone has a right to liberty: that is to do whatever we like with the things that we own provided we respect the right of others to do the same. These libertarian values formed the dominant political hegemony in the 1980s and had profound, long-lasting effects on social and economic spheres through the development of neoliberal ideologies. Key intellectual protagonists included Friedrich Hayek (1899–1992), Milton Friedman (1912–2006) and Robert Nozick (1938–2002). Each viewed the role of the state as only appropriate to safeguard the protection of the rights of life, liberty, property; contract and state intervention was deemed coercive and destructive of a free society (Hayek, 1960). For libertarians, equality was only appropriate as equality of opportunity. People with different strengths and attributes must be allowed to flourish and achieve to strengthen society. As Smith (2018) points out, much of the UK and the global education system is based on rewarding achievement based on merit, and it formed the basis of UK government policy in the Thatcher era. Equality for Thatcher was analogous with "equality of opportunity. And equality means nothing unless it includes the right to be unequal and the freedom to be different" (Thatcher, 1975). Social justice principles for this ideology involved encouragement of concepts of inequality and eschewed concepts of inclusion. Libertarian social justice would not use legislation to ensure inclusion or allow affirmative action to give preferential treatment to disadvantaged groups, and would argue that those students who do perform well have done so on merit and will go on to benefit society. Different outcomes are to be accepted and celebrated, will improve society as a whole and should not be viewed as a problem.

Towards the end of this period, attitudes towards how society treats individuals began to change, with a recognition that not all people are free to climb the ladder of opportunity (Tucker & Lister, 2016) even if we can see it and are aware of its existence. Global social movements and international government policies increased awareness of the need for legislation to help overcome prejudice towards groups of people who held disadvantaged positions in society. In particular, the social movement concerned with the rights of disabled people was driven by the critical disability movement originating in the United States (Barnes, 1991; Barnes, 2007; Barton & Oliver, 1997; Oliver, 1996; Shakespeare, 1993). Inclusive education, driven in part by this movement, became a global priority supported by the development of the

Salamanca Statement in 1994. Improving rates of participation in education by all underrepresented groups was the emphasis and the focus in education became about inclusion:

> Reaffirming the right to education of every individual, as enshrined in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and renewing the pledge made by the world community at the 1990 World Conference on Education for All to ensure that right for all regardless of individual differences (UNESCO, 1994, p. vii).

The UK Conservative government at that time acted upon these principles widely and introduced the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) (1995) after which it became much more widely accepted that disabled people faced discrimination within society. The importance of the principle of inclusion was thus cemented in international political and social agendas. Although the Salamanca Statement was about all underrepresented groups, some critics have seen the resulting focus on students with disabilities or special educational needs by governments as distracting from a wider issue. That is, the processes of inclusion and exclusion leave many students, not simply those with disabilities, unable to participate in mainstream culture and communities (Ainscow et al., 2006).

At this time UK government educational priorities regarding compulsory education were concerned with creating opportunity through widening choice of school for the individuals, a national curriculum, reducing local authority control by introducing local management of schools through grant-maintained status academies and the introduction of league tables and rigorous inspection procedures for schools. A similar treatment of the post-compulsory university sector saw radical changes to funding models for universities and students resulting in cuts to universities funding and students personally responsible for the burden of their fees following the recommendations of the Dearing Report 1997 (Dearing, 1997). Changes to the process of allocation of funds took place returning power to a government quango funding council, HEFCE and reducing academic representation to a minority role. This was the start of an expansionist revolution in the HE sector to be continued by successive governments to the present day. Much literature exists which examines the effects of the increasingly involved role of the state's representatives in the UK university sector which critically questions these neoliberal managerial approaches (Anderson, 2008; Ek, Ideland, Jonsson, & Malmberg, 2013; Riddell et al., 2007) to HE which have led to a

culture of audit, performativity, managerialism, and accountability and have changed the fundamental role and purpose of universities including how it feels to work in one or attend one (Allan, 2010a; Barnett, C., Clarke, Cloke & Malpass, 2008; Barnett, R. 2003; Collini, 2012; Giroux & Myrsiades, 2001).

2.3.2 New Labour and the rise of rights-based social justice

The dominance of the idea of social justice as an individual's opportunity and their right to be informed about and make choices concerning their education of the Conservative-era shifted during Tony Blair's time in government as the New Labour prime minister (1997–2007). The notion of social justice was prevalent in government priorities and related closely to education: "I say education is social justice," (Blair, 1997). Universities were thought of as key institutions which could contribute to social justice through fostering social mobility, and WP in HE was an important goal for the New Labour government – although the adoption of the recommendations of the Dearing Report 1997 which required students to contribute financially to their fees was controversial.

Key historical, legislative milestones in support of equality in human rights in education included the 1998 Human Rights act in the UK. This act established the right to "an effective education" as a human rights principle, and was ratified at the beginning of the New Labour government in 1997. It was a clear statement of the importance of education in society to the incoming government. Simultaneously, New Labour governments acted to bring about further protection from discriminatory practices, particularly in the field of disability (Ainscow et al., 2006) which brought about the exclusion of disabled people within society. The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001), of relevance to the school-age sector, stated that it is "unlawful for the body responsible for the educational institution to discriminate against a disabled student in the student services that it provides or offers to provide" and initiated the move towards inclusion of students with special needs in existing schools. Gordon Brown's subsequent government made a commitment in this field in 2009 when the UK ratified the UN Convention on the rights of people with disabilities, which ensured that future governments agreed to develop policies which supported a goal to "Ensure the education system at all levels is *inclusive* and geared towards supporting

disabled people to achieve their full potential and participate equally in society" (United Nations, 2009, p.1) (my emphasis).

The approach of such legislative policy constituted a society-based approach to human rights and sought to improve the rights of disabled people within the context of education, employers and service providers. In contrast, the ideological approach of the subsequent Coalition-led legislation focuses on the individual, with personal choice of education provider and personal budgets and plans at the heart of the reform. The incoming Coalition government in 2010 took a more individualistic approach to disability, with the Children and Families Act (2014). This included the new individual *Birth to 25 Educational Health and Care Plan* (Department of Education, UK government, 2014) which set out a local agenda and implementation with local authorities, schools and colleges taking responsibility for supporting the disabled child. Daniels and Garner (1999, p. 3) comment that the concept of inclusion was given fresh impetus and credence by rights-based arguments: "It is the recent widespread and increasingly vociferous demand to establish individual rights as a central component in policy-making that has provided the impetus to place inclusion firmly on the agenda of social change."

This alternative way of thinking about social justice is based on the philosophies of John Rawls (Rawls, 1971), and this is where I turn in the next section. This rights-based social justice principle was a departure from the neoliberalist thinking of the previous Conservative government. Rawlsian rights-based social justice philosophy is based upon fundamental Kantian principles of the categorical imperative, such that laws should protect the rights of citizens. Rawls proposes that societies are unequal, and action to redress the wrongs that the individual experiences is important to protect equal basic liberties. Rawls appreciated that society is unjust, and change can only come about through the redistribution of resources. Distribution of resources can be unequal but should benefit the most disadvantaged in society and have the goal of making outcomes more equitable. This distributive form of social justice is demonstrated through the legislative approach of New Labour to protect individual basic equal liberties and ensure organisations have made anticipatory reasonable adjustments to their practice to ensure that this occurs for the protected groups of

people outlined in legislation. The development of this social justice approach was influenced by civil rights movements in the United States and UK.

The critical disability movement became influential in enabling society to recognise discriminatory practices (Barnes, 2007) which spurred the development of the social model of disability. The development of this model in the UK was a departure from traditional medical or deficit bases for defining and classifying disability. The social model of disability identified a difference between the impairment and what is a 'disability' (Davis, 1995). The impairment is private and personal, whereas the disability comes from the environment. A critical tone is taken by Barton and Oliver (1997), locating discrimination on the social, economic and cultural basis for disablism from a structural social theory perspective rather than physical characteristics.

From this perspective, what became key was not to be excluded from society because of the barriers it produced; the responsibility lay with society and its institutions to take affirmative action to remove those barriers. The concept of inclusion became a key focus for theories of social justice. The basic right to participate equally in society was a legislative imperative, and the focus for institutions in education was to work to include all groups of people. Thus, the relationship was now formed between equality, social justice and inclusion.

More recently debates about the nature of social justice have sought to extend and elaborate Rawls distributive form of social justice which has been criticised for a limiting focus on the fair re-distribution of goods (Wilson-Strydom, 2014). One problem with applying a redistribution of important goods to those with a need is that this requires the identification of individuals with such a need. It brings to the fore the "dilemma of difference" a term attributed to Martha Minow (1990, p.19). Minow outlined concerns over how to be fair to those who had limited power because of their gender, race or disability, whilst avoiding labelling them as powerless or different, and by doing so placing them outside normative society. Young (2011) and Fraser (2003) accept but seek to adapt the distributive principles of social justice. Young (2011) challenges the fairness of normative power structures embedded in a structural system which decides how to distribute the mainly economic goods and she seeks to uncover further elements which constitute injustice such as oppression and domination. Fraser (2003;2009) also sees the need for a re distribution of society's

goods which include wealth, opportunity, and material resources, however, two further aspects of justice are important to consider: The *recognition* of inequality and the injustices which occur socially and culturally and the political arena where *representation* occurs including the decision making processes and identification of who is allowed to be included and participate in society. Wilson-Strydom (2014) and Leibowitz (2009) move the critical debate further by pointing out that what is missing from these theories of social justice is an account of individual agency. The capabilities approach to social justice proposed by Sen (1999; 2006) and Nussbaum (2001;2013) foregrounds individual well being and quality of life. They refer to the freedom to opportunity and the conversion of those opportunities to individually valued achievements. Walker (2003; 2010) supports and argues for this approach to be widely adopted in a HE context to further social inclusion using the lists of opportunities which Nussbaum sees as most important elements of justice to preserve (Mutanga and Walker, 2015). The key to understanding this approach, and to seeing the difference between libertarian approaches is that there must be a compensatory action for those who have limited or compromised opportunities. For example, a deaf student at university must be given the opportunities to achieve by the provision of tailored and specific support from academic staff and university systems and processes. The relevance of this debate for this research is that there is little knowledge of the ways in which lecturers in English universities understand concepts of social justice such as inclusion and the associated IP. A deeper appreciation of this would help to develop a picture of how IP is enacted.

2.3.3 Recent legislative and policy frameworks for higher education

Concurrent to the development of rights-based legislation in the UK, universities have undergone one of the most significant changes in their history. The transfer of funding responsibility from the state to a private sector loan system for students attending UK universities is a fundamental and ideological shift based on neoliberal ideology (Collini, 2012; Giroux, 2014; McGettigan, 2013). Beginning with the expansionist policies of the Blair government, subsequent administrations have pushed for a more individual consumerist basis of funding for HEIs (Collini, 2012; Ek et al., 2013; Molesworth, Nixon, & Scullion, 2011) and a more localised basis of operation for HEIs (Ball,2003). The Conservative government in 2014 developed a framework within which HEIs would be held to account against measures for performance and progress. The Conservative

government's Higher Education and Research Act attempts to measure teaching quality through criteria in a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), and opens up the HE system to new providers within the sector with the stated goal of improving social mobility through improved access to HE. For Ball (2012) this is an example of how the 'technologies' of performativity and managerialism are driving culture within universities, and therefore influencing their responses to the issue of how to approach inclusion in HE.

The effects of these national policy directions on the working environment of the academic were far reaching, especially combined with a shift in the dimensions and expectations of the academic lecturer (Barry, Chandler, & Clark, 2001; Henkel, 2000; Kogan & Teichler, 2007; Trowler & Bamber, 2005). The Browne Report (2010) recommended that all new lecturing staff be required to undertake a teaching qualification, and furthermore that universities would be required to publish levels of teaching qualifications in order to obtain higher levels of funding via the HESA. Universities interpreted this as direction and, combined with drives to create competitive points of difference in a newly created marketised HE system, implemented strategies to comply with professional development initiatives from the HEA. This included schemes of professional accreditation to include the UK professional standards framework (UKPSF) (Higher Education Academy, 2011; Lea, 2015). This resulted in a new climate of encouragement or pressure for those lecturers who had previously not needed a professional qualification to now achieve recognition (Macdonald & Wisdom, 2002; Spowart, Turner, Shenton, & Kneale, 2016).

Academics with years of experience are now required and encouraged to obtain their fellowship of AdvanceHE and engage in professional development (Deaker, Stein, & Spiller, 2016). The UKPSF has a section which encourages professional values related to inclusion and IP. Value 1 indicates that lecturers should "Respect individual learners and diverse learning communities" (Higher Education Academy, 2011, p. 3). This further outlines the significant policy guidance and operationalisation expectations of teaching and learning practice for lecturing professionals. Teacher education for inclusivity has received some attention in the literature, and the way teachers are trained or educated for inclusion and equality is critically seen as a 'quick and dirty' style of professional development which "quickly yields donor pleasing statistics and

publicity-attracting case studies, but fails to elicit sufficiently extensive and sustainable change to education systems and cultures" (Lewis et al., 2019).

2.4 Conceptual explorations of inclusion and inclusive practice in education

Notions of inclusion and IP have been explored critically in UK HE by authors over the previous two decades as the political move towards rights-based social justice policies became prominent. This section will outline conceptual discourses around the terms inclusion and IP.

In an educational context, Norwich (2010) understood Minow's dilemma of difference as the choice presented when we talk about inclusion in education: the choice between a common curriculum which includes all students or a differentiated curriculum to allow for difference amongst students. Johnson and William's (2014) standpoint, that treating children all the same is the problem, was developed out of racial equality concerns in the United States. For Johnson and Williams (2014) educational policies and strategies aimed at equality have not worked thus far, and what is required is a consideration of dilemmas of difference as part of the responsibility of educational leadership to develop and embed discourses of difference within everyday educational practices. The debate about how to deal with difference extends the discussions of political approaches to social justice in the previous section, and is useful in this section in informing a critical discussion of what inclusion means and has meant in the UK's education system.

The three themes found in the critical literature concern notions of rhetorical policy enactment, normalcy and deficit discourses; and thirdly the identification of barriers to implementation which prevent effective inclusion.

2.4.1 Rhetorical policy enactment

Case studies demonstrating the progress in universities and the sector discourses around how inclusion in universities is playing out are overwhelmingly positive (Hockings, 2010; Wray, 2013), perhaps due in part to the reliance on funding from the UK government which requires proof of effective strategies to promote WP and inclusion (Mccaig, 2015). These positive discourses and the desire not to be discriminatory serve to silence those practitioners who may question the enactment of

IP policy within universities. The socially constructed acceptable "policy subjects" (as Ball, Maguire, Braun and Hoskins (2011, p.611) refer to them) involve *what can be talked about* and *what can be thought about* such policies. To challenge or question the efficacy of IP within one's department or university would be to criticise others, to risk calling colleagues discriminatory and, as Foucault points out, "One cannot speak of anything at any time, it is not easy to say something new" (Foucault, 1972, p.44).

The academy silence may have contributed to university positions that support the idea that we are 'doing inclusion' in our practice and in the way we run universities. Much critical research would take issue with this situation. Ahmed (2007) rejects the idea that inclusionary policies are effective and asserts that 'doing diversity' is a rhetorical device. Similarly, Graham and Slee (2008) question the suitability of the concept of inclusion and go onto further suggest that there is a complacency in education conversations about inclusion which takes for granted, accepts and supports the status quo rather than encouraging critical reflection and debate to enable and promote change towards social justice goals (Graham & Slee, 2008).

Atkins (2016) calls for critical perspectives to challenge the university sector's philosophical assumptions that have become "comfortable" truths because we feel "secure in the knowledge that we are doing inclusion, as practitioners we often fail to question or even consider these critical issues" (Atkins, 2016,p. 8). The policy itself can be seen as a social construction which favours existing unequal hierarchies, power relationships and patterns and works to replicate those inequalities. Discourses in social justice theories or inclusive education debates which position the individual within society and its institutions as in some way requiring compensation in order to be included or involved in that society are making assumptions which are flawed and inherently exclusionary for those individuals. Atkins (2016, p. 6) questions the ability of HE and the wider society's ability to become inclusive, believing it to be illusory at best but at worst contributing to exclusion: "Inclusive practices and policies, however well intentioned, can create new and subtle forms of marginalisation through the structures and discourse intended to address exclusion."

In concurrence with the principles of Atkins's argument, Gibson (2015) develops a valuable point which concerns the way in which universities' strategies, policies and practices work to silence conversations about differences or otherness. Ahmed and

Swain's (2006) work on 'doing diversity' and the outward-facing 'diversity smile' that institutions put forward to meet government funding requirements and public expectations and assure everyone that they are not racist, sexist, homophobic or disablist. Gibson draws on this work and asserts that we may as well insert the 'inclusion smile' as this too is an outward-facing, simplistic view of inclusion which masks the messy and slippery nature of the concept. Policies and strategies that universities put forward as supporting inclusion and diversity are working to limit the conversation and mask the problematic nature of enacting the policy in practice. This outward face of inclusion would also include the previously outlined professional development texts from AdvanceHE on how to do IP, which attempt to give advice on what works. Gibson uses work from Slee (2013) and Allan (2010a) to support her argument that these self-help texts are simplistic.

2.4.2 Normalcy and deficit discourses

The concept of 'normalcy' is drawn on in much literature concerning inclusion and IP. As such, it is important for this doctoral research. It may be a useful concept for exploring and understanding the ways lecturers understand and negotiate the policy of IP. The weight of literature and evidence put forward that the concept is one which dominates society and cultures within universities and wider society is compelling, and its prevalence is accepted as an assumption in this research. The findings of this research may contribute to and extend knowledge of this concept as an underpinning of lecturers' understanding, as well as how it becomes operationalised, and help to develop deeper clarity on how educational norms in universities become replicated and reinforced. This section provides a discussion of the concept of normalcy and it goes on to explain how the concept necessarily leads to behaviours which contribute to deficit discourses.

Discourses around normalcy have their roots in the critical disability studies movement. Social constructions of what is 'normal' is outlined in respect to disability by Davis (2013, p.1):

> To understand the disabled body, one must return to the concept of the norm, the normal body… I would like to focus… on the construction of normalcy. I do this because the 'problem' is not the person with disabilities, the problem is the way that normalcy is constructed to create the 'problem' of the disabled person. (Davies, 2013, p.1)

Literature in this field identifies systematic biases inherent within HE institutions and the unconscious bias of academics who favour the 'normal' student as a barrier to comparable achievement, leading to the perpetuation of disablism. Treatment disabled students as abnormal, such as making individual adjustments to compensate for deficits, marks a return to the medical model of disability, despite many institutions declaring their adoption of practices based on the social model. There are many studies which present evidence that disabled students struggle with general pedagogic issues, such as the nuts and bolts of note taking, listening and writing in lectures, a lack of handouts and notes prior to lectures and general time management (Madriaga et al., 2011; Rowlett, 2011; Vickerman & Blundell, 2010). Importantly, Madriaga et al. (2010) conclude that all students struggle with their studies and would benefit from actions taken to help and support disabled students. This view supports the conclusions of Goodley (2007) who identifies that a "Too often, when we think about involving students in educational practices, we assume students to be able, productive, skilled, accountable individuals who are ready and willing to lead developments in the classroom." (2007, p.321). Madriaga's (2011) research clearly identifies a university context which reproduces ideas of the concept of normalcy, leading to "an everyday eugenics which heralds a non-disabled person without 'defects' or impairments, as the ideal norm" (Madriaga et al., 2011). For Slee and Cook (Slee & Cook, 1999), Goodley (2007), Gillborn (2010) and Madriaga et al. (2011), combating normalcy and rejecting a system that tries and fails to accommodate different groups in existing structures is the key if HE is to realise its contribution to transformative education and social justice responsibilities. For Giroux (2011), Freire (1970) and Goodley (2007), drawing on critical pedagogies to challenge normalcy through curriculum and teaching approaches is the way for universities and lecturers to achieve their social justice goals. This research is interested in the extent to which this is part of the lived experiences of lecturers in their everyday practice.

This doctoral research is also interested in how students are talked about by lecturers as an important indicator of the extent to which inclusion and IP are prevalent and operationalised. Literature in this area is critical of normative discourses. Atkins (2016) identifies evidence that the discourses of in/exclusion revolve around the differences and deficits of students and involve words which are prefaced with 'dis' and its negative connotations. Crucially important is the balance of power between

educational contexts and professionals and the individual students, as expressed through this negative deficit-constructed language. Reproduction of this negative discourse "contributes to the maintenance of the status quo in terms of societal views of disability and makes the journey towards full inclusion and social justice more difficult" (Atkins, 2016, p. 15). Atkins argues it is crucial to "interrogate practice" (2016, p. 16), to explore and challenge normative perceptions held by institutions and professionals as expressed through their professional discourse. In doing so she draws on Graham and Slee's (2008) notion that inclusionary policies assume that we should bring the 'others' into the interior, which is an entirely undesirable situation. Gibson (2015) supports the idea that discourses of deficit or difference perpetuate barriers within existing HE systems and society, preventing real change: "Thus, a misunderstanding and misrepresented form of 'inclusion' is practiced in education. 'Inclusion' becomes about attempts to induct that which is 'different' into already established forms and dominant institutional cultures." (2015, p. 878).

A similar picture is to found in an Australian context. O'Shea, Lysaght, Roberts and Harwood (2016) examine the discourses of lecturers' talk about social inclusion, finding that they are "entwined with deficit" (2016, p. 331) and connected to discourses about the "difficulty to enact inclusivity" and the "challenges of inclusivity" – despite all the university initiatives and strategies to include students in their education system. Two sources of the problems presented themselves: lecturers thought the students were deficient in the skills required for university, and secondly, the university was not responding to students' needs adequately. For O'Shea et al. (2016) an understanding of how academic staff perceive inclusivity was not only important but underresearched. Smit (2012) outlines the problematic deficit discourse which she sees as the dominant thinking in South African universities, asserting that this alienates students and "replicates the educational stratification of societies" (Smit,2012, p.369).

This thesis addresses this call for further research in an English context, and draws upon these concepts from literature. They have influenced the research questions which concern the understandings of lecturers in English universities and enable an exploration of the extent to which they may have become misunderstandings and misrepresentations of IP.

2.4.3 Discomfort around difference

Further informing and influencing this research was the extension of the two concepts outlined in previous sections: normalcy and deficit discourses. The critical idea formed in the literature was that there is discomfort felt by people around groups who are seen to be different from what they see as the norm. Gibson (2015) claims that inclusion as a rights-based policy has failed; her call for critical discussions in universities and with students about cultures of difference is a way forward to challenge the existing hegemonic position which is responsible for that failure. However, for these discussions to take place 'cultures of difference' need to be recognised. Recognition of inequality is an important element of a contemporary theory of social justice put forward by Fraser (Fraser & Honneth, 2003; Fraser, 2009). If we are to do something about inequality and difference in universities, then lecturers first must recognise these issues. The research questions in this thesis were developed to explore the nature and extent of this recognition amongst lecturers.

An interesting concept in relation to the conversations professionals have concerning dilemmas of difference (Johnson & Williams, 2014; Minow, 1990; Norwich, 2010) put forward by Gibson (2015) is to view conflict and struggle as requirements of inclusion dialogues. These are uncomfortable but necessary requirements for confronting and addressing conflict between those that are different from each other. Before we can have these conversations, we have to acknowledge and recognise the difference or the injustice. As Nancy Fraser (2003) points out in her theory of social justice, the problem needs to be recognised before people can be represented and the redistribution of social justice can occur.

Drawing on Slee and Cook's (1999, p. 272) assertion that "overcoming disablement and discrimination … is a political struggle between cultures of difference", Gibson identifies that conflict and frustration should be felt by participants in a struggle to hear each other's voices, especially when one party is part of an accepted privileged hegemony which promotes its own interests over those of others (Burke, 2012). This resonates with the recent work of (Blaisdell, 2018) which, through an action approach, highlights recent thought about the discomfort that white people in educational settings feel about having conversations about race and racism with people of colour. For Blasidell (2018) this conflict does not usually lead to productive conversations

which address racism. His research found that it leads to an end in the conversation, or that these discomforts – rather than the underlying problem of racism – become the prominent aspect. Moreover, critical race writers evidence the experience of the concept of discomfort of white people and the effect this has on productive debates about racism which become silenced or become about white-centric pain (Eddo-Lodge, 2018; Leibowitz, Bozalek, Rohleder, Carolissen, & Swartz, 2010). Leibotwitz et al. (2010) call for educational professionals to develop pedagogies of discomfort to challenge existing normative views.

Atkin's (2016, p.16) call for the "interrogation of practice" and Gibson's (2015, p. 885) argument that "space is needed for cultures of difference to be explored, for questions to be asked, political conversations to be held and for educators to reflect…", are key drivers for this research and have been fundamental in forming research questions which focus on practitioners and their experiences of policy and practice at the point of praxis, where they meet university structures and procedures. The exploratory research questions allow room to develop analytical frameworks which include explorations of lecturers' conversations for discourses of discomfort, deficit, power and normalcy.

2.5 Research on inclusive practice implementation

The professional motivation which prompted this research concerned an inquiry around how lecturers understood inclusion and IP, and how they engaged with university policies and practices for IP, with the goal to develop effective ways to encourage and inform academic development within my faculty and beyond. The literature discussed so far has developed an understanding of inclusion as an educational concept and a historical, political and legislative understanding of the development of inclusion and IP as a social justice concept. These are fundamental in getting to grips with what inclusion and IP means, but of professional practice interest were the operational definitions and articulations of IP, and critical perspectives and concepts related to rhetorical policy articulation, normalcy and deficit, and discourses of discomfort. These subjects offer guidelines for the research questions that were developed for this research. This next section of the literature review discusses the specific research which has been undertaken relating to the problematic implementation of IP in academic teaching and learning practice.

Whilst many studies have highlighted the ways in which students in disadvantaged groups experience teaching and learning activities, studies which proffer reasons for those problematic and negative experiences are geographically and temporally limited. The professional and academic knowledge which would help to understand this issue concerns the perspective of the lecturer and their teaching and learning practice. There are few studies which feature the experiences and voices of lecturers. More research in this area would help to inform us of the difficulties they face with IP and would deepen our knowledge and understanding with the aim of improving equality in student experiences and outcomes.

A theme within the literature relates to a pessimism – or at least a note of caution – that IP is going to be difficult for universities to achieve. Winter and Raw (2010) doubt whether inclusion is achievable in HE settings. Richards and Armstrong (2015, p. 3) put forward that "Diversity and inclusion are not issues that can simply be taught as subjects." This argument was supported by Allan (2010b) and Beauchamp-Pryor (2012) who indicate that, without the significant change advocated by Hockings (2010), May and Bridger (2010) and Ainscow (2006), inclusion of students with a disability is unlikely to be achieved. It could be concluded that, as disability is a prominent and long-standing part of the university consciousness, the chances of achieving inclusion for other groups of students is even more limited. It is an opportune time to revisit this scenario to examine whether progress has been made in the intervening years.

Two possible reasons for the lack of progress or the pessimism found in the literature seem to locate critical issues in either internal academic understandings and knowledge or externally in structures, cultures and constraints. Both themes are reflected in the development of the two key strands of the research aims in this study.

2.5.1 Academic resistance and knowledge

Gorard and Smith (2006) identified that whilst most HEIs and individual academics were supportive of equality principles and aware of the diversity of students' needs, little evidence existed for successfully adapted teaching practices. Similarly, Smith (2010) was sceptical about the willingness of academics to embrace IP, but found little evidence of resistance. However, her research found widespread acceptance of these equality principles, if not widespread practice at that time. Evidence of academic practitioners' positive attitudes to inclusivity and IP is found in some studies

(Claiborne, Cornforth, Gibson, & Smith, 2011; Fuller et al., 2004; Smith, M., 2010). These studies do not find that academics are resistant to IP or that they reject the principle of equality, but do find that there is widespread lack of understanding and knowledge leading to confusion, as Smith states (2010, p. 227), "Lecturing staff believe in the moral case for IP, although they do find difficulty with the actual implementation."

There is more evidence of a lack of effective academic practice from Reupert et al. (2010, p. 130), who indicate a mismatch between academic identification with inclusive values and their everyday practice: "While many are strong advocates for inclusive education, their practices demonstrate real shortcomings in terms of inclusive education, not all of which can, we believe be accounted for by institutional barriers." O'Donnell et al. (2012) identified a contradiction between academic acceptance of the principles of IP and "simultaneously held resistance to making changes to academic practices which would enact such principles" (2012, p. 71). In contrast, a later study found a slightly more positive finding related to the engagement of lecturers with conceptual or theoretical understandings of IP. Lecturers were found who "drew on multiple and, at times, disparate or conflicting theories" to explore inclusion and IP in education (Hemmings et al., 2013, p. 484). However, an important factor in their findings was that lecturers were engaged in scholarship concerning IP and made "significant intellectual investments" (Hemmings et al., 2013, p. 484) in their understanding and practice with students. This study did use participants from a teacher training course who had a legal responsibility to deliver IP and inclusion-based content, and this may explain the level of engagement found.

The gap between academic attitudes and values towards IP and actual practice is a theme which has been explored by several authors in other international contexts, with much the same results as the Australian studies. Lombardi, Vukovic and Sala-Bars (2015) compared academic attitudes from Spain, Canada and the United States, and found attitudes were positive towards inclusion – but difficulties presented themselves when academics found that attitudes did not translate into practice. Similar findings were found by Zhang et al. (2010) in the USA. One solution put forward by some proponents is to improve training of academics by universities (Hockings, Brett, & Terentjevs, 2012; Morgado, Cortes-Vega, Lopez-Gavira, Alvarez, & Morina, 2016).

These studies locate a barrier to adoption of policy within the techno-rational view of policy implementation which seeks to improve communication of policy goals. In particular, UDL as a model for inclusive approaches to teaching has been identified as having benefits for students (Lombardi et al., 2015; Hitch, Macfarlane & Nihill, 2015; Murray, Lombardi & Wren, 2011). However, evidence exists to show that academics are often not trained in or do not use UDL in their practice (Black, Weinberg, & Brodwin, 2015; Davies, Schelly, & Spooner, 2013). This theme, concerning the resistance or otherwise of lecturers to engage with IP, has been instrumental in my choice of focus and approach. It has framed and directed my gaze which seeks a more nuanced and deeper understanding of what lecturers know and talk about in relation to inclusivity in contemporary English universities.

2.5.2 Structures, cultures and constraints

When it comes to considerations about how much can lecturers do to achieve IP, it has been suggested by some authors that there are structural barriers to the agency of lecturers and professionals working in universities which prevent the implementation of inclusive policy (Borland & James, 1999; Riddell et al., 2007). Somewhat dated now, these studies highlight structural difficulties, such as decreases in institutional funding, increasing workloads and the prioritisation of research which Riddell (2007) appropriates to the increasing managerialist culture of UK universities. (Deaker et al., 2016) looked at academic resistance to changes in teaching and learning policy and finds it to be related to structural and cultural issues, pointing to pressures of increased drives for professionalism, accountability and research cultures as reasons why lecturers find it difficult to prioritise professional development of practice. These issues were similarly attributed to audit cultures related to neoliberalist cultures within HE by Allan (2010b). There is further evidence in a later study from Hemmings, Kemmis and Reupert (2013), that the extent to which a university can address inclusion is enabled and constrained by conditions beyond lecturer's control, and that transforming university inclusive education requires transforming those conditions as well as the lecturer's professional practice knowledge.

A key contribution to this research concerned the barriers or constraints to those intellectual understandings. Whilst some lecturers were able to work to establish IP within their scope of influence, most found existing arrangements constrained their IP.

This included physical forms, such as the configuration of teaching spaces and timetables and limiting discourses of what equity means – which prevent lecturers from making reasonable adjustments for individuals through assessment flexibility – and social predispositions to assume all students have similar circumstances and backgrounds, and therefore 'mainstream' capabilities. For Hemmings, "lecturers are not the sole architects of the conditions under which they teach" (Hemmings et al., 2013, p. 485), rather universities have a role and responsibility to act. Locating IP failure as a lecturer's problem (as is often the case within universities) seems to be misplaced.

O'Donnell et al. (2012; 2016) found strong evidence of institutional commitment to change for inclusion through university strategies and policy documentation, but also found evidence that lecturers were not aware of such policy documentation. Even when participants were aware, they expressed a view that finding time to engage with it was impossible. Further, the study found that staff had disengaged with policy documentation due to the volume of policies presented by the university and the rate at which they changed. The study concludes that May and Bridger's (2010) two-pronged continuum of inclusive universities is too simple and relies on change happening as an intellectual process based on academic curiosity and values.

The two themes identified in the literature inform the existing understanding of lecturers' experiences with IP, and are concerned with the tensions between academic identity, values and resistance, and the contextual structural and cultural barriers constraining practice within universities. An area of interest is developing for this thesis: how much power does a lecturer have to be able to develop and adapt their practice to meet the diverse demands of inclusion? The findings are explored with this question in mind.

2.6 Summary

In summary, the key points arising in the literature related to the complex challenge of meeting social justice policy goals of inclusion for HE which have become part of socially desirable and legislatively driven imperatives. HE as a sector was found to have made commitments to the goal of inclusion and as part of this to have developed IP to help achieve it.

Literature was outlined which gave operational definitions and policy guidance aimed at helping professionals in universities to develop their practice to be inclusive individually. These were established at the time of legislative drivers almost a decade ago (HM Government, 2010). The challenge for lecturers or anyone trying to work with social inclusion was found in the wider educational debate concerning the nature of inclusion and IP. As a concept and as a practice inclusion is fluid and controversial. Historically, after a long period of social justice being seen as equality of opportunity in the UK (Smith, 2012) rather than an individual right, there is now a tendency for governments and universities to draw on rights-based approaches to social justice to pursue inclusion through the delivery of an individual's right to a fair HE experience, as enshrined in the Equality Act (2010). Critical perspectives were found in the literature, which saw this as an inadequate response (Atkins, 2016; Gibson, 2015; Madriaga et al., 2011) that does not support students sufficiently to be able to achieve their potential within a normative-dominated HE system.

This is further complicated when the debate is located within the literature, which demonstrates the influence of neoliberal ideologies on the ways in which universities prioritise and plan their policies and processes. Marketised audit cultures (Allan, 2010b; Ball, 2013; Brown & Carasso, 2012; O'Shea et al., 2016) are obstacles for inclusion and more socially motivated policies. The key debate was seen to be concerned with the dilemma of difference (Minow, 1990). Critical concepts which illuminated how we are dealing with difference in HE identified concerned rhetorical policy implementation, where the stated university goal did not match real practice in the HE sector (Ahmed, 2007; Bolt, 2004); 'deficit' discourses which were found to dominate how universities approach inclusion were seen as a continuation of *othering* of groups of students perpetuating inequality (Atkins, 2016; Cameron, 2016); the discomforting nature of discourses around inclusion for educators meant dialogues about inclusion and IP did not occur in everyday professional practice (Gibson, 2015). Such literature emphasises the complexity and problematic nature of inclusion, and how it plays out in operational contexts in universities requires further interrogation and research.

Literature which highlights the problems of inclusion in operational contexts for HE students is substantial, especially around the experiences of disabled students.

Research which has attempted to understand how IP is experienced and operationalised by lecturers has been sparse. The literature here identifies two concepts: firstly, the tension between academic identities which, whilst supporting and valuing inclusion and IP, have entrenched values which see supporting students pastorally to help them achieve their potential as working against the principle of autonomic learning (O'Donnell et al., 2012). Secondly, the tension felt by lecturers between their ability and power to make changes to their teaching practice, and the structural constraints of the university context which acts as a barrier and restricts their academic creativity and professional judgement. This tension is explored by this thesis in an English context, updating and extending knowledge almost a decade after the legislative requirement formalised the principle of inclusion for HE.

Little work has been done which gives a rich and nuanced up-to-date picture of the lived experience of the lecturer – particularly in the UK context – as they engage with and negotiate inclusive policy. Critically there is still much to learn that could enhance and further our knowledge about the way academic staff work in England. Enriching this picture may help inform and guide UK universities and policy makers more accurately on how to move forward to reduce inequality.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores my underlying philosophical position and outlines my ontological and epistemological orientations in relation to the research topic. The aim of the study is to explore the understandings and experiences of university lecturers within their professional structural context and develop understandings of the relationship between the two. My choices have been made according to the aims of the study and my philosophical beliefs, resulting in a methodologically coherent thesis. Outlining these beliefs makes explicit the assumptions I have used at every stage of my research design and implementation. This chapter describes my approach and considerations to help my reader understand my choices. My epistemological and ontological approach draws upon critical realism (CR) which I consider a useful approach to answer my research questions.

The subsequent choices relating to the methods used (concerning the data collection process, ethical considerations and the data analysis process) are then discussed fully. The importance of reflexivity in research is acknowledged (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Mason, 2002; Patton, 2014) and I have sought to give a reflective account throughout this chapter, with a further focus on some reflective moments in section 3.12. My doctoral research strived to emulate the CR researchers Ritchie et al (2014, p.23) whose goals are "to conduct research that is well designed and well-conducted, and to generate well-founded and trustworthy evidence", and this chapter will demonstrate how I believe I have achieved this.

3.2 Research aims and objectives

My wider research purpose is to inform practice in relation to inclusion and inclusive practice (IP) in higher education (HE). I am contributing to this through an exploration of how IP as a policy is enacted and understood by lecturers in English universities. My aim is to understand through exploration 'what is going on here' at the ground level in universities, to help work out 'what can be done' to improve policy enactment to help reduce inequalities felt across the student body.

In relation to IP policy in English universities, the research objectives are to explore the,

- experiences of academic teaching staff as they negotiate their teaching and learning practice; and the
- relationship between academic teaching staff and university policies, structures and processes.

Two research questions are posed:

1. To what extent do academic teaching staff understand, interpret and implement IP?
2. In what ways do academic teaching staff engage with university policies and processes aimed at supporting the development of IP?

The outcomes of the research are knowledge and recommendations to help university leaders, managers, and those whose role it is to promote and support IP to make effective decisions to inform the enactment of inclusion-related policies. However, it is not the intention of this research to produce a toolkit of hints and tips for lecturers to enhance their IP. The issue seems more serious than that. The literature review demonstrated that advice for inclusive teaching practice has existed for almost a decade now (Bridger & Shaw, 2012; May & Bridger, 2010; Wray, 2013) and with some success, but it has failed to achieve the broad changes required to deliver the policy goals of equality. This doctoral thesis seeks to go deeper than this surface appreciation of IP to uncover what may be happening to generate these persistent inequalities.

3.3 Ontological and epistemological orientation

Danermark et al. (2005, p.2) suggest that research which involves the social world is moving away from a restrictive ontological and epistemological dualism towards a 'both-and' approach to realism and relativism, based upon the philosophical underpinnings of the 20th century critical realist movement (CR). This doctoral research draws on this school of thought to approach my research questions. My research questions seek to focus on individuals' experiences and understandings of the concept of IP, based upon my epistemological position which takes a relativist socially constructed approach to knowledge about the social world. However, I am also interested in how lecturers' professional practices are shaped by their structural contexts and positions within their universities, which assumes a degree of realist ontological acceptance of the existence of social structures independent of human conception or construction. My research approach therefore does not sit squarely in

either realist or relativist camps – but it draws from and has affinity with many of the key principles of CR. CR has the potential to provide an answer to the realism-relativism debate as Danermark et al. suggest,

> The answer which critical realism provides us with is that there exists both an external world independently of human consciousness, and at the same time a dimension which includes our socially determined knowledge about reality. (Danermark et al., 2005, p.6)

Archer (2016) and other CR theorists refer to these two positions – viewing the external world as real and appreciating the social determination of our knowledge about it – as ontological realism and epistemological relativism, respectively. Ontological realism views the social world as real through adoption of a position that distinguishes between the real, actual and empirical levels in the stratification of the social world (Fletcher, 2017; Jessop, 2005). Often described with an iceberg metaphor (Fletcher, 2017) the 'real'-level events form the bottom stratification and refer to generative structures and casual mechanisms' "tendencies or countertendencies" (Jessop, 2005, p. 41). Tendencies can be identified in empirical data, such as through coded themes in qualitative research (Fletcher, 2017). The next level refers to 'actual', which denotes events that may result from those generative structures and may be observed or not. Finally, forming the tip of the iceberg is the 'empirical' level, which refers to events that are observed and experienced through human interpretation. This 'open system' is fluid and subject to all human action, which is constantly changing (Danermark et al., 2005, p.2; Fleetwood, Brown, & Roberts, 2002). Importantly, CR underlines the relational nature between these strata, and pays attention to the importance of uncovering these generative mechanisms through social research grounded in epistemological relativism. This explanation of CR is particularly useful for understanding my approach to the doctoral inquiry. My doctoral inquiry places importance on exploring and to an extent explaining the seen and unseen professional understanding and practice of lecturers in relation to IP; this has inevitably directed attention to the structures and domains in which they operate.

I have approached the study with the notion that there may be deeper structures, events and patterns which are not directly observable, or that may be different to how they appear. I have sought to look for causal mechanisms or tendencies which may deepen our understanding of the relationships between real-level events which may

be an individual's accounts of their understandings of inclusion, actual unobservable events which may relate to how lecturers experience structural barriers to their practice and observable events such as university policies and strategies. The methodological choice of qualitative in-depth interviews helped to uncover those individual accounts and unobservable events. CR puts forward a note of caution that our knowledge is always fallible and we can never fully know the truth about the social world, but we can know situational, historically reliant, multiple perspectives of our participants as they experience the world. It is these key types of information which will help to answer my research questions.

3.3.1 Structure, agency and internal conversations

This research is orientated, to explore what Scott sees as, "The essential ontological relation which educational researchers need to examine is the relationship between structure and agency or enablement and constraint" (Scott, 2000, p. 3). Concepts of enablement or constraints were prevalent in the literature presented in sections 2.3 and 2.4 of chapter two and were an important element of this research particularly forming a picture of how lecturer's agency may be constrained in their practice of IP . The role of human agency is significant in CR. Emphasis is placed upon how human agency may contribute to transforming and reproducing existing structures and social processes (Fairclough, 2005). I have drawn extensively on Archer's form of CR, which sees CR as "concerned with the nature of causation, agency, structure, and relations," (Archer et al., 2016, p.3). My research questions sought to explore the interrelationship between the human agency of lecturers within and between the structures in which they work. CR puts forward that research should seek a "thick and robust account of causation, structures and processes which are able to do justice to the complexity and heterogeneity of the social world." (Archer et al., 2016, p.4). The approach I have taken in my research sought deeper understandings of the internal conversations lecturers have about inclusion and IP and their subsequent 'modus vivendi' (Archer, 2003, p.27). Critical realists prefer to retroductively return to data to form theoretically possible explanations of what is going on, put forward their plausible accounts, and consider their significance when viewed historically.

3.3.3 Plausibility and change as a purpose for research

A key principle put forward by Bhaskar (1979), CR's most closely associated philosopher, is that the purpose of research is to develop understanding in order to bring about change. Archer refers to this as "cautious ethical naturalism" (2016, p.1) which involves an orientation that researchers should be critical of the social world as it is exists through examination of the power relations, historical and value-relevant contexts which are part of that world in order to move towards transforming it. This has resonance with my research. A key feature of this doctoral research is to develop a greater understanding of how inclusion is enacted within the institutions or social worlds of universities with the aim to inform our understanding in order to improve equality, and the choice of qualitative in-depth interviews helps to achieve that. Archer further suggests that all research becomes part of our knowledge and is judged on its plausibility rather than its truth:

> The goal of any investigation is the creation and relative stabilization of a descriptive or explanatory account which provides a plausible model of our object of inquiry. (Archer, et al., 2016, p.3)

By adding to the body of knowledge surrounding inclusion and IP as part of a social justice agenda in universities, I make a claim to developing a story which can be judged by others on its plausibility for understanding more about the mechanisms behind the persistent inequalities that are exhibited in such institutions. I was conscious of the need to produce research which has a persuasive influence over university policy makers, leaders and managers and adopting the CR approach will help to produce findings that concern a practical professional reality, are plausible and relatable to HE and that are not directly observable.

3.4 The research design

The epistemological relativist position within the CR group of theories suggests a social determination of knowledge of the ontological world which we can observe. This research takes this epistemological position and seeks to explore the socially determined knowledge held by lecturer's in relation to the research questions concerned with understandings and experiences of IP in the context of the structures of their respective universities. It seeks to uncover and develop deeper understandings of what is going on in the unobservable 'real' social world to elicit the multiple realities

or truths of lecturer's experiences. The research assumptions are that the multiple truths held by lecturers are contingent on individual values, English post- 1992 university contexts and experiences of participants and as they are not apparent in the 'empirical' observable world the research design must uncover those truths. This meant that an empathetic research space was necessary. I recognised the sensitivity of the topic including its emotionally charged nature which raised the possibility for participants of confronting one's discriminatory practices potentially altering their responses if fear of scrutiny and exposure are felt. These complex sensitivities needed to be considered in the development of the research design. Whilst quantitative methods are often employed by research drawing on a particular form of CR (Pring, 2000) this methodology was not considered for this research because it was thought it would not overcome the problem of sensitivity discussed above or enable the internal conversations of participants to be heard. My epistemological position leans on relativism and the social construction of reality which requires a qualitative research design. The ontological and epistemological positions of CR are more closely associated with the benefits and goals afforded by qualitative research aimed at eliciting more emic accounts of social reality as sought by the aims of this research (Danemark et al., 2005; Roberts, 2014, Azzopardi & Nash, 2014). Qualitative semi-structured in-depth interviews were chosen as the most appropriate tool to uncover " thick and robust accounts" (Archer et al, 2016, p.3) in order to answer the research questions as supported by similar studies in this field (Kemmis, et al.,2005; Lawrie et al, 2017; Messiou, 2017; Hemmings et al, 2016).

3.5 Ethical frameworks and considerations

The research was planned in accordance with the principles outlined in the British Educational Research Association (BERA) Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2018). Ethical approval for the pilot and main study was sought and gained via the Converis system in place at my host university, and the research complied with institutional guidelines.

This involved consideration of procedural approaches to select and brief the participants, obtaining informed consent, debriefing and the right to withdraw from the study. The principle of voluntary informed consent was followed and provided the participant with written information, via email, on the research prior to gaining their

acceptance to participate. Once the participant accepted I verbally discussed the information with the participants at the start of each interview. Full information about their right to withdraw from the research, how to do that and the time limit for withdrawal was given in writing prior to the interview and verbally discussed at the same time. Confidentiality and anonymity were preserved for participants through the anonymisation of interviews after transcription, and participants' data was stored under different names which were used in the write up of the findings. A data management plan was part of the institutional ethics policy and required secure storage of participant's data on dedicated space for research.

The anonymity of the institution was maintained by not revealing its name in presentation of the thesis or other publications of findings, and removing any identifying features from interview transcripts. The confidentiality of the research and the guarantee of anonymity for participants was made clear prior to commencement of the research verbally and in writing. A data management plan is in place for the research in accordance to research regulations at my host university. Examples of all research documentation are included in Appendix 3.

It is widely accepted that ethical frameworks, whilst important for researchers, are fraught with tensions and difficulties when the researcher comes to apply them in practice (Bryman,2016; Cohen et al.,2011; Ritchie, et al.,2014). My research posed some tensions between the requirements of ethical frameworks and the aims of the research. These tensions are represented in the next section as ethical challenges that I identified during the research design, and I discuss how I made plans to develop a research methodology to overcome those challenges.

3.5.1 Identification of ethical challenges

3.5.2 Informed consent

One of the challenges for this research was to engage participants sufficiently for their answers to be honest, whilst being mindful that this may lead to information being offered which might identify malpractice. The sensitivity of the research topic has been discussed in this methodology chapter. These issues brought some ethical tensions when I considered applying the generally accepted ethical principles of such respected organisations as the BERA. I felt that revealing the purpose of the research and the research questions to the participants before they consented to the interview would

introduce a high degree of bias into the findings. If I told participants the research is about their understandings of IP policy and they were unaware of the policy or its meaning, the temptation might be to not participate in the research, therefore introducing a bias to my participants, or worse researching the meaning of the term and policy – therefore changing their understanding before the interview. Cohen et al. (2011) discuss this issue as a deception, and suggest that it can be justified on the grounds that the research has a social benefit and "that the deception prevents any bias from entering the research" (Cohen et al., 2011, p.95). Being actively aware (Kelman, 1967) of the predicament and considering the costs of this deception to my participants is part of taking an ethical approach. I concluded that the deception was justified on the grounds that knowledge which answered my research questions relied upon natural, true accounts from participants about their understanding of IP. My participants were given information about the study which talked about the study in general descriptive terms, as suggested by Plummer (2001). An example of this is included in Appendix 3.

3.5.3 Avoiding malfeasance

Through the interview process there was a risk that participants were made aware of their lack of professional knowledge and their potentially discriminatory practices and felt emotionally harmed by this. I considered this prior to the research, and took steps to have material about IP available if any participant asked for help with this policy. No participant did this, although some did say that they were now going to read around the subject and were made more aware by this research. The pilot study raised some issues about the style of interview questions and my delivery of them, as addressed in the main study. I became aware of the impact these questions were having on participants and took steps to soften the approach. I am confident that, rather than harm participants, I encouraged reflection. I have included a case in my interview reflection (see section 3.12 for more details) which highlights this issue.

Exposure of malpractice by participants was considered, and I decided that any disclosure of malpractice would not be reported to any institution. A non-disclosure of malpractice statement was made part of the participant information, and I emphasised my code of anonymity and confidentiality through my data management procedures

and in the presentation of findings. An exception to this would be made, in the unlikely event that incidents of abuse or harm to students were disclosed.

3.5.4 Confidentiality and anonymisation

As my unit of analysis for this research was individual lecturers, there was no requirement to involve the relevant universities in seeking permission for the research to go ahead. Nevertheless, my process of anonymisation of participants and my commitment to confidentiality extended to the universities where the participants worked. My university ethical committee was very keen to question my intentions and procedures to ensure that the universities where the participants worked could not be identified either explicitly or by a process of deduction. To this end I recruited participants from several universities. Information that could identify a university, such as names of faculties or departments, subjects or module names, have not formed part of this research or thesis.

3.6 Qualitative interviews

I chose in-depth semi-structured interviews as my research tool. As a lone researcher I faced constraints of time and budget, which inevitably influenced my choice of method. In these situations, many lone researchers choose to interview as a relatively fast way to gather insight into a problem (Middlewood, Coleman, & Lumby, 1999). An interview, or 'inter-view' as Kvale (1996) prefers to call them, is a method grounded in human experience and entails the meeting of viewpoints. They are more than everyday conversations (Dyer, 1995). Qualitative interviewing could take different forms, my interview approach is akin to Morrison's (1993) conceptualisation of interpretative research interviews which are characterised by word based subjective conversations with open ended questioning allowing respondents to create their own responses. I approached the interviews as an opportunity to explore what I did not know about my respondents, to foreground what my participants want to say in the way that they understand it. CR and the social construction of multiple realities was underpinned the research design here. I designed my interview tool to enable meaningful responses to emerge from my participants responses with a framework of questions based upon key research areas of interest related to my research questions to guide those responses. Although the research questions formed the interview questions outlined the schedule remained as open and inductive as possible. As Keith

Morrison puts it “we only know what we are looking for when we have found it!” (Cohen et al., 2011, p.414). My design was based on a semi-structured interview, employing a guide approach (Patton, 2014) In my adoption of this research method I aimed to achieve an approach outlined by Rubin (1995) that interviewing requires “a systematic effort to really hear and understand what people tell you”(Rubin, 1995, p.17). The next section considers that systematic effort and outlines how I developed my research tool and applied it in the field.

3.7 Developing an interview protocol

I have discussed that I took a mostly inductive approach to the interview process. However, I cannot claim to be truly and completely inductive as I framed my interview questions with the concepts which were important for this research and its aims: understandings of IP as a policy by actors within structural contexts; and the idea of barriers to practice. This “thematized” (Kvale, 1996 p. 88) the interview schedule as a starting point for the interview conversation. The benefit of this was that it helped produce the right kind of data to help answer my research questions. The pilot study helped to sense-check the interview schedule and some changes to the order and style of questions were made after the pilot. The pilot study is discussed in the following section of this chapter.

The interview schedule that I used is outlined in Table 3. Ritchie et al. (2014) suggests a staged flow as important for managing the unpredictability of the social interview situation. The order of questions commenced at Stage 1, with introductory scene setting and administrative questions, followed by Stage 2 for an initial discussion of the lecturer’s career history which served the function of developing a rapport and relaxing the participant into the interview, with the more challenging questions left until later in the schedule. Stage 3 involves the core of the interview questions and took the longest time to work through, whilst Stage 4 was important to review and summarise and allow for time to check for accuracy with participants.

Table 3 The research interview schedule (using a suggested approach from Ritchie, et al.,2014, p.150)

Research focus area	Interview questions
Stage 1: Introduction and context setting *Introduction to research area – study and participant introduction*	Go through participant information sheet, consent forms, general information required. Emphasise that there are no correct or right answers. I am interested in your opinions and what you have to say only. It is okay if you want to say you do not know about something that I ask about.
Stage 2: Easy opening questions, surface level *Personal career history of participant*	Tell me a little about your teaching history, how has it developed? What are key important issues to you in your teaching, working with students?
Stage 3: Core part/moving from general to specific/in depth *Policy communication* Enabling technique – policy identification and ranking Location of IP in university policy landscape Understanding and awareness of IP	What are the key strategic policies/directives for your university/faculty that impact on your academic practice? Flip chart and Post-It Note exercise Thinking about equality and inclusion, what government policies or advice are you aware of or conscious of that have affected teaching practice?

Research focus area	Interview questions
Understandings and definitions of inclusive practice *Experiences of IP in relation to teaching practice*	How do you understand the term IP? What does it mean to you? Are there any particular types of students it relates to? Thinking about IP, what does 'being inclusive' mean in your teaching? Can you give any examples of your experiences with students with issues covered by inclusivity? How do you approach/achieve IP in your teaching?
Interactions with university structures related to IP	Do you use academic development resources/training etc. to support the development of your teaching? In what ways does your university communicate things to do with IP policy to you?
Identification of barriers to implementing IP	Have you experienced any barriers/issues/problems regarding implementing IP? Are you concerned about being inclusive?
Stage 4: Winding down/summarising/what happens next	Would you like to go back to anything that we have talked about?
Summarise and anything to add	Does anything occur to you about this area that has not been covered in this interview and you would like to say?

Stage 3 of the process included an enabling activity which is discussed in the following section. Prompts and probes were not planned but were used during the interviews and normally involved asking the participant to tell the interviewer a little more about that issue. I often asked if participants could explain a little more or if we could go back to talk about an issue that I felt needed further explanation. As can be seen in this excerpt from an interview with Anya – a new lecturer who was experiencing difficulties in being able to develop her own style and approach to IP because of her position in the 'module teaching hierarchy' employed in her university, which involved a tripartite team of module leader, lecturer and seminar tutor.

Figure 1 An excerpt from Anya's interview transcript

Anya (Participant)	And all other seminar tutors, they've been teaching this module for numbers of years, while I was a brand-new person. I needed that extra support and guidance. And the materials were delivered to me last minute. So, it was really stressful and I don't think I was given enough support.
Karen (Researcher)	You said earlier that one of the modules, you were thrown in at the deep end and it was a new module. Were you involved in the development of the materials or the module or the development of the...
Anya	No.
Karen	Lecture schedule or what the content was?
Anya	No, absolutely nothing. No. I was just being told that this is what we are going to do. This is how it has to be.

I was keen to understand more about Anya's involvement in the development of teaching materials, so I prompted her to say whether she had an opportunity to take part in pedagogic activities. This area of data was to become an interesting and emergent code as it transpired that lecturers do not always feel in control of their teaching practice, and therefore their agency for teaching with IP principles is often limited and reliant on colleagues who *are* in control of curriculum content, lecture and seminar material and assessment tasks.

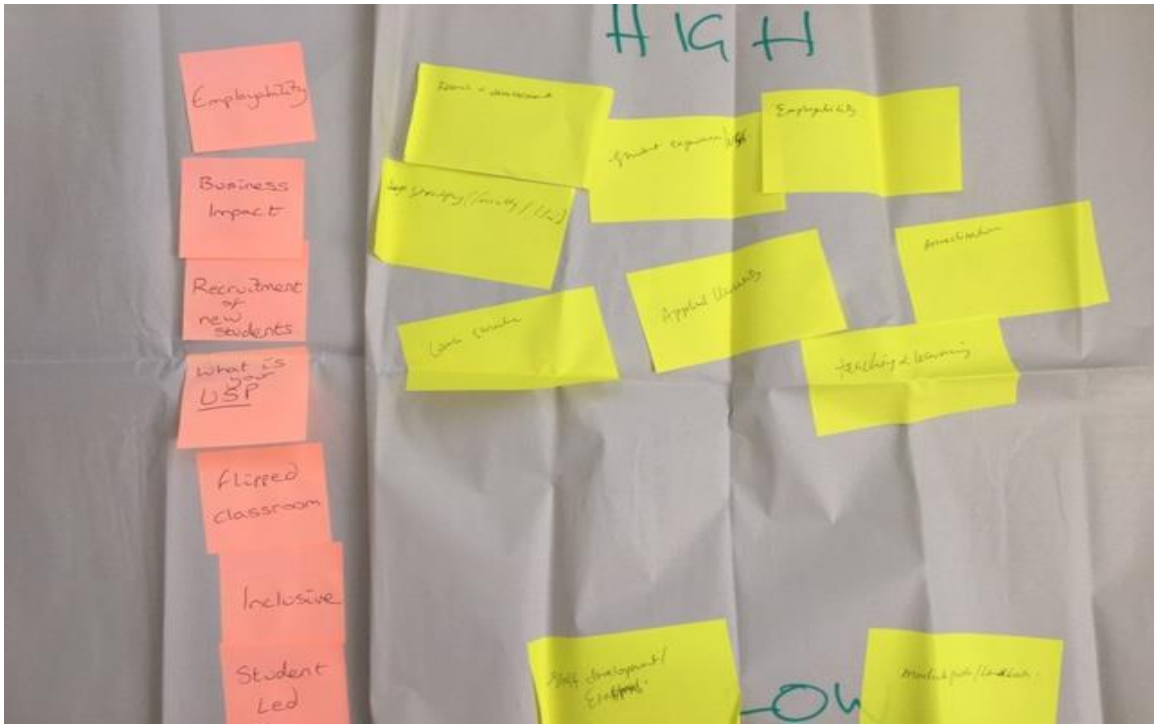
The unpredictable nature of the socially constructed inter-view (Kvale, 1996) meant that, despite my well-thought out interview schedule, things did not always go to plan. Participants sometimes gave full answers which flowed into other stages of the schedule. My approach here was to follow the conversation with the participant, and

so changes to the schedule were made spontaneously. Small changes to how questions were phrased and ordered were an inevitable part of the interview process and acceptable within my research approach (Arksey & Knight, 1999; Breakwell, 2000; King & Horrocks, 2010; Qu & Dumay, 2011).

3.7.1 Enabling techniques

Earlier in this chapter I discussed the sensitive elements of this research and how I designed my research to overcome this problem. Further to this point, I designed my interviews with an enabling technique (King & Horrocks, 2010) to stimulate discussion and allow participants to have some thinking time to enable deeper reflection. It is a useful technique to "surface underlying constructs" (King & Horrocks, 2010, p.162). I used coloured notes for participants to identify university policies which they felt were most important in their everyday professional lives. I left the room to reduce the pressure on participants. Once I returned, we discussed the meanings of what they had written on the notes and the relative importance of each policy. Participants ranked them on a flipchart according to their own *felt* scale of importance. An example of this is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 2 Photograph of policy identification and ranking enabling exercise



The benefits of this exercise were that it stimulated participants' thoughts, generated discussion of participant-led topics and enabled me to move the focus of discussion

from the general domain to the specific focus of IP policy as part of their wider understanding of key policies affecting their teaching practice.

3.8 Reflections and lessons learnt from conducting a pilot study

The purpose of the pilot study was to test the suitability of the interview method to elicit sufficient and appropriate data from participants. Ethical approval was sought and given for three semi-structured interviews with known contacts within the university where I worked in June 2018. This process was invaluable in improving my research design through my choice of recruitment method, the design of my method and my interviewing skills as a researcher. I used this experience to strengthen the resulting research tools that I developed.

My pilot study participants offered very detailed and honest accounts, possibly because of pre-existing positive relationships which reduced any power imbalances. They offered very specific answers which I felt had been prepared to fit with their perceptions and previous knowledge of my professional role. Although I was keen to avail myself of the benefits of being an insider and developing an emic understanding, I needed to create some impartial distance and recruit participants that were not aware of my interests and roles.

The pilot study helped me to refine my interview schedule of discussion topics and questions. During the pilot interviews it appeared that questions which tested participants' knowledge of policies related to inclusion made participants uncomfortable. Questions based on knowledge can be threatening, as Patton (2014) warns. To mitigate this and follow my ethical code to do no harm, I considered a softer phrasing style, and changed the sequence of questions for the main study, to ensure that a rapport could develop.

During the pilot interviews I often became cast in the role of 'expert'. My pilot study participants would ask me if they 'had got that right' and often said, 'well, *you* know about these things.' I did know about *these things* but for this research I wanted to know about what *they* knew about *these things.* I was keen to minimise the power imbalance that may occur during my research and added some more phrases to my pre-interview briefing notes to emphasise that I was interested in what my participants had to say and that there were no right answers.

This experience caused me to reflect on how I should deal with this issue during my research interviews. Should I step in to offer my knowledge? By doing so I would offer my approval or disapproval to their responses, which many authors advise against (Arksey & Knight, 1999; Hannabuss, 1996; Ritchie, et al.,2014) preferring instead for an active listening approach to interviewing to maintain the interview as a comfortable, non-threatening encounter. I decided my policy would be to reiterate that the research was concerned with what my participants understood or felt, and that there was no right answers in this field. There were many times that I had to fall back on this stock phrase during the research, and I was grateful to have considered how I would deal with it beforehand.

3.9 Recruitment of participants

This study included interviews with 19 participants who were full time lecturers in post 1992 English universities. The participants were of central importance as protagonists in the story I wanted to tell. As discussed previously, an important tenant of CR gives prominence to understanding the internal conversations of human agents (Archer, 2003) and as such it was important in this research to foreground the voices of lecturers to give the best opportunity to hear what lecturers in universities had to say. A non-probability sample was sought in line with CR principles seeking plausible rather than generalisable accounts of participants. This necessarily required a purposive approach to participant selection which “professes no representativeness” (Thomas, 2013, p.137).

The parameters of the study were set to include lecturers in English universities whose substantive employment contracts involved significant teaching responsibilities which were described as over 75 per cent of their workload. Lecturers who had a management role or were working on principal lecturer pay scales were not included in this study, although those who had organisational roles (such as module leaders) and course leaders were included. Length of experience teaching in HE was not a criteria for inclusion, other than that lecturers with less than two years teaching experience were not included in the study, as they may not have had sufficient time to experience fully the issues I was interested in. Lecturers who were employed on a part-time basis or on a temporary contract were not included. I considered the policy experiences of part-time and casual workers and their negotiation of IP and

anticipated that this may be very different to full-time lecturers. Full-time lecturers would have more in-depth experience of 'being' a lecturer, and therefore could contribute to answering my research questions more fully. They also had more time and access to engage with academic development resources and policy events, which was a key part of the research questions. The consequences of being a part-time or casual academic are a partial involvement in the academic teaching arena (Brown, Yasukawa, & Goodman, 2008; Leathwood & Read, 2020). It often means that these workers do not form part of module leadership teams and therefore do not have a high degree of agency to react to or act upon policy. I acknowledge that this could be an important issue and the realities of these types of academics are important areas for future research as identified in the final chapter.

Importantly, I wanted to broaden the study to a wider application recognising that to focus on one institution may mean that the findings are limited and only plausible for that organisation (Trowler, 1998). This was the case in previous studies involving lecturers' experiences of inclusion and IP which had been limited to a single-university context (Bunbury, 2018; Hemmings, Kemmis, & Reupert, 2013; O'Donnell, 2016). Therefore, participants were not limited to one particular university, but the sampling method led to the inclusion of lecturers from post-1992 universities affording a possible limitation of the pertinence of the findings to similar institutions rather than the range of universities found in the English HE sector. Three universities were represented in this study. My subsequent choice of recruitment strategy provided a range of identities and a variety of teaching career journeys, and I felt that this enriched and enhanced the findings. The participants are outlined in Appendix 2. A range of academic teaching experience can be seen from 3 years to 25 years. Participants were also asked informally if they would identify with a particular ethnicity and the mix of self-proffered identities show only two participants who identify as black British, five white Europeans', and twelve white British. The research aims were exploratory rather than comparative and findings were intended to form the basis of further research. Further aspects of participant identity such as disability, gender, sexuality, age were not established. This may be seen as a limitation of the study's findings and is discussed in Chapter 5.

I chose to use a snowballing recruitment strategy (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p.174).

Snowball sampling would enable me to access lecturers outside my work environment and to explore sensitive and personal practice issues by helping develop a relationship which I hoped would engender trust and foster openness revealing internal conversations of participants. Both are considered benefits of snowball sampling, as identified by Cohen et al. (2011) and Browne (2005).

The participant stemma (snowballing scheme) can be seen diagrammatically in Appendix 1. The diagram shows the first-level contacts which formed a gatekeeper role. These were non-participants who suggested lecturers who might be willing to participate in my research. The resulting elongated snowball demonstrates a successful effort to have a range of lecturers from different faculties and universities and demonstrates enough diversity to mitigate criticisms of self-selecting bias. Noy (2008) further points out that an elongated snowball can lead to very different types of participants at the end of the chain of contact from the beginning. This helps to overcome the problem of the influence of initial contacts on further contacts. It also mitigates an issue in qualitative research relating to the effect of power relations between the researcher and the researched. As I did not know any of my participants personally or professionally, this distance meant that participants were not aware of my teaching specialisms or research interests, helping to reduce the "asymmetrical power relations between researcher and participants" (Cohen et al., 2011, p.159).

3.10 The interview process

The interviews took place in numerous locations, but always in a private space to minimise interruptions and distractions. Each interview took at least 30 minutes of set up, up to 30 minutes of pre-interview talk, at least 60 minutes of interview and then 30 minutes of post-interview administration. Therefore each participant interview represents a 3-hour commitment. Two or three interviews during one day was the maximum that could be scheduled. Interviews were exhausting and time to process and recover was also needed. In short, the timescale for interviewing was underestimated, but I felt it important to take time with this important stage. It required more than one trip to different interview locations, which further extended the data collection period. Data collection commenced in October 2018 and finished in March 2019.

Interviews were recorded using two devices, and written field notes were made immediately after the interview to record non-verbal data which may aid future detailed contextual and situational interpretations of the texts.

In the field notes I included a description of how I interpreted the participant was behaving during the interview, what I observed of their body language, tone, style of talking, etc. I also recorded any reflective points that had occurred to me, including how I felt the interview had gone. The advantage of this was that it enabled me, when I was reading the transcriptions of the interviews, to look back and remember how data that I was trying to code was delivered. This enabled a deeper understanding of the participants' responses, which I believe improved my interpretations of

Participant Ilya

Figure 3 Excerpt from field note memo created after an interview with Ilya

Very nervous at the start of the interview. Seems very anxious to please and commented that they worried that they will say 'something wrong'. I tried to reassure.
This participant is talking extensively in the interview - at pains to get it right, say the right thing. At times I feel this was to cover up for a lack of knowledge.
Questions about policy and teaching application - Became anxious and a little uncomfortable when could not answer the questions or did not understand them.
Kept talking on the same point, repeating himself.
There is constant shuffling in the chair and it feels like a defensive body language. Arms folded, sat back in chair.
I feel uncomfortable in this interview.

participants' meaning-making and the credibility of my research. Using NVivo, field notes can be typed and attached as memo files to each participant's transcript, allowing for them to be open and available during the coding process. Figure 4 shows an excerpt from a memo written after interviewing Ilya. I was able to use this memo to better understand the comments Ilya makes in the transcript. He is acutely aware of his lack of knowledge about IP and what it means for his teaching, and his long statements, read in the context of his discomfort, contributed to the development of codes relating to understandings of IP and the emotional affective response that thinking about IP has on lecturers.

The interviews were closed by asking if the participant wanted to return to add anything to any of the discussions. My ethical protocol included an opportunity for

respondents to request their interview be amended or withdrawn up to two weeks after the interview. Participants were also given the opportunity to view their transcripts, and were contacted by email to ask if they would like to do so once the transcribed files were available. I was disappointed that no participant requested to read their transcript, however a number have requested a copy of the thesis after it has been examined. I deduce from this that participants felt they gave true and honest accounts in the interviews and are happy for those to stand on the record.

3.11 Reflections on the interview process

Generally, the interviews were an enjoyable experience for me. I felt privileged that my colleagues in the field shared their thoughts and some of their internal conversations with me. My participants were also positively affected. Greta (Northern University) commented "I really enjoyed it, thank you". An example of how the interview prompted reflection by participants on the issues raised comes from Ilya, who said, "You have made me think about these issues now. I think I might need to go back and do some thinking." Zeyd expressed some self-reflection after the interview had finished but the tape was still recording: "When you asked me that, I thought, 'What do I do? Do I think about it?' Yes, I do. It makes me think and now it makes me think, even think more, am I doing everything I'm supposed to be doing? But it's very interesting." This hints at the potentially transformative effect of this type of research in developing academics in relation to IP. This reflexivity of academic staff was also observed by Clegg and Stevenson (2013), who point out that this reaction means these reflective conversations about issues of importance are not part of the everyday experience in universities. My starting point for this doctoral research was my own experience of a lack of engagement amongst lecturers in IP, and I reflected on how doing this research might have helped engage some lecturers.

Many of my field notes indicate the high levels of stress and anxiety felt by participants when asked to talk about IP and in their responses about their working lives. These are discussed further in the data analysis section, but one interview stood out as it affected both me and the participant very deeply. Joan (Midlands University) found the interview difficult, and at one point became emotional: "I don't know why this is making me upset, maybe it's just the chance to talk to someone." I asked if Joan wanted to stop the interview, a strategy recommended by King and Horrocks (2010)

for interviewees in distress, and we had a break until Joan said she wanted to continue. The following excerpt, from my field notes, shows how this interview made me feel. Firstly, I found myself wanting to step out of researcher mode:

> I felt like Joan was desperate for someone to listen to her story. … The honesty she talked with made me feel protective and want to cross over from interviewer to supportive colleague.

My emotional response was one of anger, this made me realise the human impact of the field that I am researching:

> I feel angry that Joan was brought to this point by the job, the university etc, she has enormous levels of responsibility which she doesn't feel appreciated for and I feel angry about that.

Joan allowed me into her inner world, and I feel privileged and grateful. My field notes record:

> she says she is fascinated by my research – sees it as valuable and interesting and needed and I should shout about it to all university management. She is grateful for the opportunity to talk about stuff, the job and how difficult it is.'

Whilst this was a very difficult interview and I felt responsible for Joan's emotional wellbeing, I felt that this was not necessarily a negative experience for her. King and Horrocks point out that when interviewing about sensitive topics participants can be grateful for "the chance to discuss a difficult subject with a sympathetic listener." (2010, p.59)

3.12 Approach to data analysis

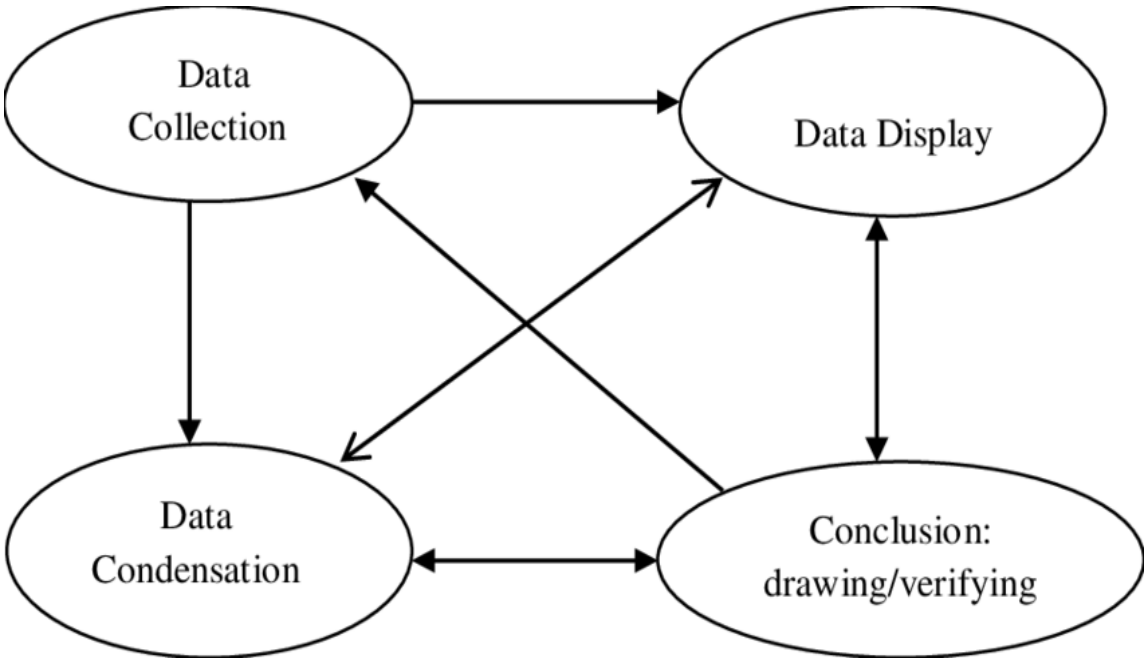
The approach I have taken in this doctoral research foregrounded the importance of "the *content* of what participants have to say" (King & Horrocks, 2010, p.142) (my emphasis). An approach to data analysis often closely associated with helping to achieve this goal is thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). Thematic analysis is consistent with my ontological and epistemological stance; it will enable me to develop a key understanding of the essence of a lecturer's experiences and therefore is the most suitable way to answer my research questions. There are many ways in which thematic analysis can be applied, and I have drawn on a variation of thematic research called framework analysis developed by the critical realist approaches of Ritchie and Spencer (1994; and Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014).

The next sections outline the process through which I managed and indexed my data. It includes a consideration of the transcription of interviews and the approaches I used to code data, including the development of my analytical framework, my use of computer aided qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) and NVivo to structure my data analysis and decisions related to the presentation of findings.

3.12.1 The process of data analysis

A useful framework for understanding how I dealt with data is conceptualised by the CR approach of transcendental realism of Miles and Huberman (2014) (see Figure 4). Here, they articulate the four stages of data analysis through which researcher moves and returns to cyclically before reaching their conclusions: data collection, data display, data condensation and conclusion drawing.

Figure 4 Miles and Huberman (1994), stages in qualitative data analysis



The interview process, as a data collection phase, was important as a starting point for analysis, as I started to become aware of issues being discussed by participants during the interviews. This was informing my thoughts and impressions of important issues contributing to how I looked at my data. It helped form my analytic strategy which I then employed to achieve data condensation. Following the data collection phase I processed the audio files and moved into a data display phase which commenced with the transcription of these files.

3.12.2 Data display

To display the data, it was necessary to transcribe the audio files into written scripts. Interviews were recorded with two devices. This ensured that the quality of the recordings was always good enough to be transcribed accurately. The audio files of recorded interviews were professionally transcribed verbatim (but without emphasis) by a company used by academic researchers for this purpose. Time constraints and my personal circumstances as a full-time lecturer were practical reasons why I could not do this myself. This might be criticised for an absence of contextual detail which might detract from understanding the participant's comments; I overcame this by writing a field note memo immediately after each interview which recorded the tone, pace and body language of participants and the immediate thoughts I had about the interview. In addition to this the audio tapes were also kept within the software package NVivo, which enabled me to return to the time indicated on the transcript to gain clarification of the tone of the comment if I felt unsure as I went through the coding process. As an insider researcher I felt tuned in to what my participants were describing, and was able to identify the significance of any body language, verbal nuances, sighs or pauses which might have indicated annoyance, frustration or stress. I brought to these encounters my personal frames of reference to interpret what my participants said, and the existence of detailed field notes helped to support or refute my interpretations of the data.

3.12.3 Using CAQDAS to organise data display and data condensation

I used a CAQDAS package – NVivo 12– to organise, rather than analyse, my data. Using NVivo as a tool to help analyse qualitative data has been debated in academic literature. Lu and Shulman (2008) provide a summary of the debate: for academics who object to using CAQDAS, objections revolve around quantification of the data through a focus on frequency of topic rather than meaning. In addition, there is a concern that the software may drive a formulaic approach which may become relied upon by researchers, and neglects to incorporate contextual and individual research characteristics. In contrast, advocates are numerous and put forward many advantages, such as effective and transparent management of large data sets; varied methods of data enquiry; increased ability to compare across data sets and identify linkages and similarities.

Two bodies of work convinced me to use NVivo. Odena's (2013) work on analysing the way researchers use CAQDAS proposes a model of the development of knowledge that resonates with my doctoral research. In this sense, using NVivo gives an audit trail for other researchers to follow which contributes and substantiates the claim to knowledge that research makes. Secondly, Woods, Macklin and Lewis (2016) suggest that using CAQDAS can promote reflective moments for the researcher during the data analysis process, a crucial element to the presentation of credible qualitative research. They identify opportunities for the researcher to use the software to track their coding decision development and return to those decisions to review them. However, they warn that "it can only do so if researchers choose to be reflexive and are disciplined about doing so…not if researchers unthinkingly defer to program requirements without considering their broader implications" (Woods et al., 2016, p.402). Bearing this in mind I consciously used NVivo as a tool for data management. I personally coded my data rather than using the auto-coding function, and only used the functions of the software to interrogate the data to draw comparisons across cases. I found it to be useful in allowing the transparent use of a matrix or framework approach to data display in thematic analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Ritchie, et al., 2014). Woods et al. put forward that

> Leaving a trail others can follow and challenge is epistemologically important and addresses a moral imperative for reflexive researchers to communicate openly, ethically and truthfully about their research journey. (Woods et al., 2016, p.385).

Using NVivo allowed me to record my progress and thought processes as the data analysis process developed and this has allowed me to communicate to others the research trail for interrogation strengthening my claims for rigour.

3.12.4 Analysing the data

The next stage involved data condensation. Data condensation or reduction (Miles & Huberman, 1994) refers to the process by which qualitative data is organised, sorted for relevance and reduced to enable the researcher to produce meaningful conclusions. For my research, this meant following the analysis process recommended by Ritchie et al. (2014, p. 280) adapted from Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis process. It includes many of the features of Braun and Clarke's and Miles and Huberman's (1994) processes, but adds a further dimension of data summary and

display and involves a summary of coded, indexed data per case (participant) displayed in a matrix. This has the benefit of keeping the coded phrases and verbatim scripts for each participant whilst allowing for a deeper interpretation across and within cases. The following sections move through Ritchie et al.'s data management process, describing how I engaged with each stage.

Stage 1: Familiarisation

I became immersed in my data through a process of reading and re-reading each transcript. As this took place very soon after the interviews, I felt familiar with each transcript.

Stage 2: Constructing an initial thematic framework

I returned to my research questions to help guide the development of my thematic framework. This helped formed a descriptive set of themes or codes which could be applied to each transcript as a first pass at coding the data into topics or themes (Saldaña, 2016). Initially it included lecturers' understandings of IP policy; experiences of implementation of IP policy; engagement with university policy and processes; and contextual barriers to being inclusive as overarching themes.

Stage 3: Indexing and sorting

The first pass of the data allowed each transcript to be coded on a thematic basis (Ritchie, et al., 2014) allowing each theme to be collated and compared.

Working through each transcript allowed me to build upon the initial indexing framework and develop a set of themes with more detailed sub-themes. NVivo allows descriptions of codes to be recorded and recalled when the researcher is considering applying a code. I considered the setting up of thematic codes to be a significant part of using my positionality to approach my data (Woods et al., 2016). To acknowledge and support this process I began to write an analytical diary to describe the thought processes I was going through at each stage as I reviewed the data. As part of this process I also wrote analytical memos to accompany most of the thematic codes which described their origin and meaning. A benefit of using NVivo is that these can be attached to each code and recalled when the later stage of abstraction and interpretation of data commences thereby producing an analytical audit trail of my interpretations.

This is shown in Figure 6, a screenshot from NVivo. The initial thematic coding frame can be seen on the left of the page, the overarching theme with codes and sub-codes forming a full coding framework is shown in the middle of the screen with the coding notes in the folder properties file which explains the principles employed when I applied the overarching theme to the data. This is a view of the coding framework for this theme after the data has been read, re-read and coded. The sub-codes were derived from the data, and this list became fuller as I progressed through my transcripts. I then returned to the transcripts to ensure that I had applied these codes effectively and had not missed any data which should be included. I also wanted to check if there was any room for more codes to be added. Only when I was satisfied did I move onto the next overarching theme with the knowledge that NVivo enabled me to add and change codes to any node very easily as I continued my analytical process.

In the node framework shown in Figure 6 there is a set of codes named 'Emotional response to IP'. This did not form part of my initial thematic framework. As I worked through my data during a second pass (Saldaña, 2016) with a more interpretative eye, I became very aware of the responses which either substantively or implicitly discussed in an emotional or affective way how participants felt about IP and the process of trying to implement it. This emergent theme was apparent to me, perhaps keenly due to my positionality. Initially, I coded these comments within my framework, but as they featured in each overarching theme and became more detailed and complicated, I decided that this warranted an independent theme code: 'Emotional affective

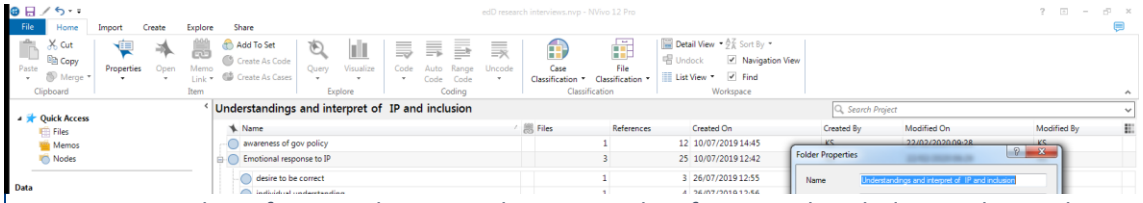
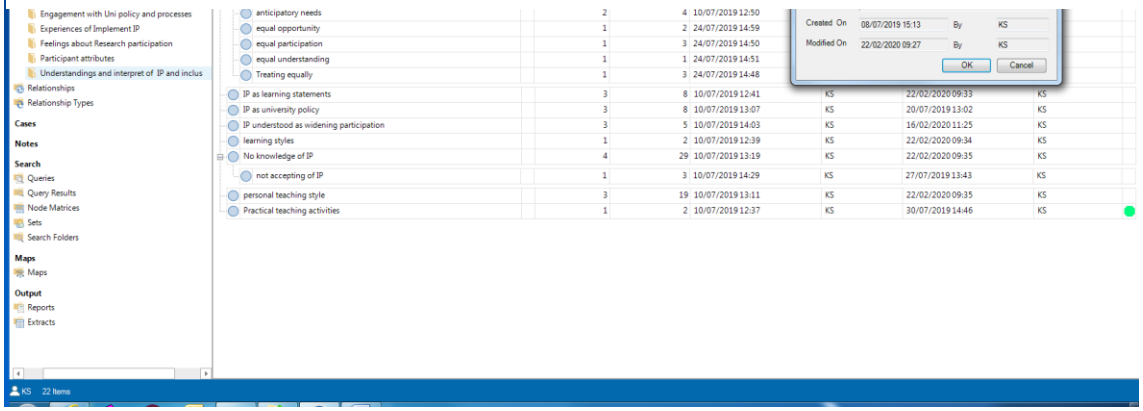


Figure 5 Screenshot of NVivio showing a thematic coding framework including nodes, codes and sub-codes

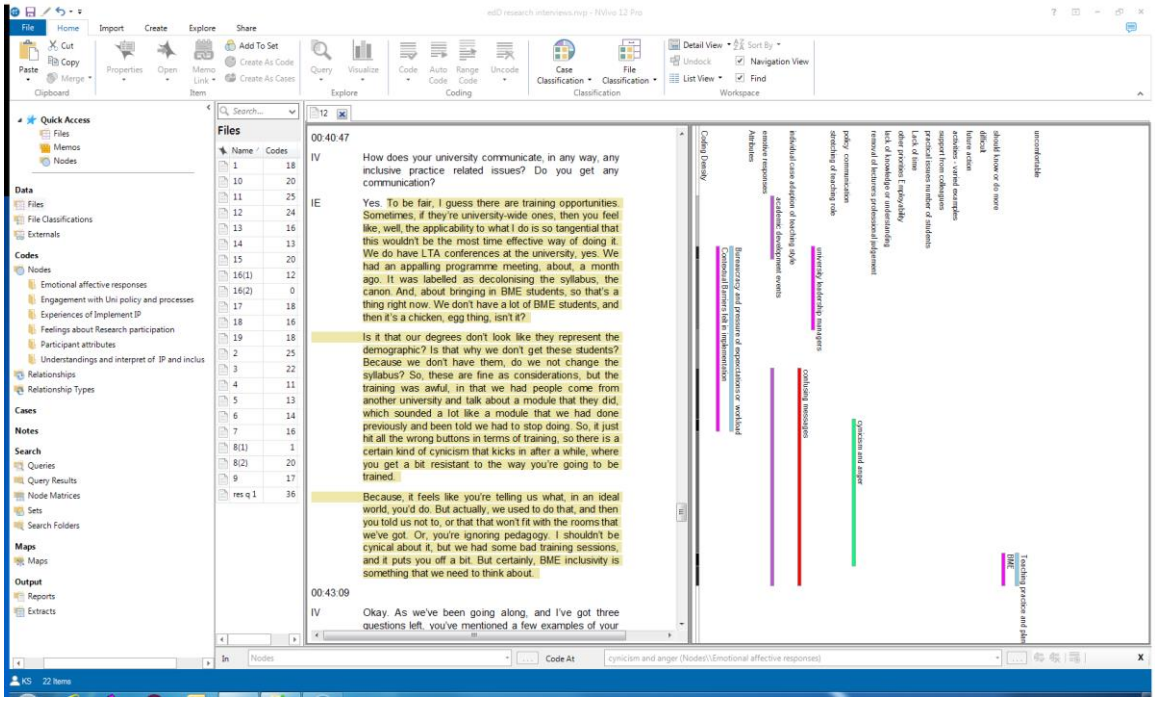


responses'. Once all themes had been exhausted, I returned to the data to apply this theme. The full coding framework with attached code descriptions is contained in Appendix 4.

Stage 4: Reviewing data extracts

At this point my interview transcripts were coded by theme and sub-theme, which identified where the responses that were about the same thing were. A benefit of using NVivo was that I could easily navigate between case, theme (NVivo calls these

Figure 6 Screenshot of an index-coded transcript in NVivo



nodes) and sub-themes (or codes). My data was sorted and in a manageable form. Figure 7 gives a screenshot of a transcript which has been coded. This is participant number 12. I used a numbering system to help anonymise the transcripts as I indexed them.

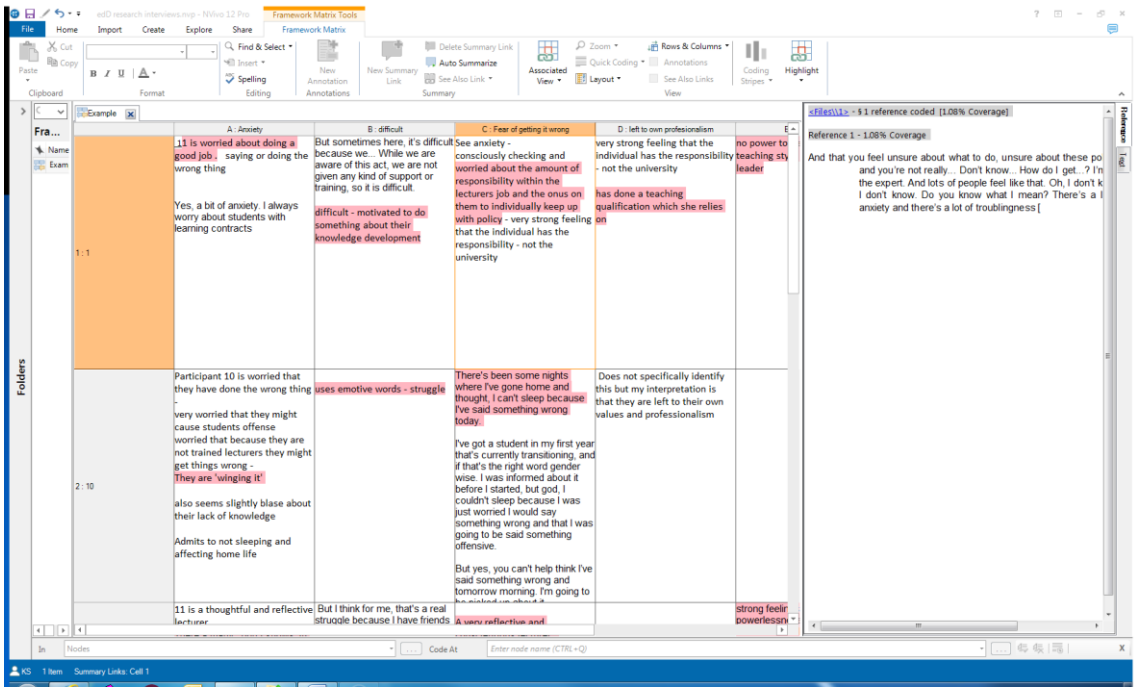
The screenshot shows part of a coded interview transcript. This section of the interview is a response about how the university and participant interact in respect to IP.

Stage 5: Data summary and display

I returned to my data to create a matrix which summarises, by theme, the essence of the participant's interview. This should enable the researcher to work from these summaries for further interpretative analysis rather than the full transcripts, and they should contain "enough detail and context … to understand the point being made" (Ritchie, et al.,2014, p.309).

I used this method to note my interpretations of participants' responses and link themes to indexed texts. This is demonstrated in Figure 8, which shows an excerpt from a framework matrix created on codes related to the 'Emotive and affective' theme. I became more skilled as my analysis progressed, but this was the first step in moving towards abstraction and interpretation of the data, and there is evidence of the development of my coding framework here as I start to develop interpretations, for example, of what it might mean for participants who are expressing difficulties and struggles when they think about IP.

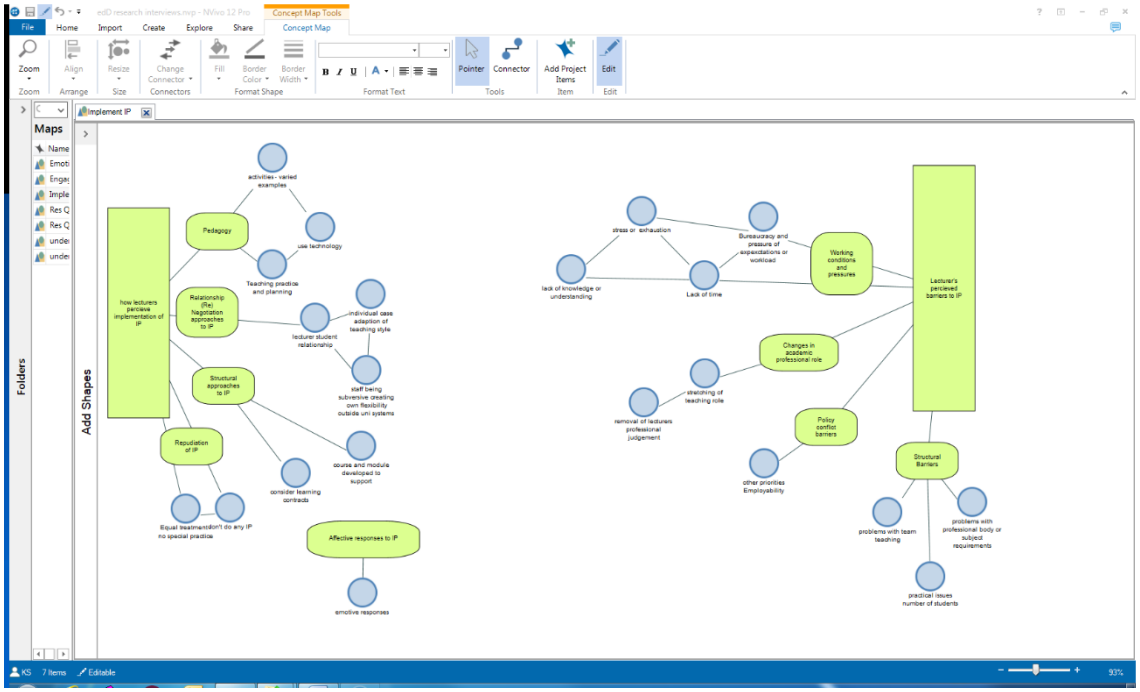
Figure 7 Screenshot of a framework matrix created for all participants' responses to the theme of emotive and affective responses



3.12.5 Abstraction and interpretation

The abstraction and interpretation phase, which began with developing a framework matrix, involves thinking about what the data reveals. It involved bringing my values and interpretations to the data – what Miles and Huberman (1994) call the conclusion-drawing or verification phase. Inevitably, as I created my framework matrices and revisited my thematic codes and data, I began to see overlapping, similarities and patterns which meant I could refine my codes and start the process of categorisation. Developing categories and moving toward meaningful themes which addressed my research questions was achieved through what Saldana terms a 'lumper' approach (2015). Saldana urges researchers to be lumpers; to develop categories with depth. I tried to approach my data not with the intention of creating a large number of

categories, but of focusing on groupings of codes which were supported by a depth and breadth of responses sufficient enough to make interpretative judgements about the meaning of the research for my research questions. My process is demonstrated



by the concept maps I created to aid this process in NVivo (see Figure 9). This shows the index codes in blue circles which were grouped into categories represented by green shapes. Some codes are related to each other and have been linked with lines to represent this.

Figure 8 Screenshot to show a concept map created in NVivo related to themes of implementation and barriers to inclusive practice

For example, it can be seen on the concept map that a category of relationship (re)negotiation approaches to IP has been created, and includes data indexed to codes of lecturer-student relationship, individual case adaption of teaching style, and staff being subversive outside of university systems. Concept maps are presented in appendices 5–8.

3.13 Summary

This chapter outlined the considerations taken for the research design of this doctoral study. The intersectionality of the influence of my positionality as a lecturer; the ontological and epistemological critical realist framework of the research; and the sensitive nature of the research topic were explored. The coherence of the resulting naturalistic research design was therefore fully justified. The research followed the

ethical codes of BERA (British Educational Research Association, 2018) and the host university, and issues particular to this research were explored, including informed consent, risk of harm and confidentiality. The process of developing a qualitative, in-depth semi-structured interview research tool is described – including the development of an interview protocol and a snowballing recruitment strategy for participants. A reflective stance is taken throughout this chapter, discussing moments of learning and reflection – particularly concerning the quality and rigour of the research design. The thematic framework approach to data analysis and the use of CAQDAS in the data analysis process is explained, and the stages of data analysis are outlined.

The next chapter outlines the findings this research process produced. An overarching theme identified dilemmas of practice which lecturers appear to face as they negotiate their IP. Within this, sub-themes of (mis)understandings of inclusion by policy actors; pragmatism; doubt and discomfort; absent and rhetorical IP policy discourse and artefacts and constraints of academic agency, including power, space and time, emerge.

Chapter 4: Findings, Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

Analysis of the interview data collected for this doctoral research identified several themes, topics and issues of concern to participants. In this chapter I draw attention to those themes that most closely inform and help to address my research objectives and questions. To reiterate those here, the research aims were in relation to inclusive practice (IP) policy in English universities and sought to explore the experiences of academic teaching staff as they negotiate their teaching practice in relation to IP. More specifically, two research questions were posed: to what extent do academic teaching staff understand, interpret and implement IP, and in what ways do academic teaching staff engage with university policies and processes aimed at supporting the development of IP? A sociological approach to policy enactment as developed by Ball, Braun and Maguire (2011) is taken. The concepts of policy actors, subjects, contexts and discourses that form this approach frame the research findings. This original approach gives a hitherto unknown picture of how IP policy is enacted in higher education institutions (HEIs). This chapter initially outlines the overarching theme of the findings, which identifies dilemmas of practice participants face and experience in their professional practice, and then moves on to present and discuss the themes in more detail. The findings are presented and illustrated with participants' words. Each participant is identified by a false name, their anonymised university, and the number of years that they have been teaching in higher education (HE).

4.2 Overarching theme: dilemmas of practice

The findings of this research identified the quandary lecturers are faced with in their professional practice. Their responses support themes that coalesce around an overall finding (or conclusion) that lecturers face every day dilemmas of practice involving inclusion and equality issues, which are often unresolved or resolved unsatisfactorily. Influencing those dilemmas are the contingencies of situated contextual factors that inform, constrain and shape lecturers' choices in how they practice. These choices are located in the IP policy subjects, discourses and structural contexts that play out in English universities. Policy enactments are not simple processes. They are:

> collective, creative, and constrained and are made up of unstable juggling between irreconcilable priorities, impossible workloads, satisficing moves, and personal enthusiasm. (Ball et al., 2011, p.71)

There is constant tension in this process of making choices which are ultimately constrained, difficult to resolve and have consequences for lecturers' personal and working lives. The interview responses suggested lecturers are often caught juggling the aims of policy articulated at national and local levels, and the coal-face demands of students resulting in everyday dilemmas of practice which are resolved in pragmatic, value-based ways. This was found to cause a high degree of self-doubt, stress and anxiety. This chapter seeks to articulate and demonstrate in greater depth and detail the findings and themes which explore and illustrate my assertion that lecturers are confronted with dilemmas of practice as part of their lived experience.

This chapter is structured to address each research question. Firstly, the themes related to question 1 are mostly but not exclusively linked to theoretical concepts related to policy actors and subjects. That is, the themes which emerged from the participants' interviews which pertain to how policy is understood and articulated, by *actors* and as *subjects*. The three key themes here were found to be (mis)understandings of IP; dilemmas of practice leading to pragmatism; and doubt and discomfort felt by participants about IP. The second question is connected to theoretical concepts of policy discourse and policy context, and themes related to these areas are discussed in sections 4.6 and 4.7. Findings here evidenced a policy context theme of constraints of power, space and time felt by lecturers. The policy discourses section presents and discusses the ways IP policy is felt to be communicated and received by participants. This theme highlighted the importance of informal discourses over formal policy discourses for informing lecturers' pedagogical practice and influencing the ways they resolve their dilemmas of practice. Lecturers were found to be engaged in developing their own definitions of IP using their trusted professional networks and drawing on their personal values. Consequently, IP policy was being played out very differently across institutions and differently from how the institutions intended.

4.3 (Mis)understandings of inclusion by policy actors

This theme relates to what the policy actors, lecturers, *understand as* and *know* about the policy of IP.

> Inclusive practice? My understanding of that is to do with the fact…let me think…I've heard of it, yes, but only once or twice. Zeyd (Northern, 3 years)

> I ought to be more aware of it. Emma (Northern, 25 years)

There was evidence that, as these quotes from Zeyd and Emma illustrate, the lecturers in this study had very little understanding or awareness of IP. A key significance of this is that, potentially, lecturers who do not have this policy understanding are not orientated to change or improve their teaching and learning practice in line with the principles of IP. Being aware of the policy is fundamental to its enactment – although it is not a guarantee that it will be enacted in the way that is intended.

Similarly, for others, IP was not a consideration for their teaching practice:

> So it really is the least thing on my mind. Joan (Midlands, 10 years)

> I don't set out purposefully for each module to start thinking, right, I need to consider inclusivity. Perhaps I should. Greta (Northern, 25 years)

More important than IP seemed to be the notion that it was not lecturers' responsibility to develop practice based upon a consideration of different individual needs:

> For me I guess I've stopped noticing where you're from or what you're doing, because I'm here to *teach*. Joan (Midlands, 10 years) (emphasis added)

Joan's professional values appear to prioritise her delivery of subject and curriculum over the supportive aspects of individual learning differentiation that are identified with IP. This was found to be the case in O'Donnell et al.'s study, which found that lecturers felt that such changes to practice was "out of their remit" (2012,p.71) and that traditional methods of pedagogy – such as lectures or essay assessments – were not likely to be changed, as they formed a key aspect of academic identity.

Many other lecturers exhibit gaps in their understanding and knowledge of specific types of students and how to deal with them. Leon's comments give an example of how lecturers may not know how to approach people from different religions and have little knowledge about specific learning disabilities:

> The inclusivity there and again with things like religion, if a student has to go to call for prayer or something like that and therefore is going to be late, we don't really understand or know much about that do we? and those sorts of things. I think at the moment dyslexia, dyspraxia, da-di-da, has almost become common, hasn't it? Leon (Midlands, 10 years)

We must assume therefore that these are not considerations when he prepares his curriculum and his teaching practice. Interestingly, he indicates the extent to which lecturers may be feeling that specific learning difficulties are so commonplace that perhaps it is impossible to take them into consideration and make changes to practice. I returned to listen to Leon's transcript again to check for tone and intention, and it appeared to me that his tone indicated anxiety and is self-deprecating rather than dismissive.

This finding contrasts with work from other authors. Hemmings, Kemmis and Reupert (2013) found that lecturers develop their teaching materials with "significant intellectual investments in a worldview about students with special needs" (Hemmings et al., 2013, p.78). In the findings of this research study, this did not seem to be the case. There was evidence of, if not a rejection of IP principles, an absence of engagement with the principles for some participants and partial, contradictory, fluid understandings held by others. Participants in the study presented confusing and inconsistent positions throughout the interviews. There was no evidence found to support the idea of the *intellectually invested* lecturer in IP. The picture is more complicated than this. This theme needs unpicking to give the full picture of lecturer's understandings and policy work that the research uncovered. Throughout the interviews, lecturers other than those who admitted forthrightly to a lack of knowledge, were tentative about their conceptions of IP and often gave contradictory accounts about their understandings and how they approached it in practice. It was hard to find any consensus for what IP meant to participants in this study. Earlier studies, such as Smith (2010) found lecturers had mostly supportive attitudes to inclusion but struggled to put them into practice, which was a similar position found by Fuller et al. (2004). In a schools scenario, Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) also point to difficulties of implementation felt by teachers of inclusive principles. Similarly in schools, Ineland (2015, p.53) identifies professional educational and personal social logics which are confused about inclusion and result in "institutional ambivalence" towards IP. The findings of the current study support this work in part. There is evidence to support problematic implementation (which is discussed in the latter sections of these findings) however a common positive invested attitude was not found in this study. There was evidence in the findings to support a confused logic

concerning IP for lecturers and this may be a contributing factor to generating an ambivalent institutional HE context.

The responses demonstrated a wide range of understandings of what IP is. A multiplicity of conceptions and theories were used, often unconsciously, to articulate lecturers' understandings. It seemed that lecturers *misunderstood* what the policy is or what it involves. It was these misunderstandings, rather than a common understanding, which was identified as an important and significant finding. The theme is made significant by the omission of any comment which clearly specified a strong grasp of any professional or university-derived definition of IP. This is not surprising. It was seen in the literature that definitions of IP were complex and multifarious. Given the numerous sources of information specifying and defining IP at an international, national and local or institutional levels, it may not be surprising that participants had differing understandings (Lawrie et al., 2017). Hardy and Woodcock (2015) put forward a critique of international and national-level inclusive education policy articulation, citing a lack of clarity and consistency, but also identified a predominant deficit discourse around how to enact policy goals. At a local level within a HEI in Scotland, O'Donnell's (2016) research put forward that confusing and contradictory messages are evident in policy discourses found in documents and texts created to support IP. Complicated and confusing messages found in policy discourses at all levels (Ahmed, 2012; Pilkington, 2011) could account for misunderstandings and an apparent lack of engagement or awareness of policy relating to inclusion or IP.

The following discussions of this theme address the findings which are concerned with the notions of equality and social justice held by lecturers to explain their understandings of IP; a recognition that there is a reliance on practices such as normalcy and othering as a basis for understanding and implementing IP; misunderstandings of IP as reasonable adjustments, disability orientation and widening participation (WP); and finally an appreciation of where IP happens for lecturers.

4.3.1 Notions of equality and social justice

A key finding that emerged from the data was that participants strongly related IP with notions of *equality*. Ilya puts it simply:

> Inclusive practice involves treating people equally. Ilya (Midlands, 6 years)

Participants used the word 'equality' and related phrases in their discussions about IP. This formed the basis of a parent code within NVivo with sub-codes arising when equality was further discussed in relation to its subject: equality of opportunity for example. A key part of understanding IP for lecturers involved phrases that included the words 'equal' or 'same opportunity'. It was clear that participants' understandings of what treating people equally meant was related to treating people the same, and that this would achieve equality of opportunity. This was interpreted as the equality of opportunity to participate in the activities involved in an HE experience in the same way as other students. Anya and Greta's comments demonstrate this:

> Everyone should be treated the same way and should be given the same opportunities so they can achieve the same result as everyone else. Anya (Northern, 3 years)
>
> It's about ensuring that everybody's treated equally, and fairly, and is involved in the activities. Greta (Northern, 25 years)

These quotes from participants raise two issues relating to the understanding of IP. Firstly, they seem to suggest that all students should be treated the same way, regardless of any differences between them. It is likely that this understanding of IP derives from and shows awareness of the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, which protects in law the rights of protected groups in the UK – making it illegal to discriminate against or fail to anticipate their needs. Although participants rarely mentioned this Act, it is the most likely driver of conceptions of IP as anti-discriminatory, and has been part of social narratives in the UK since its inception. This assumption of treating all students in the same way would seem to be a 'misrecognition' of inequality on behalf of lecturers – a key component of addressing social inequality for Fraser and Honneth (2003). Fraser and Honneth suggest that recognising inequality and practices that support inequality is a fundamental requirement if society is to achieve social justice goals.

Secondly, even when participants recognise differences between students, they seem to advocate that equal treatment will result in all students being able to achieve the same results as 'everyone else'. This was evidenced and supported by numerous participants who identified and associated 'opportunities' as opportunities to participate in the everyday activities of a university education. All students should be able to come to lectures and seminars, get the reading, do the activities, do the

assessments and be included in equal ways. For example, Altin's understanding is that IP involves consideration of students and their inclusion in classroom-based activities:

> Inclusive practice, to my understanding, means taking into consideration all the diversity that you have in class, in terms of abilities, and backgrounds, and including them all, equally, in the class activities and in knowledge. Altin (Northern, 3 years)

> So, inclusive practice, acknowledging all the differences, and everything else, in the classroom, and still being able to include them all together equally. Greta (Northern, 25 years)

There appears to be evidence to suggest that, for participants, to treat students equally or not to discriminate is the basis of achieving equality or their position on how to achieve social justice. This raises interesting points relating to philosophical debates about the definition of social justice and how to reduce inequality. The evidence here points to views of social justice and inclusion as being equal or giving the same opportunity, following libertarian principles of justice as equality or justice as harmony (Ruitenberg & Vokey, 2010). Principles of equality based upon equality of opportunity found favour and support in the UK during the era of Thatcher and the rise of neoliberal political agendas. Ideologically opposed to this principle, Rawls' (1971) influential liberal rights-based theory recognised that individuals start their journey in life from unequal positions, and so treating them all the same way may not overcome the inequalities in society, but will serve to reinforce them. Rawls' (1971) theory of distributive justice has formed the development of international governmental approaches to social justice politics, which enshrines rights of protected characteristics of groups in human rights legislation. As Johnson and Williams (2014) point out, treating everyone the same way does not lead to improvements for those who are already experiencing disadvantage. This theoretical and ideological dilemma of difference (Minow, 1990) is discussed in the literature review and is far from resolved.

Madriaga and Goodley (2010), supported by many others, make the point that the minimum requirements of legislation aimed at supporting the rights of disabled students are not sufficient for universities to achieve a reduction in inequality (Gibson, 2015; Madriaga & Goodley, 2010; Terzi, 2005; Walker & Unterhalter, 2010). The participants in this study might be drawing on social justice values from conservative neoliberal political ideologies originating from the 1970s in a historical, path-dependent way, in addition to values and understandings which recognise that rights-

based anti-discrimination principles are important. Beyond this, participant understandings of IP did not seem to involve considerations of compensatory actions to support students or wholesale shifts in cultural practices and processes as part of IP as it is defined (Bridger & Shaw, 2012; Hockings, 2010).

4.3.2 Understandings which 'other'

Related to their libertarian conceptions of equality and social justice, lecturers appear to reproduce the normative activities and processes related to teaching in HE. There is evidence in responses that they see the existing status quo as the 'norm' into which 'other' students need to be included in. As an example, Anya explains her position which involves not leaving out any *different* students. The assumption here is that these students should be enabled to do the same as the other students:

> So, whatever activities that you do in class, to make sure that none of the groups and none of the students who are different from the rest will feel left out or will feel unable to achieve the same level as the rest of the students. Anya (Northern, 3 years)

It is interesting that Anya notes there are students who are different – in effect 'othering' those that are different. There was evidence that most lecturers understood that there was an element of inclusion that they had responsibility for and a duty to actively develop. This involved their responsibility to consider students and include them in all activities as they exist currently, rather than making significant changes to teaching orientation and teaching practice. Anya's phrase "feeling left out" suggests an assumption of an existing normal practice from which students could be excluded, which Graham and Slee call an "illusory interiority" (2008, p.1). This evidence of 'normalcy' thinking assumes current university practice and process is normal, and other students should be brought into it. To use a phrase from disability studies, this understanding favours ableist positions, in that the able-bodied student is the norm to strive towards. The prevalence of normalcy has been identified by many as a problem evident within HE (Davis, 1995; Madriaga, Hanson, Kay, & Walker, 2011). Madriaga et al. (2011) found that all students struggled with university assessments and that trying to include students with a disability into existing assessment practices reinforced the ideals of a normative HE system. The previous section found that understandings of IP for participants took into consideration rights-based legislation in the UK and put forward a criticism of such approaches as reductionist and leading to adjustments to

practice to remedy deficits of students, rather than fundamental shifts in thinking within HE. Hardy and Woodcock (2015) purport that the 'deficit discourse' is prominent in policy subjects and texts. The deficit discourse, as identified in the literature review, is thought by many authors to still be the dominant approach to inclusion in HE (Atkins, 2016; Cameron, 2016; Gibson, 2015; O'Shea, Lysaght, Roberts, & Harwood, 2016) despite claims by institutions to have moved towards the social model of disability or more enlightened approaches to other protected groups of students. Reproduction of this negative discourse "contributes to the maintenance of the status quo in terms of societal views of disability and makes the journey towards full inclusion and social justice more difficult" (Atkins, 2016, p.15) Trying to make up for this deficit to make students all the same involves an inevitable incongruence between teaching and learning practice and student needs: "the pre-determined box or curriculum is square whilst the student is round." (Gibson, 2015, p878). Furthermore, the fundamental principle of inclusionary practice has been to move towards operationally integrated IPs and policies for HE rather than add-on adjustments (Bridger & Shaw, 2012; Disabled Student Sector Leadership Group, 2017; Hockings, 2010; Office of Students, 2018).

4.3.3 Inclusive practice is about disability

Disability and disabled students are the predominant focus of understandings of IP held by participants in this study. Emma's understanding of IP shows how lecturers hold firm ideas that IP is concerned with disabled students:

> Setting up learning environments and assessments in such a way that it includes students with various disabilities, as opposed to having to make special arrangements for them. Emma (Northern, 25 years)

Emma clearly identifies that IP is related to groups of students with disabilities, but IP does not refer to disability only. In contrast to most participants, Emma suggested she is aware that IP requires more that special arrangements for individuals. Within an HE context, university commitments have been made at policy level to pursue inclusionary principles through adopting a social model-based approach to IP which locates barriers to equality with society and institutions rather than individual impairment (Oliver, 2013; Shakespeare, 2006; Davis, 1995) The social model, although now criticised (Owens, 2015; Shakespeare & Watson, 2010), has been a positive step towards recognising inequality and difference with particular regard to disability. Hockings and

many others who define IP are clear: it involves all protected groups covered by the Equality Act (2010) and includes multiculturalism (Hockings,2010; May & Bridger, 2010). However, in this research participants firmly associated IP with disability, leaving students in other protected groupings and categories overlooked. This is not surprising and understandable given the centrality of critical disability studies in the development of IP policy in the UK context as outlined in chapter 2.

4.3.4 Reasonable adjustments through learning support mechanisms

The previous section discussed how conceptions of inclusion and IP have become associated with disability for participants in this study rather than other aspects which divide student groups. One possible reason for this is the prominence of university policies and processes which have developed learning support mechanisms (LSM) for students with a disability to achieve anticipatory reasonable adjustments as required by equality legislation:

> I think in terms of my day-to-day knowledge, and stuff, and awareness of inclusivity, and stuff like that, obviously, we've got students with learning contracts. Learning contracts are set up for all sorts of mental and physical disabilities, needs, illnesses. Greta (Northern, 25 years)

> About inclusivity, I think. I don't know. We get students with learning contracts all the time, and so this shows that the university is addressing those issues, and we seem to get more and more students with learning contracts. Altin (Northern, 3 years)

For these participants, being made aware of individual student needs is how they interpret and experience university policies towards inclusion. LSMs have become the policy subjects (Ball, Maguire, Braun, & Hoskins, 2011b) of inclusion. The policy subjects of inclusion, or what is *seen* by lecturers as IP policy, revolve around the measures put in place to support disabled students. LSMs for disabled students have been a significant part of policy direction in HE (Gibson, 2015; Slee & Cook, 1999). LSMs take the form of statements delivered electronically via a customised system (or more rudimentarily via email) from departments in universities which have responsibility for assessment of disabled students' needs and communicating those needs to the teaching team.

The reliance of universities on this process of learning support seems to have generated misunderstanding and confusion, and this is seen in the responses of participants who lean towards LSMs as the basis of their understanding of IP. IP

becomes closely associated with disability. LSMs are only used for students with disabilities, as explained by many participants. Indeed, participants routinely consider students with disabilities as the most important group of students to be addressed. This does not support any of the other protected groups outlined in the Equality Act including groups defined by race, gender, age or sexual orientation, and international students.

Furthermore, LSMs are becoming associated with and thought of as IP. There is evidence in this research that lecturers see support statements and individual student adaptations as IP. They value them as ways to engage with students with disabilities in ways that fit in with their existing practice. Gibson (2015) recognised this, and the findings of this study support her view that these university processes serve to confirm and replicate the cultures that exist in HE by limiting views of inclusion and IP to reasonable adjustments for those students who are able to be assessed and given small and limited allowances. May and Bridger's definitive study saw IP as more than such targeted interventions: "It necessitates a shift away from supporting specific student groups through a discrete set of policies or timebound interventions," (2010, p.4). Such well-intentioned measures are based on discourses of deficit (Atkins, 2016) and deficit models of disability (Barnes, 1991; Barton & Oliver, 1997). Something is wrong or deficit with disabled students, and we need a redistribution of resources to enable those affected to maintain their presence with the normative discourses and practices in universities.

Such a system of categorising students as deficit in some way requires the assumption of a normative position, because they identify the *other* (Bolt, 2004; Grace & Gravestock, 2009; Graham & Slee, 2008), that is, they separate the disabled students from other students. Furthermore, participants are distracted by or lulled into an illusionary belief that they are practicing IP because LSMs are in place. IP necessitates a shift away from supporting specific student groups through a discrete set of policies or timebound interventions.

LSM processes are not without operational problems. Atkins (2016) supports this critical view and provides evidence that the intended outcome of such measures is often not, met arguing that they allow new ways of marginalisation and exclusion that impacts students. Bunbury (2018; Burchardt, 2004; Gabel & Peters, 2004; Matthews,

2009) makes a case for universities to move towards the social model of disability to remove the need to rely on "reasonable adjustments made by the LSM based on evidence that lecturing staff struggle to make the adjustments due to lack of knowledge, training and awareness of disability" (2018, p.1), chiming with the findings of this doctoral study. Bunbury's qualitative study was smaller than this doctoral study, but nevertheless it is a useful comparator which finds similar themes to account for the problematic enactment of IP.

LSMs and their application are an interesting and often-criticised area of practice by participants. One participant, Joanne, recognised that learning statements are limited and that IP or equality should be a wider concern:

> I have a bit of an issue with singling out students for particular things. I think all students are students and therefore should have the same, but we shouldn't be singling out, because by singling out students, you're singling out students, if that makes any sense. I would say all students. It's not just about one particular or two particular elements of students, it's about all students, I think. Joan (Midlands, 10 years)

LSMs become policy subjects (Ball, Maguire, Braun, & Hoskins, 2011b), representing all that can be talked about or conceived of with regard to IP within universities. In policy analysis terms this would seem to be evidence of the concept of path dependency, a component of complexity theory (Morrison,2008) where tracking policy and behaviours associated with the policy see that the changes required to implement the policy are contingent on what has gone before, and policies remain on existing paths without significant impetus to change. LSMs could be seen to keep universities and lecturers on the same paths and, although they have incrementally moved towards inclusivity, they have moved little from what existed before, and their current policies are heavily dependent and informed by what has gone before.

It is a significant finding that participants understand IP as LSMs and are putting their use of them forward as evidence of their understanding and practice of IP. It appears to indicate a further complicated picture of how lecturers understand IP, but this nuanced understanding may be invaluable in helping to provide solutions to help improve IP in professional practice.

4.3.5 Is widening participation the same as inclusive practice?

Participants, as part of their (mis)understanding of IP, talked about the policy of WP (Thomas et al., 2005). What has become known as WP – often conflated with the term

'diversity' – is not a clearly defined or well-understood policy (Stevenson, Clegg, & Lefever, 2010). A key policy focus of WP in HE from previously underrepresented groups in society was driven by successive governments since the Robbins report (1963), and more keenly since the expansion of HE adopted by the New Labour government. IP for participants in this study appeared to mean accepting and welcoming a diverse and wide range of students to study at university, and the policy associated with that:

> To me, it's about ensuring that the higher education provision is inclusive, to ensure that students from a variety of different backgrounds can actually access higher education at various different levels…I guess because we are a part of a widening participation university, so we kind of embrace diversity. Joan (Midlands, 10 years)

> If we're talking about inclusive practice on a broader basis, maybe it's about universities ensuring, as far as possible, that they recruit students from all sorts of backgrounds, from different disabilities or special needs, from different ethnic minority groups. Greta (Northern, 25 years)

WP in HE is clearly an important element in achieving social justice goals, and it has often been linked with inclusion and IP. For example, May and Bridger's continuum of inclusive provision (2010) in HE featured WP alongside considerations of equality to be embedded in mainstream policies and practices in institutions in order for them to claim they have inclusive provision. However, it is clear that IP has become thought of and considered as a practical teaching and learning activity with Hockings defining it as "ways in which pedagogy, curricula and assessment are designed and delivered to engage students in learning that is meaningful, relevant, and accessible to all." (Hockings, 2010, p.1).

4.3.6 Where IP policy work happens

If IP work involves, as Hockings states, "pedagogy, curricula and assessment" (2010, p.1), we can see that its activity as *work* might take place in numerous places and times in the academic cycle as lecturers develop new curricula, make changes to their teaching practice and amend and develop new assessment tools within modules. Hemmings et al. (2013, p.470) puts forward that IP involves lecturers in activities which plan for inclusive curricula, teaching including lectures and seminars, modelling desirable practices and assessing students work. However, the participants in this study identified that their understanding is that IP takes place in a classroom and is directly related to those activities, as Lucinda and Zeyd exemplify:

> So, from what I understand it to mean is that inclusivity is to make sure that everybody in the class is included in the lecture. Lucinda (Southern, 20 years)
>
> When I think about inclusivity, I think about the learning environment that I am creating within the classroom and if that is inclusive to my students. Zeyd (Northern, 3 years)

It might have been expected that lecturers would include mentions of, for example, aspects of course organisation based on principles of IP, or curriculum design content, or assessment design, etc. The wider context of a lecturer's role as module leader or course leader was not included or discussed by participants. Participants hold very distinct and limited ideas about the realm in which their influence and power to undertake IP policy work takes place. Findings related to the power of lecturers to effect change are presented more fully and developed in section 4.7. Definitions of inclusion and IP include a wide range of activities; however, this seemed to be absent from lecturers' understandings of IP as expressed in their interviews. The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) identified staff activities, such as creating appropriate curricula, organisational arrangements, teaching strategies and use of resources. In Chapter 2, definitions of IP were explored and it was identified that Hockings' (2010) seminal definition had six elements that referred to the activities of lecturers in relation to IP. These involved value-based principles such as recognising students as individuals, creating safe environments, recognising and providing for a range of students' needs, in addition to preparing universal curricula and teaching activities to engage all students meaningfully. Such a range of practical and value-based principles as part of IP was not present in participants' understandings of IP in this study.

4.4 Dilemmas of practice leading to pragmatism

The previous section outlined how despite national and institutional policy goals concerning and IP participants fell back on personal values to understand IP. This next theme considers how these value-based understandings are translated into activity causing lecturers to confront everyday dilemmas in their teaching practice to help and support students.

4.4.1 Getting the job done

IP was found to be constructed by participants based on their academic identity and values through their lived experiences and relationships with their students. Many participants discussed how their identity as a lecturer had changed in relation to their

experiences with students, and how this was becoming difficult for them. The way participants talked about how they *do* IP was expressed as deficit discourses (Atkins, 2016; Claiborne, Cornforth, Gibson, & Smith, 2011; Gibson, 2015). Discourses focused on their considerations about how they *help* students who need more support, i.e. those who have a deficit. Whilst adapting practice to meet the needs of students is a core principle of IP and fits with legislative and university conceptions of IP (Disabled Student Sector Leadership Group, 2017; Hockings, 2010; May & Bridger, 2010), the way academic lecturers in this study discussed their IP activities was more individually constructed and very different from how HEIs construct discourses around IP.

A theme presented in the data related to the work that policy actors do to construct practice. Katrina illustrates this as she constructs her version of IP to pragmatically 'get the job done', eschewing university policies and rhetoric around inclusion:

> You just do it. Unofficial counsellors, really. Mostly now, in this job, I'm less attached to the university and the policy and I do what needs to be done to get the job done. Katrina (Southern, 20 years)

Katrina has resolved her dilemma concerning how to support students she can identify with a need. For her, the resolution does not lie in university policy for inclusive teaching activities or changes to curriculum or assessment, but in her pragmatic assessment of what the student needs and how she can help. Many participants employed different practical tactics to 'get the job done', and local expressions of IP policy discourses put forward by universities appeared to have limited influence on daily decision making and practice.

Shifting conceptions of the role of lecturer from academic knowledge giver to pastoral caretaker was a key theme in the data. It is widely accepted that the role of the academic in HE has changed dramatically over the past two decades (Marquis, Power, & Yin, 2019) and the findings here foreground the development of relationships with students as important elements in academic work. There was a keen sense that pastoral elements of the job were now becoming an important part of academic work, and participants drew on personal values to develop those:

> Pastorally is quite an interesting one because sometimes it's overwhelming and sometimes I don't feel equipped to deal with some issues…And, yesterday, for example, I felt like a doctor's surgery and it was just one student with a problem after another. It was draining and I did think to myself, I'm too open, maybe. Maybe, I don't know. Lucinda (Southern, 20 years)

> When I was a course leader, I had to have some very distressing conversations with one student who admitted to me that she'd been trying to commit suicide. Georgia (Southern, 10 years)

There are many serious issues that present themselves to lecturers in their work with young adults. For most participants this was a concern especially as they struggled with the levels of preparation they felt they had been given. Their individual construction of identity was based upon academic knowledge exchange and traditional academic assessments such as essay writing, as seen in O'Donnell et al.'s study (2012), but this research found that participants were now called upon to construct themselves as doctors, psychiatrists and counsellors unofficially within universities. Lecturers felt they were unprepared for most of this activity, and it caused them anxiety and stress. Emma and Lucinda typify this issue:

> And, we've asked for help in the past with dealing with students with mental health issues and anxieties, and I think we've asked for that again. Last time I had it, I was told to just keep the door open when you're talking to someone. Emma (Northern, 25 years)

> A few years ago, I did have a severely epileptic student that would fit in the class. And, we're just not medically trained to do that. And, as a result, we were put on first aid courses. That, I felt, I was suddenly in a new realm of, hang on a minute. Lucinda (Southern, 20 years)

The lecturers in this study were concerned about the stretching of their role and this, for Claire, had become a barrier to effective IP teaching:

> To me, one of the biggest barriers to producing equality of experience for the students is the fact that we have to be and do everything. Claire (Southern, 20 years)

Being *everything* may refer to the increasing pressure to produce research upon which to base their teaching and enhance the standing of their universities. *Doing everything* could be attributed to the ever-increasing burden of administration, use of technological learning environments and providing higher levels of student contact and support. Joanne agreed about the number of different skills and roles a lecturing position involved:

> I research, I am an ex-professional and I'm a lecturer, so I have three heads on, how do you manage to keep up with the current relevant thinking on whether that's inclusive teaching practice, plus the professional side? Joanne (Southern, 20 years)

In this university (Southern) it seemed that student support was delivered in large part by academic staff, although in all three universities lecturers were performing a non-

traditional academic role to support students. This sense of being overwhelmed which participants articulated may be inducing a state of emotional labour which is often unseen by universities (Berry & Cassidy, 2013). The personal and professional values held by lecturers, which universities are relying upon, could be providing an invisible safety net to support student needs. The effort required to then present positively to students the face of the professional accomplishment of IP is causing a strain for the participants in this study. In this way, academic professional identities and values are highly supportive, but they are informal and risk inadequate and unreliable substitutes for university-wide adaptation of IP principles to achieve equality priorities.

4.4.2 Common sense adaptations

Constructing your own identity as a lecturer based upon your experiences, individual agency and capital is key to how lecturers seem to see themselves. It was discussed during interviews as the way in which they choose to address IP. Self-reliance might be expected in the role of an academic lecturer, and for some this was accepted and a positive element. Ilya shows their acceptance and ability to adapt an autonomic approach to IP in the classroom:

> As an educator, you've got to develop your own strategies to deal with those kinds of events that happen within the classroom. Ilya (Midlands, 6 years)

A less positive discussion of self-reliance was discussed by some lecturers, where views of pedagogy were based on 'common sense' about the best thing to do whilst in the difficult location of the workplace microsystem or, as they put it, 'the chalk face'. There was an acknowledgement that being a lecturer is a lonely and autonomic activity. High levels of workplace professional cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1988) are drawn upon to help support students.

Relationship-building was identified as a key part of achieving IP, and Femi and Joanne demonstrate the importance of the personal contact in identifying student needs:

> I guess it's just getting to know the students and seeing if they want that additional support. Femi (Midlands, 5 years)

> Also, I think it comes back to trying to have that relationship with students…I therefore know which ones have particular issues and can keep an eye out when they're doing group work and having discussions. Joanne (Southern, 20 years)

Individual adjustments to lecturer's practice is done almost unconsciously as part of academic professional identity, as shown by Greta, who discusses here how she adapted an assessment for one student:

> She wanted to try to present within the group, but closer to the date of the presentation, it was making her feel too anxious, so we gave her the option of saying, well, you can either present in front of the group, or we're happy for you to present at the end when everybody's left. So, I suppose, I do, do that. I don't really think about it, but now you come to mention it. Greta (Northern, 25 years)

David and Susanna express this, and furthermore feel unsupported by their universities when developing pedagogy which is inclusive:

> It was about using your common sense and your understanding of that student's need rather than having any support and help given to you. I'm saying well you just do things because you've been around a long time and you just deal with situations. I think an awful lot of the people at the chalk face do have to use their own common sense rather than get any support or direction in relation to those areas. David (Northern, 30 years)

> We are aware that there are things that we must do, but what support there is to help us in understanding how best to do that is perhaps something that is absent. As I say, the policy is generally quite easy to find, but interpreting the policy and understanding how best to implement it at the chalk face, as it were, is perhaps left rather more to the individual's discretion. Susanna (Southern, 25 years)

Research by O'Donnell et al. (2012) points to similar inconsistencies and incongruences between academics acceptance of inclusive principles and their practice. This study cites lecturers lack of preparedness "to make the necessary changes to enable such an approach" (O'Donnell et al., 2012, p.70) despite their support of IP principles. There is evidence of similar findings in my research for inconsistencies between practice and university policies and being prepared to make changes to comply may be one factor. However, the themes emerging from this doctoral research suggest a more complex range of responses and practices that lecturers seem to undertake. The changes they undertake are related to their personal values and judgement in relation to student needs and involve complex relationships with students. This may be related to their independence at the chalk face, and the immediate pressure felt by having to "just deal with situations" as David's response might be interpreted. Susanna indicates a problem she experiences interpreting what policy statements are asking of the lecturer, and feels like she has "individual discretion" to enact the policy as she

understands it. The ways actors *do* IP through individual adaptation was an important finding in this research and is discussed further in the next section.

4.4.3 Subversive policy enactments

The analysis of data led to an emerging theme of participants autonomy in working on the ground in the field and interpreting IP according to their individual values. This was expected from previous studies from O'Donnell et al. (2012) and Hemmings et al. (2013), where lecturers acted within their contextual systems to adapt their practice, or not. Policy implementation studies also have identified gaps between the goals and origins of policy and those that have responsibility for enacting policy. Cohen, March and Olsen (1972) refer to this as "organisational slack" in the garbage-can model of policy implementation in HE, whilst Lipsky (Lipsky, Gartner, Vitello, & Mithaug, 1998; Weatherley & Lipsky, 1977) refer to the role of the "street-level bureaucrats" in inclusion policy implementation within education.

Acting as street-level bureaucrats with the power to disregard IP policy completely was evident:

> I don't set out purposefully for each module to start thinking, right, I need to consider inclusivity. Perhaps I should. Greta (Northern, 25 years)

If there is space for lecturers to construct their own version of IP within policy implementation gaps, as we saw in previous themes, there is also the freedom to ignore policy completely:

> It's very much down to you individually, and you could probably get away with not doing it at all if you didn't want to – if you didn't have the inclination to do it. Yeah, you could get away with doing the bare minimum. Yeah, so there's just a bit of a hole really, I think. I don't know why. Alice (Northern, 10 years)

> We're writing all these things we want to achieve but then how many people actually follow what is the objective? Most people just look what is the content area I need to do deliver and what I need to do with the content. Leon (Midlands, 10 years)

For other policy actors, changes to assessment methods and process was the most cited way that lecturers modified their practice to meet the needs of individual students, as Claire states:

> But for her, we had to sometimes make significant adjustments in terms of assessment and the way in which we would assess her, to make sure that that was suitable. So, sometimes it had to be a different level, different type of assessment, to make sure that she could show her best qualities. Claire (Southern, 20 years)

Lucinda indicates the limitations and constrictions felt by lecturers. Changing or amending assessments might provide individual help and support for students, but lecturers often made these changes subversively – outside the normal university structures and processes:

> …but the student is having a variety of issues, and we did have to redesign an awful lot of assessments, which is an inconvenience for us more than anything else. Some people will just do things and run with it, but you technically have to go up the hierarchical chain, I suppose, and go okay, I'm looking after this unit, let's talk to the course coordinator. Are you okay with it? And then they'll have to go and ask the person that looks after all of the courses and then they'll have to go and by the time you do that, you're like, okay, let's just do the assignment we always do. Joanne (Southern, 20 years)

Academic staff operating under autonomic professional identities seem to feel bureaucratic processes are limiting the amount of actual change to assessment practice that can be made. In this sense they are acting as "receivers" of policy as outlined in Ball et al's typology of policy positions (2012,p.49) where they cope and muddle through but "managing in the classroom is prime reality" (2012, p.63). One effect this has is that lecturers exercise their agency to take matters into their own hands and make smaller, individually targeted changes to help their students. They are responding to the "micro-pressures of survival, improvement and of performance" (Ball et al., p.70) that makes up the daily life of a lecturer. This practice, whilst helping some students, is clearly too piecemeal to constitute an effective cross-institution approach to IP, as advocated by definitions of IP (Disabled Student Sector Leadership Group, 2017; Hockings, 2010; May & Bridger, 2010). It is perhaps more of an indication that IP policy as implemented by universities is falling short of supporting students that need it.

4.5 Doubt and discomfort

> I'm thinking do I do it? I think I do, but do I though? I'm not sure. Altin (Northern, 3 years)

This section extends the themes discussed in the previous two sections. It builds upon these themes, which answer one research question concerning how lecturers understand interpret and implement IP, and adds a dimension that was previously unthought of before the research began. The framework thematic data analysis method outlined in the methodology chapter enabled participants' direct quotations to be on view. During this process it became obvious that there were many similarities

in the choice of language by participants, which helped to form a picture of the emotional dimension of professional practice related to IP. I reflected in my methodology chapter how I was surprised at the extent to which lecturers openly admitted to a lack of understanding about the process of IP and how often they sought confirmation from me about what they had identified as their interpretations. If I reflect on my assumptions before starting the research, I considered that lecturers had incomplete and varied understandings of IP, and used these differently in their practice. I wanted to understand more about these to help universities achieve IP. I had not considered that lecturers would feel high levels of anxiety about their knowledge or professional practice in relation to IP, and this has become one of the most significant findings of this doctoral research. The participants in this study found this a difficult topic to understand and difficult to discuss:

> But I think for me, that's a real struggle. But it's really tough to create that inclusive environment sometimes. Ilya (Midlands, 6 years) (my emphasis)

The word 'struggle' was used many times to describe experiences with IP policy. These policy tensions were similar to the policy tensions that Maguire et al. (2011) find in their study of policy enactment in schools. Policy discourses often need to have deliverable outcomes which are often difficult for policy actors to achieve, leading to policy discomforts and contradictions. Ball et al identify these as 'murmurings' of the policy positions of 'critics' (2012, p.61) although the participants here did not express their outright dissent of IP that is characterised by this policy typology.

During the interviews I began to appreciate the depth of emotion and anxiety that participants were feeling when discussing IP. Often the interviewees seemed nervous: anxious to say the right thing but clearly not sure whether they were saying the right thing. I have discussed the asymmetrical power relations that I began to feel during the interviews in my methodology chapter, but it is useful to consider those again here. The power relationship that seemed to develop placed me in the role of expert, to which the participants deferred and occasionally asked if they were 'saying the right thing'. This did have the advantage of allowing the participants to discuss how they felt about their teaching quite openly. The interviews became almost confessional, and I felt that without exception each participant felt relief to be able to express their views – which were often angry, frustrated and distressed. The strength of participants'

insecurity, which dominated the interviews, coalesces around fears and doubts. Many of them conclude that they don't know whether they are being inclusive or not:

> I always worry about saying the wrong thing or doing the wrong thing. I try to think about how to do things. But maybe I'm ignoring inclusivity and diversity, when I shouldn't be, I don't know, maybe I am. Anya (Northern, 3 years)
>
> I sometimes wonder, come out of my sessions, I wonder how inclusive I was? Joanne (Southern, 20 years)
>
> I was thinking I don't know if I'm doing the right thing here. I was just using my own intuition as to how I should manage it rather than having any support. David (Northern, 30 years)

My field memos, written after each interview with participants, show a range of verbal and non-verbal communication clues as to the feelings of lecturers as they responded to the interview questions. Few lecturers responded directly to questions with confidence as the following notes demonstrate:

> Shifting in her chair. There are pauses to think. Clearly looks uncomfortable about this question. Claire (Southern, 20 years)
>
> Stuttering. Stalling for time. Asking to repeat the question. Zeyd (Northern, 3 years)
>
> Openly states – can you give me more details. Leon (Midlands, 10 years)
>
> Often long pauses before answering. Ilya (Midlands, 6 years)

This was further explored with the data, which seemed to suggest high levels of anxiety and worry from the participants. In addition to doubts about their inclusivity, their responses also illustrated anxiety about events and cases within the classroom situation. They did not know whether they were 'doing it right'. Their explicit knowledge about IP was not matched by their ability to put the principles into practice. One aspect of IP involves planning at the design stage of curriculum delivery. It was noted in earlier findings that this was absent in most participants' views of IP. The responses seen here offer a reason why this might be the case. The most demanding and immediate requirement of the academic role takes place with students in the lecture room. It is not surprising then that interactions with students are a source of worry for lecturers:

> There's been some nights where I've gone home and thought, I can't sleep because I've said something wrong today. I've got a student in my first year that's currently transitioning, and if that's the right word gender wise. I was

> informed about it before I started, but god, I couldn't sleep because I was just worried I would say something wrong and that I was going to be said something offensive. Femi (Midlands, 5 years)

> And I went home and I told my husband and I spoke to other colleagues about this. I just thought, god did I do the right thing? Did I challenge him in the right way? Did anyone feel left out in that room because of what he said? Did I respond to in the right in the right way? Ilya (Midlands, 6 years)

> Are you being unfair to the student by, yes it ties you up in a little bit of knots, trying to work that one through. Joanne (Southern, 20 years)

> I think consciously when I design the materials, I try to use different ways and as I said earlier, make it accessible. But then, in class it's quite… And I think about it and then, it's like… How do I do it? What's the best way to do it? Elaine (Midlands, 4 years)

Day-to-day interactions cause the most distress for lecturers. In a schools context, Maguire et al. (2011) find this delivery of policy brings the pressure of performativity which "discomforts, de-stabilises, and re-conforms" teacher values. It makes "'what to do for the best' unclear and difficult" (Ball et al., 2011, p97). The findings of this research resonate with this – lecturers appear to be confused by lack of knowledge, yet aware of the need to 'perform' to the needs of the IP policy which creates the discomfort:

> I do think about it. I do think about it, especially if you've got people, with different abilities or learning contracts, to make sure everyone actually is getting what I'm trying to do with them, you know, and it's something I find difficult, did I always…yes. Zeyd (Northern, 3 years)

An awareness of the discomfort felt around difference is growing. Scope, a UK disability equality charity, found that there is a widening gap between disabled and non-disabled people's beliefs around discrimination, and this manifests in public avoidance and not knowing what to do or say in encounters with disabled people. This mirrors the anxiety felt by most people in the interactions with disability, race, gender transitioning etc. For example, Eddo-Lodge identifies the painful language contortions that people go through when talking about race as "awkward cartwheels" (2018) and Blaisdell talks about the avoidance strategies of white people when talking about inequality (2018) and the importance of disrupting whiteness as a dominant discourse. The findings of this research highlight this discomfort and tension and although the participants were not all white or British, they all felt similar tensions and discomforts:

> Never been so aware of being white and middle class. So, that would be the module where I've most been aware of it. Emma (Northern, 25 years)

The discomfort of white people when talking about race and the way in which white people dominate discourses challenging racial injustice is recognised in research (Leibowitz, Bozalek, Rohleder, Carolissen, & Swartz, 2010). There are growing voices which advocate that social justice can only be fulfilled when we all start to have difficult conversations about difference. Atkins argues it is crucial to "interrogate practice" (2016, p. 16), to explore and challenge normative perceptions held by institutions and professionals as expressed through their professional discourse. Gibson (2015, p. 878) further supports the idea that discourses of deficit or difference (Hardy & Woodcock, 2015) perpetuate barriers within existing HE systems and society preventing real change.

Atkin's (2016) call for the interrogation of practice and Gibson's (2015, p. 885) argument that "space is needed for cultures of difference to be explored, for questions to be asked, political conversations to be held and for educators to reflect…" would seem to be appropriate ways forward, given the findings presented here.

4.6 Doing inclusive practice policy – discourses and artefacts

This section presents and discusses the ways the research found IP policy is talked about and presented in universities. It relates to the second research question of this thesis: In what ways do academic teaching staff engage with university policies and processes aimed at supporting the development of IP? The findings presented in this section relate to how IP policy is presented by the university and its managers to lecturers who have the task of interpreting and translating those policies. The research sought to find clarification on how IP is 'done' in universities in the same way that Maguire et al. (2011) describe how policy is transformed into practice in schools:

> Policies become represented and translated in and through different sets of artefacts, experiences, material resources and in-service activities; these micro-technologies and representations of policy that serve as meaning makers and control of meanings in the social-material world of the school. (Ball et al., 2011, p.121)

How a policy is *produced* within an institution is influenced by what Fairclough (1995, p. 132) identifies as "discursive practices, events and texts". The production of IP as a discursive practice through the activities of the university department or faculty and the micro-technologies of where a policy is to be *found* by policy actors is the concern of this section of findings. The theme identified through analysis of the data for this

doctoral study involved looking at how participants saw the activities and micro-technologies of policy communicated in meetings, through emails, through online material, and through academic development initiatives which serve to create the 'discourses' of IP policy. Discourses are significant as they form knowledge about a topic and give it resonance and form. For Foucault "they are practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (Foucault, 1986 ,p. 122 in Maguire et al 2012). The findings presented here concern the way IP is formed and spoken about, or not, through the practices of the university.

4.6.1 Absent and rhetorical inclusive practice policy discourses

In relation to questions which sought to establish the extent of participants' knowledge of national-level policies concerning inclusion and IP, the responses indicate an absence of knowledge or a rudimentary grasp of headline legislation:

> I can't think of any specific ones, sorry. Leon (Midlands, 10 years)

> No, I mean, you kind of read things in the news more on a primary school and secondary school level, I think. But no, I don't really think I've seen anything but maybe that's because I've not gone through teaching qualifications yet, of there being a university policy to that, no. Lucinda (Southern, 20 years)

> I wouldn't say I know much about that. I think they probably are, but I don't really know much. Zeyd (Northern, 3 years)

There were some contrasting responses which identified the existence of anti-discrimination and equality legislation, but these were also limited and suggested a lack of appreciation of the content of such legislation:

> No, I mean, apart from, you know, the obvious Equality Act and all of those kinds of things that drive just morally what we should do as people, no. Katrina (Southern, 20 years)

> The Equality Act. I'm not sure when it was published. It was quite old but it was updated recently. I'm not sure. Emma (Northern, 25 years)

A similar finding was seen in Zhang's quantitative study in the US (Zhang et al., 2010), which found that faculty members' knowledge of their personal and institutional legal responsibilities was often limited. Where a greater knowledge of legal responsibilities existed, this improved lecturers' responsiveness to providing adjustments to their practice for students. According to the current study's findings, it would seem that wider integration of equality concerns, as predicted by Hockings (Hockings, 2010) has not

materialised in the UK since equality legislation has been in place.

Within universities, the extent to which IP or related concepts are focused on varies. Some have explicitly stated headline strategies relating to IP, and some have mid- to lower-level policy statements included in department or faculty operating plans. In themselves, they present conflicting and not always helpful messages for lecturers (O'Donnell, 2016). However, in this study the existence of an IP policy discourse was felt to be absent by participants whether the policies exist or not. IP as a policy is not prominent in daily business activities in university departments, such as team meetings or development events:

> Those things aren't jumping at you as the most important business of the day, and I think that's probably true in the faculty. Alice (Northern, 10 years)

Alice's comments illustrate this theme:

> Like I said, I think there's a lot of talk, and perhaps that's all – perhaps that's what you have at first, you talk and you have policies and then you get better, and incrementally things change and then things become more embedded, but it's not there yet – it's not at the best place it could be. Alice (Northern, 10 years)

One level of engagement with university structures policies and processes happens within faculties, departments and subject group contexts, and was an interesting way that participants viewed their engagement within their immediate spheres of practice. An identifiable person whose role and responsibility it is for matters relating to teaching and learning was indicated by participants within faculty management teams:

> I think in the school for example, we have an Associate Dean for student experience and she herself is really enthusiastic about pedagogy and learning and she's really research active and she does loads of conferences and she presents at those. She is I think, if I really if I wanted to go to anyone, I would probably go to her but she is incredibly busy. So I don't know if it would justify me taking up her time talking about how I improve my teaching practice. Ilya (Midlands, 6 years)

> Probably we have somebody who deals with it as well. We have a quality director and we have other important people, technically. Georgia (Southern, 10 years)

There is some lack of clarity in their knowledge about the scope and influence of the identified management role from these participants, and their title do not reflect any equality and inclusion priorities. Rather the participants locate IP within the realm of

those who are responsible for managing teaching and learning or student experience within faculties.

For one participant, David, this was due to historical changes to the relationship between lecturers and faculty management:

> I think they just feel a disconnect in faculty between management and what happens on the ground which didn't used to be the case I think going back a number of years there did feel a little bit more we were all part of something. David (Northern, 30 years)

Proponents of IP were hopeful that inclusion would become mainstream within universities (Hockings, 2010; May & Bridger, 2010) and that all faculty would become inclusive practitioners. If this is the case there appears to be a lack of understanding concerning whose responsibility this is and the mechanism by which this happens. Ilya presents a reticence to bother management for support, possibly because of a perceived lack of emphasis placed on teaching practice matters.

Alternative policy discourses are given prominence over inclusivity within university contexts. There are other policies which take priority and are foregrounded:

> Inclusiveness needs to become more on the agenda here, I feel. We talk about TEF and REF and student voice, but there's not much done on IP, at least not that… All the other words, you are bombarded with it, but IP, and inclusiveness, you are not… It's not in the foreground I would say. Elaine (Midlands, 4 years)

Visual evidence was collected during the interviews which outlined the local-level university policies and priorities which lecturers were primarily aware of and that impacted their practice. The key policies which were identified were related to employability and research activities. Several lecturers identified the National Student Survey and student satisfaction as a strong priority for their faculty. Only two lecturers mentioned policies directly related to inclusion and IP through their awareness of the BAME attainment gap.

This theme is further developed by participants who were aware of IP discourses within their university departments. However, there was considerable scepticism about how this was presented. Lecturers in this study felt that the policy rhetoric did not reflect true support of the practice, which would be required to affect meaningful change:

> I think maybe the inclusivity, it's just something that's said. Even in our meetings, we're always, 'we're a really diverse school' [mocking tone]. Ilya (Midlands, 6 years)

Programme or subject team meetings are part of the fabric of everyday business for many lecturing staff, but for some lecturers these can often be seen as distractions to the real business of teaching. Even when there are attempts to develop issues related to inclusion through this means, it is often met with resistance and scepticism:

> We had an appalling programme meeting, about, a month ago. It was labelled as decolonising the syllabus, the canon. And, about bringing in BME students, so that's a thing right now. Emma (Northern, 25 years)

> Sometimes things are talked about in quite a holistic, strategical way, but then you actually come to delivering it…and you might want to try a new way of an assignment or something, but you can't. Claire (Southern, 20 years)

> I'm sure we could go to various heads and say what do you think about equality, and they would tell us it's very important and they've really got to factor it in. But is it really taken seriously? I don't know. Alice (Northern, 10 years)

Alice demonstrates how lecturers perceive that IP is often put forward by management as important but rhetorical, and the resources, support and change to enable improvements to happen are often lacking in everyday business.

Hemmings et al.'s (2013) Australian study also found that there were similar barriers to how lecturers develop their IP. Using a practice architectures approach, the authors identify that the architecture of teaching practice located in the cultural-discursive aspects of practice within universities was acting to prevent and hinder lecturers' creativity and ability to change their practice to support principles of inclusivity. Lecturers were encountering discursive difficulties such as university structures and hierarchies which could not be challenged to develop more inclusive ways of teaching, in a similar way to Ahmed's description of institutional "brick walls" (2012).

These findings resonate with the work of Pilkington (2011), who recognises that the public face of the institution – as expressed through policy documents concerning race equality processes – are often well crafted, but argues that they should not be confused with what actually happens in institutions. Often equality policies are abandoned as the university says equality is now part of everyday processes, but if no one is pushing this agenda through everyday activities, the principles become lost or

new policies are never implemented in practice (Ahmed & Swain, 2006; Pilkington, 2011; Tatlow, 2015).

4.6.2 What policy discourses are known by policy actors?

Several participants demonstrated a lack of understanding concerning university expectations about IP, the location of such a policy or even what the university policy regarding inclusivity was:

> We have a teaching and learning strategy in the university, which I know quite well. And, I guess, it (IP) is in that. It is in that, to be fair. But I don't think it's anything that's down to say you must have IP. Katrina (Southern, 20 years)

> So, I'm aware of these things that go on and I know to think about them consciously, but I couldn't really state specific policies. That's not to say I've not had them; I'm sure I have had them. But whether I've actually – you know I can't say I've read them very specifically, but I do know that they are there. Alice (Northern, 10 years)

Alice and Katrina are both experienced lecturers and yet have difficulty articulating what IP means in their respective universities. The tone of their comments was defensive: they protest that they know it is published somewhere, but they are prepared to admit to that they might not have read it. This is a very common theme for all participants. They exhibit awareness of and support for the policy, but the specific detail of the requirements or what is involved alludes them. They are discomforted by this.

Anya and John highlight an important finding for the research questions. The existence of policy or process does not seem to be effective in informing and improving lecturers' understandings of IP in either an explicit or mainstream way. May and Bridger's (2010) hopes for inclusion policies were that alternative provision-type universities would move from separate policies which articulate inclusion to the more desirable fully inclusive institution which embeds inclusion policies in all functions of university practice. The findings of this research seem to throw doubt on the achievement of these goals.

To illustrate this theme further, participants often indicated that they understand they should be teaching inclusively, but feel that they are not supported to clearly understand what is involved in this process:

> I think it's a very broad term and we are required to teach inclusively, however the support that's given on that… [transcript has a pause] Anya (Northern, 3 years)

> For example, in the documents for the teaching observation, you are asked when you observe others, or when you're observed, the degree of inclusiveness. How inclusive was the teaching? Then there are no further details on what the university means about inclusiveness. John (Northern, 10 years)

Anya and John have appreciated that their knowledge is somewhat lacking and their discomfort and anxiety is evidenced by their appreciation that the specific detail about 'how to go on' on a daily basis in their coal-face teaching with IP is lacking from the communication of this policy from their university.

4.6.3 Experiencing policy through email

The micro-technology of policy work as it travels through universities is evidenced in the following sections. The 'deliverology' (Barber, 2007) of policy through the hierarchy of policy actors to front-line service delivery is of interest for the research aims of this study. Email communication is the most cited method of how universities communicate policy to their lecturing staff. This is one way universities create IP policy *artefacts*, and the modus operandi by which they convey them as policy subjects:

> How I physically experience that policy is probably get an email, a long email, with some attachments, and that's it. Then we're left to interpret that or understand that in whichever way we can really. They may not be very explicit, but yeah, email is the main way that you – we actually experience policy. Alice (Northern, 10 years)

Alice expresses how the policy is not well understood through emails, and she demonstrates a common feeling amongst participants: that they are individually 'left' to interpret and translate policy how they wish. The problem also concerns confusion and contradictory policy subjects:

> The problem with policy is, it's not often communicated very well. You've often got departments with conflicting sources of information. Joan (Midlands, 10 years)

An important factor here is that emails that are very long are discouraging lecturers from engaging with the content. Greta and David are honest enough to say they do not read these emails:

> Well, probably, just through emails and bulletins that come through emails which, to be honest, I don't always read, because they're not a priority a lot of the time. And, if they've come from the wider university email, then I don't

> always read them. I just bank them for another time when I've got time to read them. Greta (Northern, 25 years)

> By osmosis…We get newsletters to tell us different things and there are occasionally briefings if you've got the time and inclination to go along. I do think there's an awful lot of staff who will just hit the delete button, me included. I have got to that point where I think you know what, seen it too many times before. It's just lots of words and it would be about how they can try and bring themselves up the rankings, how they can save money, how they can rationalise staffing but still give the good show of student experience. It is anonymous, isn't it? David (Northern, 30 years)

David is strongly sceptical again about the motives of university policies and initiatives, fearing the rhetorical lip service paid to principles of inclusion and being able to give a good show, whilst the main motivators are financial and reputational. His comments are echoed in the work of Ahmed (2007), who found that inclusion and equality work done in universities was mostly about the policy document rather than the *doing*, which often hit institutional brick walls. Furthermore, these findings support Ahmed's findings, which outline that academics often ignored documents sent out by diversity practitioners, feeling that they were not applicable to them or simply audit based (Ahmed, 2012). For my participants however, it seemed that email communications were ignored or shelved also because academics felt time pressured, or that the university was insincere in their intentions as they prioritised other policies.

4.6.4 Experiencing policy through staff intranet

Extending this theme, IP is also 'delivered' to a lesser extent through the resources on what universities call a staff intranet. Some participants were aware of intranet-based resources that are linked to IP, whether they are strategy documents or IP resources for teaching that universities prepare and locate for staff to use:

> The only information I get about learning contracts or IP is from the portal. Anya (Northern, 3 years)

This method of policy communication relies on active participation from lecturers to seek out the required strategies and policies, which some participants indicated is not always the case:

> I'm going to be honest now…I mean I could have found it and I could have dug around and I could have thought about it because the various things on Blackboard etc that you could have a look at and I have done that in the past, but to be quite honest, it is not very good with its website, because it's such a large organisation finding something is very hard, I think. Joanne (Southern, 20 years)

> Probably, I'm fairly lazy, I won't go out and look for it. I'll wait until it's interpreted for me, which bits do I need to know…And that'll come out on a StaffNet notice, that everybody sees, or doesn't see because they don't look at them. Katrina (Southern, 20 years)

In summary, universities rely on intranets to deliver policy artefacts to staff. However, this is problematic, as lecturers find them hard to find and difficult to understand or apply to their own practice.

4.6.5 Experiencing policy through academic development teams and events

IP policy is also delivered through formal university structures which create a department whose responsibility it is to support academic development of teaching practice. Awareness and knowledge of the structures and teams that the university puts in place was relatively high in this study, and participants indicated that they know these departments could help them to adapt their practice. However, when participants talked about these structures, they often expressed tentative knowledge about their names or the functions that these departments perform, as can be seen in comments from Leon and Katrina. The problem seems to be that these departments are located elsewhere from the working locations of participants:

> So they were very, very helpful. What do they call them, Centre for Learning Excellence. Leon (Midlands, 10 years)

> That's a central university learning and teaching unit which, yes, has that role and has a retention progression person. Katrina (Southern, 20 years)

There are issues with these departments too, as funding is often cut by universities and initiatives often fall foul of changes in structures and processes initiated by wider quality processes – further examples of Ahmed's (2012) institutional brick walls:

> So our centre for learning excellence they do a huge amount of research around that very thing, like inclusive learning environment. So even though they're part of the university, definitely they're much more focused on learning. So they'll bring out a new document or a new policy that we should be doing, and then all of a sudden, oh, no, that was never approved. Joan (Midlands, 10 years)

> We used to have the CLE department so the Centre of Learning Excellence, but that department, you've come at the right time, it's just been slashed. A vast number of them have now left, so we don't have that support there much. Katrina (Southern, 20 years)

Policy artefacts: inclusive practice academic development events

During the interviews participants were asked whether they used university resources to support their IP or pedagogy. Many lecturers did not engage in these types of professional development events:

> Not actually going to any conferences or training events they put on or anything like that. No. I haven't. Lucinda (Southern, 20 years)

Claire raises the clear tension between having time to develop one's professional role and trying to deal with more immediate performativity concerns related to the preparation of good teaching materials:

> But quite often those sessions run half a day and you literally cannot afford, unfortunately, however much you want to, we can barely lift our heads above the parapet most of the time, never mind take the time to able to do that. And, we used to be able to do that but now time is just… And, the pressures on us, as you probably know, are just so intense that there's lots of things that I see but there's very few things that I actually have time to go to, unfortunately. I'm sure that's going to be a real common theme. Claire (Southern, 20 years)

A very strong discussion theme came through the analysis of comments in this area, involving anger and resentment about the quality and relevance of the events themselves:

> In terms of personal development, it's an absolute crock of, I mean, we have to sit through these god-awful events where they sit and talk to us, literally at us for seven hours about how wonderful everything is. There is absolutely no development at all, in any sense. In fact, we were talking the other day about how we can possibly be academics in such an environment where we're not encouraged, it's ridiculous. Joan (Midlands, 10 years)

> We had, you know, one of those really awful HR training courses that you have to go on and it was about don't judge someone because of how they look. You know, it was just really at that cursory level stuff. So I wouldn't say there was a huge focus on that, no. Ilya (Midlands, 6 years)

Furthermore, the events caused a great deal of frustration with existing university structures and processes, which participants felt prevented them from putting in place what the university was advocating:

> So, these are fine as considerations, but the training was awful, in that we had people come from another university and talk about a module that they did, which sounded a lot like a module that we had done previously and been told we had to stop doing. So, it just hit all the wrong buttons in terms of training, so there is a certain kind of cynicism that kicks in after a whilst, where you get a bit resistant to the way you're going to be trained. Emma (Northern, 25 years)

> Because, it feels like you're telling us what, in an ideal world, you'd do. But actually, we used to do that, and then you told us not to, or that that won't fit with the rooms that we've got. I shouldn't be cynical about it, but we had some bad training sessions, and it puts you off a bit. Ilya (Midlands, 6 years)

These were important issues for participants, and the comments make a very important contribution to the research questions. It seems that such events act in the opposite way, underlining the frustration felt by lecturers trying to work effectively within university structures. Ball et al. (2011, p.77) identify this in schools as "pressures to perform" exerted by delivery and governance systems which set up expectations to put forward that this pressure results in policy discomforts and contradictions felt by policy actors. The tension of setting up unattainable policy expectations and the resulting discomfort felt by participants can be seen in these findings.

In summary, university-organised development events are useful for some lecturers, but most think they are irrelevant, that the content is not appropriate and more importantly that there are no provisions for time to put the suggestions in action or to work on the issues and implement them.

Inclusive practice discourses through professional qualification

Most participants had undertaken some type of teaching qualification or professional development course. Many reflected that they had become aware of and learned about IP during these activities, and that they were valuable for this purpose. As Femi points out, knowing the subject is not enough if you are not a skilled teacher:

> A lot I thought about came from the tiny teaching qualification I did. I guess I'll get even better the more I do. I think that we should be given teaching qualifications quite soon to starting because sometimes lecturers, you might be an expert in what you did, but if you can't deliver that there's no point. If you can't deliver that in an articulate and inclusive way, there's no point really to it. Femi (Midlands, 5 years)

> I've probably found most of it through having done the PG Cert. It's probably not the answer the university would like. Joanne (Southern, 20 years)

Participants also recognised that their involvement in professional accreditation schemes run by AdvanceHE had a role in informing them about IP. Whilst there was evidence that participants who had applied to this fellowship scheme for professional accreditation reflected that they found it useful, they were sceptical about its ability to fully realise the goal of IP. The length of time since the completion of the activity is

highlighted and recognised that it may then become easy to forget the lessons learnt in everyday practice:

> I'm just trying to think back to when we were doing the HEA, because I think I did mine through the PG Cert and we had sessions on how to, for example, sessions on group work inclusivity. I think it was just mentioned in passing. The inclusivity stuff, I think there was a course. This was years ago when I first joined the university. Ilya (Midlands, 6 years)

The nature of the qualification is that lecturers are required to provide evidence of their practice related to the UK professional standards framework (UKPSF) in a reflective portfolio. The impetus is very much on individual self-directed preparation and development of reflective material. The value of the fellowship in supporting IP was appreciated by participants. However, they felt that their university's policy of lecturers having a teaching qualification was more to do with key performance indicators and goals rather than a serious attempt to develop IP within the academic workforce:

> Doing the HEA has been really useful, but quite self-directed reading around, but that's not really – that's only a policy in terms of the university want people to have the fellowship, it's not really them saying go and do the fellowship so you can really learn about inclusive practice. Alice (Northern, 10 years)

In summary, the discourse surrounding teaching qualifications in universities shows that they are used to develop IP policy artefacts. That is, they become one way that IP policy is transmitted and created within universities. They are identified as useful by participants in relation to IP, but are also recognised as limiting for achieving equality goals within universities. AdvanceHE fellowships are not specifically about IP, and may have been undertaken some time previously, similarly for PGCE in HE courses to be of use or relevance to lecturers in their current practice.

Networks: policy actors as policy subjects

An important finding was that participants used informal networks and, to a lesser extent, formal networks with colleagues to support and develop their pedagogical practice, in preference to any other form of university provided resource or support:

> I find it easier actually to speak to colleagues, more accessible than having to go to find the resource in the centre or the person or the individual or the area to get that help, to be honest. John (Northern, 10 years)

This extract suggests that IP policy is difficult to access and *find* for participants. Representations of it are thought to be located in a far-off land called 'the centre', in

the keeping of someone who has IP in their job title. In this sense, IP as a policy subject is not immediately or obviously part of everyday university discourses as seen previously in the findings of this research (section 4.3). This theme is further illustrated by participants' comments about informal networks formed within academia as the most important way to seek support for professional practice.

Within universities there is an assumption that delivering policy involves formal mechanisms such as email communication, resources on staff intranets, academic development departments, and professional qualifications. For many participants, this seemed of less relevance to creating IP policy subjects than a more informal network of support from colleagues, as the following two transcript extracts show:

> I could ask my colleagues, more senior colleagues with years of experience. Anya (Northern, 3 years)

> Other than looking at the documents, the policy, the strategy of the university to see what's in there, other than that, informally talking to colleagues and… Based on their own experience, asking them how they would tackle something. Or I'd got a specific issue or a specific inclusive challenge, then I can speak to them and they would give me some advice on how I could handle that. Altin (Northern, 3 years)

The forming of networks appeared to have evolved as a coping mechanism over several years, so that the network is strongly bonded and based on shared histories:

> There's people I've known for years across the university, colleagues who have got experience the same as me…There's an informal network of people who've been here probably 20 years plus, who've seen the changes in regulations and what we are now required to do to give every student every possible chance to be included and to do well. And so, there's probably five, six people who… Formally now, it's more difficult probably. We rely on that sort of internal network of people. Katrina (Southern, 20 years)

This extract is an interesting example of how a network forms, and would seem to suggest a possible source of the misunderstandings that were discussed in section 4.3. Katrina relies on her small group network for information, but she does mention that this trust is forged on shared histories. This may be one way in which the norms of existing behaviour have been replicated and transmitted within university cultures. In complexity theory terms, such a contingent process in an open system creates change-resistant behaviour, which is path dependent (Morrison, 2008; Pierson, 2000) leading to slow and limited change processes.

One possible reason colleagues turn to their networks to interpret and support teaching practice development in IP is that lecturers feel isolated. When new policies and strategies are communicated by the university, lecturers seek out the reassurance and opinions of others about how to interpret them. John identified this as a factor in why he had formed a network of close colleagues:

> Yes, with colleagues…We have a WhatsApp group now. The guys in the subject group, we can try and help if one of us is struggling with a situation and… not always inclusivity but it links to that and just like it comes up. Because when you're teaching alone in a place, you rarely… It's hard to get a time when everyone's together. That's the challenge. I see someone in the corridor briefly or I don't see someone for a month, actually a whole month. John (Northern, 10 years)

This extract shows how participants considered the benefits of attaching themselves to another colleague in an unofficial mentor system, and used this experience to guide their decision making for their practice:

> Mainly my portfolio leader, she has long experience in teaching. She is not my official mentor, but I have a different mentor who I don't talk to. I trust her, and she has really good advice for me on how to… If there is a difficult situation, how to deal with that. Elaine (Midlands, 4 years)

Policy actors themselves become policy subjects delivering the policy message (or their interpretations of it) and therefore influencing others by reinforcing existing practice norms. O'Donnell's (2012) study in Scotland suggests Wenger's (1998, p.2) "communities of practice" as a possible tool for universities to help lecturers develop and improve their IP. The findings of this research would seem to suggest that the informal networks formed by lecturers – although they might be seen as communities of practice – have slightly different orientations and functions. These findings seem to suggest that participants use them not as subject-specific tribes (Becher & Trowler, 2001) but as support networks to help them overcome the difficulties of working within the structures of the universities. Furthermore, whilst literature on communities of practice seems to be overwhelmingly positive, there is evidence that relying on colleagues for advice may lead to recirculation of bad practice or misunderstandings and reproduce the existing normative system (Pemberton, Mavin, & Stalker, 2007).

4.7 Constraints of academic agency: power, space and time

Much research in HE concerning the issue of inclusion and equality mentions 'barriers' (Denhart, 2008; Fuller et al., 2004; Lloyd, 2008; Madriaga et al., 2010; Shepherd, 2018) when exploring student experiences of inequality in relation to HE. Most studies identify lecturers, or more generally teaching and learning practice, as a barrier to equality as felt by students. This study sought to explore that barrier and tried to know more about what might be causing it. The findings of this research identified the contextual constraints that lecturers felt as they went through the process of enactment of IP policy. Whilst earlier studies identified institutional constraints to lecturer autonomy (O'Donnell et al., 2012; Smith, 2010), the research findings extend understanding and knowledge of how institutional constraints are in play and influence a participant's ability to enact IP. A 'barrier' implies agents are forging forward and hitting a problem, and this is certainly true, but my analysis of this study's data would suggest that constraints may be a better way to conceptualise the complex interplay of elements within university contexts which may be holding lecturers back from changing their professional teaching practice. Constraints surrounding the ability of lecturers to practice IP were found to be evident in Hemmings, Kemmis and Reupert's (2013) Australian study, which concluded that lecturers' professional knowledge and practice of IP were constrained by the university policy and practice contexts within which they found themselves.

The findings discussed in this section outline constraints that were evident in the data about the extent to which university structures and processes impacted lecturers' ability to develop their own pedagogy and approach, including the implementation of IP. The findings presented here develop Hemmings et al.'s work further by providing a more nuanced picture of those constraints. It becomes clear that there are significant challenges for lecturer agency, including power relationships resulting from intersections between university managers and processes; restricted space to implement IP arising from bureaucratic regulatory structures and processes; and the restriction of time to engage fully with IP and change practice.

4.7.1 Powerlessness

A common theme emerged from the data, as participants mentioned the hierarchical nature of work within universities. This was related to the effect of management

decisions and attitudes about their attempts to implement changes to practice. Participants expressed their experiences of an unequal power balance when it came to negotiating their practice with management. This is illustrated by a comment from Joanne which illustrates the effect of the hierarchical chain of command is a reduction in the capacity to achieve changes in pedagogical practice:

> So yes, I guess barriers will be time, budgets and that kind of hierarchical chain of command that makes things, yes, get forgotten. Joanne (Southern, 20 years)

Good teaching and learning practice is forgotten because it is too difficult to get those in management to agree and support what participants see as critical and important changes. Once this hegemonic constraint is experienced, it seemed to make participants feel unwilling to raise any problems or issues:

> I've not taken those things to management because I know that management probably couldn't support me in those things. Ilya (Midlands, 6 years)

Powerful sentiments are offered to demonstrate participants' feelings of powerlessness when confronted with managerial culture within universities concerned with performativity (Ball, 2012; Riddell et al., 2007) and audit culture (Allan, 2010):

> And we have the periodic reviews that we've had about three years ago,…they're given to like the senior members of the team. So because I'm only at lecturer level, trying to feed into that in a meaningful way, sometimes I think your voice is not heard always. It's always about, what's the business rationale behind something rather than just going hey, let's be inclusive and let's do these things because we're in academia, and we're a university, we should be doing these things, we should be expanding our students' minds. All of that gets dragged away and it's just like okay, let's look at the numbers. And then you just think, oh god, unless you've got a strong justification it's so hard to have impact and change. Ilya (Midlands, 6 years)

This comment demonstrates limitations on IP brought about through unequal power relationships and differences in attitudes to supporting students that exist between lecturers and management teams. Managerial priorities seemed to be fixed upon the 'business' of a university rather than delivering changes to pedagogy that could help deliver IP. This was talked about in strong terms by participants:

> And, actually, I was programme leader at that point, and we were doing a revalidation…It was an absolute nightmare. And…and we had to fight absolute intransigence to get best practice, what we felt like. So, that's an example, I guess, of where university directors absolutely worked against each other to make the on-the-ground practice impossible. Emma (Northern, 25 years)

John talks about an example where the university quality team are asking lecturers to give evidence of their inclusivity as part of the validation process. Whilst considering inclusivity at this stage in the process seems to be a positive move, it is not supported with strong communication about what that would entail and where to find support on developing IP as part of the course ethos:

> We were doing revalidation years ago and we were asked this question for our revalidation. How do you promote inclusivity in your course? We were struggling with the answer because and so, we wrote some general points about how we're trying to do it, but it wasn't good enough. And when we were told it wasn't good enough, when we asked the question, well, what are you looking for? Their response was, it's not our job to tell you what to write. It's just to tell you if it's right or not. John (Northern, 10 years)

A strong and emotive statement from Joan summarises the depth of frustration felt by lecturers in relation to the stifling impact of bureaucracy and administration on pedagogical practice and creativity:

> We're all at breaking point anyway, but there's no development at all, there's no encouragement, there's nothing. You need to have opportunity to share, to talk to each other and we've been trying to be so passionate about what we do, and we had really quite young group in terms of academics. At the beginning we all sit around, and we got so excited about field trips and doing all these things and everything, you're just stopped at every single stage from any type of creativity. Just from admin, it's all just admin related. Everything is a tick box. Joan (Midlands, 10 years)

Inclusivity is talked about by managers as a desirable practice, but participants are sceptical about the substance behind the narrative. This is significant on two counts. Firstly, it is seen as empty rhetoric which could be easily ignored, and managers' discourses also actively move to prevent any attempts at change for IP:

> Well, there is one module that we have been running that's been absolutely IP, and we're now being forced to stop. It's an online assessment where there has been, every week, an opportunity for assessment… So, everyone agreed it was best practice, but when the students are engaged in a discussion forum every week, that needs a module leader monitoring and intervention, sometimes. So, instead of having two-hours lecture, we'd have a module leader on it for an hour, engaging. But actually, it took longer than that. And, the marking of it, depending on how many students contributed each week, could be quite onerous. So, the department has finally decided that they can't resource it. Emma (Northern, 25 years)

4.7.2 Module teams and power relations

This theme was further illuminated and developed when participants made it clear that working with other colleagues, in addition to managerial control, impaired their

ability to carry out IP as they would wish to do. It is the case that there are lecturers who teach on modules where they have no control or influence on content or assessment approach. Anya found this particularly difficult as a lecturer with three years' teaching experience:

> And therefore, this has impact on the way I do things because if I'm non-module leader, I might be told by the module leader, oh, you have to do this exercise this particular way. But then because I've got five different learning contracts, I can't do this task in this particular way. I have to adapt this to suit all students with learning contracts. It is really difficult. Anya (Northern, 3 years)

> I suppose this was how things had to be. There was nothing else that I could do, I think. Unless, maybe, if module leader created a completely different type of assessment package, maybe that would be a different option, yes. Anya (Northern, 3 years)

This means that a potentially significant number of lecturers are powerless to change practice within the current structure of working in module teams, even if they are aware and have a desire to do so. Power is located in the hands of module leaders, who are often more experienced members of academic staff. The significance of networks of academic staff and the communication within teams is discussed by Kemmis (2005) whereby professional norms are reproduced and reinforced by all colleagues in social practice networks through Habermas's concepts of communicative action (Kemmis, 2005). John demonstrates that this is not always problematic. If the practice of the colleague is supportive of IP, often through individually constructing flexible mechanisms to support students, then this can have a positive effect:

> I'm actually teaching with a colleague. The colleague already had a system in place that allowed, if ever an individual or the majority of the group felt that it wasn't working for multiple reasons, whether the student wasn't contributing, that they could split. That was an option. John (Northern, 10 years)

This was an important finding which is not found in the limited number of existing studies about lecturers' experiences of IP. Working in teams with colleagues has the potential to be beneficial (Wenger, 1998), but could be a constraint for practice. Experienced colleagues, or those who are module leaders, are more influential and in a position of power to make changes to teaching and learning within a module. But they may not have the same views, understandings and values as others teaching on the same module. Professional norms which work against IP become replicated in those

social practice networks. This could, in part, help explain the problematic enactment of IP policy and the lack of progress in tackling inequality in universities.

4.7.3 Constrained spaces

The theme of powerlessness is further considered and expanded upon in this section. For IP to be part of the pedagogical practices of lecturers, it requires flexible structures, processes and an enabling culture within university departments and subject groups to developing new practices and changing existing practices (Bridger & Shaw, 2012; Hockings, Brett, & Terentjevs, 2012). In a sense, the space to experiment is required to enable new practices to be tried and then either rejected or adopted.

There was much evidence in this study that this feeling of space to work and push boundaries was not the experience of the participants. In fact, the opposite seemed to be true. Participants identified that the systems forming university cultures worked against their ability to determine their pedagogical practice. For example, Claire identifies constraints in the university processes, where IP should be considered in the initial development of modules:

> I think it comes sometimes in developing the modules and developing the documents for the validation reports. Sometimes they are so restrictive in terms of what you have to put, tick all the right boxes in the validation document. I think they become part of a box ticking exercise, to be fair, to get past the validation process. Claire (Southern, 20 years)

Claire further illustrates the difficulty felt in trying to achieve the paperwork required as part of university quality processes, and the limiting effect this has on the judgement of lecturers. This participant feels they have been stripped of their professional autonomy and are not allowed the space to use their judgement to develop IP:

> Bureaucracy. Red tape. A lot of the developments that are being made, I think, in one sense, for consistency and quality, ostensibly, and to try to ensure that we deliver a quality experience to every single student unfortunately puts so many barriers up there that actually it sometimes takes away your intuitive understanding of what that student needs because that quality control is always on your shoulder, when, actually, you want to make a judgement. And, in the past in HE, you were allowed to make that judgement, and you could do the best for that particular students without having to be answerable to a whole checklist. Claire (Southern, 20 years)

This was a theme strongly supported by other participants. Ilya related the rigid structures in their university to content within a module, the method of assessment,

and the number of hours contact that are set for the module. These are all set prior to validation of courses and, once lecturers are finally teaching those modules in front of students, they have very little opportunity to develop any meaningful changes to them:

> I would probably say the university I work at is quite rigid in terms of what we deliver and how we deliver it. For example, even though I'm unit coordinator, all the units that I teach on I'm really restricted in what changes I can bring in. In our university, we have the unit information form, and you cannot deviate from that. The content you've got to cover is specified in that. How you assess is specified in that. The amount of hours you spend teaching each week is specified in that and you can't break from that. Saying that, if I said that to management, they'd say yes, but there's huge amounts of flexibility even within the unit information form and you can always bring in new content. But I think for me, that's a real struggle. Ilya (Midlands, 6 years)

This rigid structural process limits the power and agency of the lecturer, who has very little agency to change that process. Anya highlights how – even if students are identified as having a need for reasonable adjustments – it is difficult to achieve this with pre-determined learning outcomes and the dominance of traditional approaches to assessment methods:

> Oh, yes, bureaucracy. The processes of… We've got very strict assessment outcomes, so we still have to make sure that even students with learning contract, that they meet the assessment outcomes. These assessment outcomes are very rigid and strict. But there's no flexibility in terms of the course work because even students with learning contracts, they still have to do the same kind of essay, report or presentation that the rest of the group. Anya (Northern, 3 years)

> Well we're restricted, aren't we, by the university policies in terms of assessments. What can you say; but I mean you can't do sub-tests, you can't encourage them to go and do something on their own way and then come back and show me in a different type of way. It's very much, this is a 20-credit module, therefore that equates to 4,000 words, and there's very little flexibility there in actually doing that. Alice (Northern, 10 years)

The findings related to pragmatic dilemmas of practice in section 4.4 demonstrate how participants reacted to the contextual factors described here. The findings indicated that many participants resorted to pragmatic subversive and individually created responses to support students which they felt to be outside of the remit of their teaching role. Key terms used by participants to describe their experiences give an indication of the limitations of the amount of space that they must work in include: restricted, struggle, limited, strict, rigid, tough.

Change is possible, but the structures and processes in order to make this happen are cumbersome, and participants demonstrate how the structure prevents lecturers from making those changes and encourages them to fall back on existing ways of working. Participants were too pressured to find the space and strength to put their ideas through the process's universities required to make changes:

> Then also getting it signed off, as in approval, which sounds odd but getting that confirmation that you're allowed to do that might take time. Some people will just do things and run with it but you technically have to go up the hierarchical chain, I suppose, and go okay, I'm looking after this unit, let's talk to the course coordinator. Are you okay with it? And then they'll have to go and ask the person that looks after all of the courses and then they'll have to go and by the time you do that, you're like, okay, let's just do the assignment we always do. Joanne (Southern, 20 years)

> And I think even if you want to change stuff, it's such a put off to go through all that admin process when you're so overworked as it is, it's quite tough to change what you're delivering. Ilya (Midlands, 6 years)

Whilst messages may be given that inclusion matters, any attempt to make changes or ask for clarification is met with procedural difficulties and constraints from quality teams:

> So the quality department for example, will say, no, that's not the right format, that's not the right piece of information you're supposed to be using. So there seems to be very much conflicting, I wouldn't necessarily say messages, but just in terms of what you're supposed to be doing. Joan (Midlands, 10 years)

Decisions about how students are taught are made by university managers. These decisions affect the ability of lecturers to improve and change their approaches to pedagogy. Participants in this research pointed to group size within the classroom as a factor in their ability to implement IP:

> We've got 90-something of them and what do we do in the lecture situation? We haven't got an answer for that yet. Joanne (Southern, 20 years)

Traditional forms of HE teaching methods such as lectures are seen as problematic (Gibbs, 2013; Hughes, 2009; Schmidt, Wagener, Smeets, Keemink, & van der Molen, 2015) for all students, but still dominate learning contexts in HE. The answer for some lecturers with large group teaching is to restrict the types of assessment to the more traditional and inaccessible ways of assessing students, as Alice points out:

> I suppose the reality of a module like {} where there's 200 students, that's going to be hard to deliver [IP], and reports and exams clearly, realistically and logistically that's appropriate I think. Alice (Northern, 10 years)

Hockings' (2010) model for IP clearly advocated that IP principles should have as their focus:

> the need to see students as individuals, to learn about and value their differences and to maintain high expectations of all students. (Hockings, 2010, p.46)

Achieving such a focus on individual learning seems an unrealistic task if teaching is conducted in such large groups. Moreover, the futility of trying to achieve IP within such an intensive educational environment at this level is highlighted by Georgia, who is worried about having to try in impossible circumstances loaded with tension:

> In a way because from one side, maybe you can't accommodate everybody's needs and wants at university, and they are teaching class of 30, 40, 60 people, so they can't maybe pay attention to some individuals…So, and I mean at the end of the day, there's this tension so I think that's what we all have to worry about. Georgia (Southern, 10 years)

Managerial decisions regarding the type and length of contact lecturers have with students also impacts their ability to bring change and creativity to their teaching. Emma seems to think that these decisions to reduce seminar time in favour of lecturer time in larger groups is driven by financial considerations:

> They changed all our contact hours, and that changed the way that we taught. But the point of the extra lecture time is, it's cheap, isn't it? It's cheaper than a seminar, so it's one member of staff with the cohort. It's more big-group teaching, less small-group teaching. So, that was a university thing, interpreted by my faculty and department in a particular way, impacted on my teaching. Emma (Northern, 25 years)

Small groups and continuity are important for John, who values the relationship that can be developed between lecturer and student:

> I think I'm lucky because we have small…like five in a tutorial group. Because of the way our course is run, I'll see more of the same students throughout. John (Northern, 10 years)

Space within modules to work with students is important for developing a student-based focus for IP, and John realises his privileged position. This is not the case for all the other participants, who work with large numbers of students with large seminar groups and lectures covering the whole module cohort. This would seem to be evidence of the commodification of universities (Ball, 2012; Collini, 2012; Ek, Ideland, Jönsson, & Malmberg, 2013; Riddell et al., 2007), which sees universities increasingly prioritising market principles in a neoliberal context. This theme is discussed in the

next section, which identifies the amount of time that participants are able to spend on adapting their teaching and learning practice for inclusion.

4.7.4 Time

Research in conceptions of academic work have sought to identify how intensification of workload has affected professional practice (Alderman, 1996; Barry, Chandler, & Clark, 2001; Evans, 2002; Hartman & Darab, 2012; Henkel, 2005; Kenny, 2017; Macdonald & Wisdom, 2002; Marginson & Smyth, 1995; Mårtensson, 2015; Sang, Powell, Finkel, & Richards, 2015). I consider the impact of workload here as a theme evident from the analysis of data. The evidence presented to me during my interviews and in the subsequent analysis of data suggests that lecturers experience keenly the pressure of demanding workloads, whether this derives from heavy teaching responsibilities, high research expectations or burdensome administration. It was not the intention of this research to explore the potential sources of intensification, but it has illuminated it as one of the potential factors in influencing the ability of lecturers to be agentic actors and improve their pedagogical practice to achieve IP. Lucinda sums this theme up and demonstrates the impact of a combination of a lack of time to make changes and high expectations of the role they play in having to be everything to everybody as a barrier to IP. The difficulties felt by this lecturer are evident in the fieldnotes, which add depth to this data:

> We do have full workloads, so then to be everything to everybody is just sometimes hard… sometimes, don't have the time to have a fresh look at your lesson and redo it etc. with inclusivity in mind. I did that lesson last year, that's going to do for this year, kind of thing. Lucinda (Southern, 20 years)
>
> Fieldnotes: This interview was tense. Lecturer quite down.
>
> I suppose, the other thing is the sheer workload. So, just keeping up to date with the sheer amount of paperwork and communications. Femi (Midlands, 5 years)
>
> I think also lack of time to do things. Because I would love to spend more time reading about different learning contracts and how to support students, even think about different types of assessment for them, but we don't have time allocated for that. I sometimes doubt myself if I'm doing a good job. I just don't know. Anya (Northern, 3 years)
>
> And that's, I think, the really sad thing because I love teaching. I don't even really get the space to think of cool stuff to do and I do my absolute best to incorporate things hence why every weekend is spent working. Joan (Midlands, 10 years)

The consequences of high workloads are high levels of tension and anxiety for lecturers and lead to working outside of work hours. “Being everything to everybody” is how Lucinda views her role, and clearly this is impossible, as the role of a lecturer expands to include many varied activities (Currie & Vidovich, 2009). The lack of available time restricts their creativity, their ability to renew and update material and it is a barrier to developing IP. This causes them significant anxiety and tension and to do a good job they feel compelled to work during what should be leisure time.

A further aspect of this theme relates to the availability of lecturers over and above their presence during timetabled contact hours:

> So, we just have to be accommodating and tell them if there’s some issue, please come and see us. We have an open-door policy and they can come and see us, if they feel there is something they would need to talk about. Georgia (Southern, 10 years)

There was a strong sense in participants’ responses that the job was impossible, and they felt overwhelmed whilst outwardly keeping up with the work they were expected to do. This is evidence to support Berry and Cassidy’s (2013) findings that lecturers perform one of the highest degrees of emotional labour of any profession. Maguire et al. (2011, p.95) observed that teachers are not often architects of their own enactments of policy, and that the demands placed upon them mean they do what they can; they “do not do policy – policy does them”. This would seem to be supported by this study’s findings in a HE context.

4.8 Summary

This chapter presents the findings of this doctoral research, which sought to explore the experiences of academic teaching staff as they negotiate their teaching practice in relation to IP. Two research questions were posed: to what extent do academic teaching staff understand, interpret and implement IP, and in what ways do academic teaching staff engage with university policies and processes aimed at supporting the development of IP?

The findings presented here made significant contributions to answer those research questions. Sociological concepts of policy actors, subjects, discourses were applied to the findings to help understand participants’ responses. This facilitated their interpretation, significance and meaning. An overarching theme is put forward, that participants seem to be continuously presented with professional dilemmas of practice

concerning IP. They are in a state of flux, searching for the best thing to do as they negotiate their daily practice. This manifests itself in tensions between their values of inclusion and desire to apply these values in their practice, and the difficulties of achieving that desirable (and often, from a university's perspective) performative goal.

The findings presented are complex, and the chapter has identified the details of each theme. An important finding was that participants as policy actors have *mis*understandings of IP. Their concepts of IP are based on contingent and historically path-dependent understandings, which were presented as neoliberal views of social justice and equality. These have led to their conceptions of students based on deficits (Atkins, 2016; O'Shea et al., 2016) and the need to individually adjust teaching and learning practice to compensate for those deficits, an acceptance of normalcy discourses which 'other' those who do not conform to the hegemonic norms of existing in HE contexts (Davis, 1995; Madriaga et al., 2011).

Similarly, university responses to anti-discrimination legislation for disabled students and responses to WP policy direction from government have led participants in this study to see these actions as IP, rather than the operational definitions (Hockings, 2010; May & Bridger, 2010) which require wider changes to teaching and learning practices for all students. Participants were unaware and uninformed about significant legislation or theoretical discourses around inclusion and IP. One of the most significant findings, in that it was not expected or seen in any previous research literature, was the extent to which participants felt doubt and discomfort about their lack of knowledge of IP and their ability to achieve or develop actions which supported equality in their professional practice. As policy actors they did not *do* policy – policy did them.

What participants did do was adopt reactive, pragmatic responses to individual student scenarios as they presented themselves. Participants provided evidence that showed they were keen to 'get the job done' by whatever means necessary. This was not evidenced in previous studies concerning lecturers' experiences of IP enactment (Hemmings et al., 2013; O'Donnell et al., 2012; O'Donnell, 2016; O'Shea et al., 2016). They chose how best to pastorally help students who had a need, and this was often not part of established and formal university practices or processes aimed at supporting students. These are seen as rhetorical or absent discourses by participants,

who identified the ways in which universities created the policy artefacts of inclusion through email, intranet resources, professional teaching qualifications and academic development events. Participants favoured informal methods of professional support and drew on networks of colleagues to define the policy subject of IP. These findings were of relevance to the research questions, as they reveal key methods that participants use to develop their professional practice.

Finding a way to improve academic development of IP was an important motivator for this doctoral study. A further finding which extended knowledge to help meet the research aims concerned the policy context and related to institutional brick walls (Ahmed, 2012) or institutional constraints that were felt by participants as they negotiated their professional practice. Here, the findings were discussed around the *powerlessness* felt by participants to achieve any changes in their professional practice, and strong feelings of frustration were to be seen in their responses. This is supported by new work around high degrees of emotional labour experienced by lecturers (Berry & Cassidy, 2013) and a much wider body of work around the changing nature of academic work within neoliberal managerial and audit cultures of contemporary universities (Ek et al., 2013; Henkel, 2005; Kenny, 2017).

Having little power to achieve changes when presented with institutional brick walls was further conflated when the structures of the fabric of how universities do things also worked to hamper the change process. For example, the long-held format of module leaders and module teams who deliver teaching activities served to restrict and hinder any changes that participants might want to make to incorporate principles of IP. Issues such as practical space constraints, less than optimal class sizes for the development of effective pedagogies and the ever-present demands of workload and available time to spend on professional development were all present in participants' perceptions of constraints to their professionalism. Whilst Hemmings et al. (2013) put forward some evidence that lecturers are not the architects of their own practice and face barriers not of their own making, the findings of the current study support that finding and also extend and illuminate this knowledge in an English context.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Limitations

5.1 Introduction

This study set out to explore lecturer's lived experiences of inclusive practice (IP) policy enactment in English post-1992 universities. The exploration was approached from a critical realism (CR) perspective and used qualitative, in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 19 lecturers working in 3 English universities. The study engaged with literature which discussed the concept of inclusion in education, theoretical perspectives on social justice and equality, definitions and conceptualisation of IP as a policy in higher education (HE), and approaches taken to research concerning policy in education. This final chapter offers a conclusion to the research undertaken and outlines its contributions for professional practice, university leadership and policy makers. The limitations of the research are outlined and reflected upon. To summarise these concluding comments, the following structure is used:

1. The aims and rationale of the study.
2. A brief review of each chapter.
3. The strengths and limitations of the study.
4. A summary of the main findings.
5. Implications and recommendations.
6. Contributions to knowledge
7. Future research directions.
8. Dissemination of the study.
9. Autobiographical reflection.

5.2 The aims and rationale of the study

This doctoral study was about policy enactment in universities, and I used IP policy as a focus. The rationale for choosing IP was initially drawn from my experience in a professional role within an English university, working to support engagement with IP. Statistics demonstrate enduring differential degree outcomes of students who have legally protected characteristics as they enter HE in the UK from students without protected characteristics (HESA, 2020; Higher Education Academy, 2016; Higher Education Commission, 2019; HESA, 2015; Moody & Thomas, 2019; Office for Students, 2018). Furthermore, many studies researched and presented the poor

experiences of those students whilst at university (Fuller et al, 2004; Hewett et al, 2017; Madriaga, 2007; Moriña Díez, López, & Molina, 2015; Mortimore, 2013; Race & Landers, 2014) Much of this research called into question teaching and learning practices of lecturers and citied this as a contributing factor for poor student experiences and outcomes, yet this is not a well understood area and there is a gap in knowledge as to how and why this occurs.

As a lecturer working with other lecturers to promote and encourage inclusive teaching and learning practice I was concerned and curious to understand what was going on for lecturers as they interpreted and enacted institutional policies. My experiences told me that their engagement in development activities was low, and that they struggled to apply key principles of IP in their daily teaching and learning practice. This study grew out of a need to understand how IP policy was enacted in universities; at the chalk face, and from the perspectives of those tasked with its enactment. The purpose of the research was to inform practice, to improve my own practice and to find ways to support changes in practice for other lecturers. The aims of the study were, therefore, to contribute to the development of an understanding of how the policy and practice of IP is enacted and understood within English universities. I was specifically interested in exploring the understanding and practices of academic teaching staff (lecturers) as they negotiated their teaching practice, and determining the influences of current thinking on inclusion and equality on that understanding. My study was further interested in exploring the relationship between academic teaching staff and university structures, policies and processes which have arisen to support IP following the requirements of the Equality Act (2010).

As the study progressed, it became clear that this was extremely complex and multi - layered, and there were many avenues which interested me – such as the role of academic lecturers within the changing HE context that has been increasingly influenced by neoliberal managerial cultures (Ek, Ideland, Jönsson, & Malmberg, 2013; Riddell et al., 2007); the impact of informal professional networks on professional practice; and the experiences and relevance of professional teaching qualifications and schemes on professionalism in HE. Mindful of the boundaries of this research, and the need to know "when, where and how to compromise" (Newby, 2010, p.6), I contained my study to a sociological investigation into how policy is enacted in universities.

However, I found there were areas which presented themselves, and I recognised that these were future avenues of research, which will be discussed in section 5.9.

5.3 A brief overview of the study by chapter

Chapter 1 provided an overview of the background to this study and gave a rationale for the choice of 'inclusion' in HE as a valuable area of study. The chapter framed the topic by providing an introduction to the problem of 'difference' (Minow, 1990; Norwich, 2010) as it presents and plays out in academic practice in English universities, including statistical evidence of differential outcomes for protected groups of students in the UK (as outlined in Equality Act 2010) The complexity of the issue is to be seen in the definitions put forward of inclusion, equality and IP and the differing interpretations of social justice principles upon which this policy has been developed.

Philosophical debates are further complicated because they straddle all forms and sources of difference as protected in UK legislation. Of great importance and influence has been the critical disability movement in raising issues related to how disabled students are treated within universities, and this has dominated the thinking of university responses to difference. I found this to be a broad and esoteric field of knowledge to grapple with, and the findings of this research bear this out. The conclusions to the study show that lecturers also share a deep misunderstanding of IP policy and its social justice goals, often relying on understandings of university responses to disability rather than difference, leading to my recommendation for a return to prominence of inclusion discourses and debate within university contexts and spheres of IP policy enactment to inform and promote IP.

I took the opportunity in Chapter 1 to outline my personal and professional reasons for pursuing this line of study. Personal experiences with disability within my family made me very aware of the impact of hidden disability on a young person's educational experience and achievement which led me to seek further understanding of inclusion-related policy and practice within my teaching and academic management practice.

The literature I engaged with is discussed in chapter 2, and provides a summary of key principles and debates related to the concepts of inclusion, equality and IP policy. I present a historical discussion of political and legislative contextual frameworks which outline the development of social justice agendas and the related development of inclusion as a political policy in the UK, culminating in a discussion of how the concept

and policy of inclusion has developed in education contexts. I further draw upon the work of authors who have conceptually defined IP policy in HE (Bridger & Shaw, 2012; Hockings, 2010; Hockings, Brett, & Terentjevs, 2012; May & Bridger, 2010) to frame the research findings. The chapter further explores the concepts of normalcy, deficit discourses, and compensatory reasonable adjustments to practice (Ahmed,2007; Bunbury,2018; Gibson,2015; Madriaga & Goodley, 2010; O'Donnell,2016; Stevenson, 2014) which offer critical perspectives on inclusion and IP within universities. The chapter then focuses on literature related to lecturers' experiences of IP policy implementation (Hemmings, Kemmis, & Reupert, 2013; O'Donnell, Tobbell, Bradshaw, & Richmond, 2012; O'Donnell, 2016; O'Shea, Lysaght, Roberts, & Harwood, 2016), finding issues related to policy awareness and knowledge and structural barriers to IP similar to the findings of this research. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the sociological theoretical toolbox approach taken by the research. This original approach applies the concept of policy enactment (Ball, Braun, & Maguire, 2011) to explore holistically how IP policy is *done* in English universities.

The complexities of the field of inclusion, or the slipperiness (Atkins, 2016, p. 7) of it, required this research to consider methodology carefully. As the research progressed from professional curiousness to implementation I became more aware of the sensitivities with which I would need to address in order to improve the truthfulness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and, therefore, the quality of my research. The research was designed in line with my methodological orientation, and Chapter 3 addressed my research design and outlined the process of developing my methodology. This involved exploring the CR philosophical concepts which would underpin the exploration of IP, enabling a focus on the *practice* of policy enactment as appropriate for a professional practice doctorate. Research based on CR principles seeks to develop hopeful understandings of the hidden social world (Bhaskar, 1979) which mirrored the hopeful aims of this research. Furthermore, I sought to examine what Archer (1995) saw as the purpose of research: an examination of power relations, historical and value relevant contexts.

Considerations upon which my research design was based are outlined in this chapter. They included the sensitivities of the research topic for my participants, which needed to be *got around* to improve the rigour and truthfulness of the findings. These,

combined with the influence of the CR paradigm, led me to choose a naturalistic approach to my research design, employing in-depth semi-structured interviews as the most appropriate and efficient method to explore the experiences of lecturers within their structural contexts. Issues related to access to participants are discussed and included the rationale to recruit lecturers across a number of English universities using a snowballing technique, with measures taken to ensure as much as possible a reduction in my influence as an insider researcher and the asymmetrical power imbalance that might impact on the research's rigour.

The process of data collection was undertaken whilst working full time with a busy workload, but once connections had been made with participants and interviews had been set up, the process was relatively smooth, if drawn out over a period of six months. It was an illuminating, fulfilling, worrying and confirming experience which, for a new researcher, I felt was as good an experience as it could be. The data collected was immense in scale, and everything appeared to be relevant and of great importance. This was to be expected (Clough & Nutbrown, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 2013; Mason, 2002) and I felt rewarded by the amount of thinking time and effort that I put into the research design by the depth and richness of the data my participants gave me.

The demands of qualitative research and data analysis are well documented (Denscombe, 2014; Denzin, & Lincoln, 1994; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014; Ritchie & Spencer, 1994) , yet I was still unprepared for the demanding task of analysing such a vast amount of valuable data, as I came to call my participants responses. I found the NVivo software progamme useful as an organising tool, and this helped me overcome the practical and psychological problem of large amounts of data. However, I did the *thinking* and *interpreting* myself after much re-reading of transcripts rather than using the automatic coding functions of the programme.

I used a framework matrix technique to organise my thematic approach to data analysis (Ritchie, et al., 2014) and found this enabled me to keep participants' comments in the forefront of analysis. I used Saldana (2016) to inform my approach, applying several readings with the aim of refining codes and form categories from the data. A first coding pass gave descriptive codes, followed by a second pass using axial coding and a third textual analysis pass. This was successful, if lengthy, and generated

interesting themes but also allowed previously unthought of themes to emerge. I still felt I was crafting and gilding my findings as I wrote them up in Chapter 4. I continuously made decisions about the key themes of most relevance to my research questions, and I returned to them and to my conceptual understanding of internal conversations of policy actors to make sense of my themes as they emerged from the analysis process.

Due to the complex nature of the findings and the interrelated nature of the themes that were identified, the decision was made to present the findings along with discussion and analysis together in Chapter 4. The findings of the study were substantial, and it was considered more comprehensible to select key themes and follow the process of analysis and interpretation for each of them. Writing the chapter in this way allowed me to apply the theoretical concepts , particularly pf policy actors, subjects and discourses to help understand the data . Themes were identified and there was flexibility to return to key concepts identified within the literature review undertaken in Chapter 2, such as normalcy and deficit discourses, and frameworks of IP identified by Hockings (2010) and May and Bridger (2010). In addition, writing this chapter in this way gave me the ability to draw on relevant theories to explore and put forward possible explanations for the themes as they were presented. I used theory retroductively, as my CR methodological approach (Sayer, 2010; Tikly, 2015) proposes seeking the most appropriate explanation for each of my findings.

5.4 Reflection on the study's strengths

An important strength of the study was the rich and extensive data it produced. The rigorous methodological considerations undertaken and discussed in Chapter 3, including an appreciation of the sensitivity of the topic for participants and the design of the sampling method, combined with ethical and sensitive interviews, produced rich and appropriate data to answer the research questions.

This was achieved despite being a newer researcher and feeling unsure about my research skills. I was able to develop an empathetic research space using my insider experience of what it is like to be a lecturer currently in HE. This enabled me to overcome my inexperience and conduct interviews empathetically, drawing out honest and sometimes raw responses from participants. This data provided confirmation of some aspects of others' work in this field. For example, lecturers were operationalising

their understandings of IP based on concepts of normalcy and using deficit discourses which 'othered' some groups of students (Atkins, 2016a; Gibson, 2015; Madriaga, Hanson, Kay, & Walker, 2011; O'Shea et al., 2016).

However, the importance and significance of this study's findings are that it improved and deepened understandings of how IP policy is experienced by lecturers, and it illuminates some of the possible barriers to practice in greater detail and depth than has previously been done. The findings in this study show that the structural barriers to practice are ingrained in university policy contexts and discourses, or as inclusive policy subjects that are not talked about or represented in the everyday experiences of meetings, policy directions, the development of new courses or modules, or teaching and learning development activities. There was evidence in this study which supported the notion that structural barriers exist within university contexts that limit the ability of lecturers to effectively develop their teaching and learning strategies in relation to IP (Hemmings et al., 2013; O'Donnell, 2016). An appreciation of the nuanced policy enactment picture has enabled me to develop a more appropriate set of recommendations for universities to adopt to help towards the achievement of social equity goals, other than those put forward which focus on improving lecturers' practice through increased training and awareness (Cunnah, 2012; O'Donnell, 2016; O'Shea et al., 2016; Shepherd, 2018). The study's findings support the calls for institutional cultural change at the time of the introduction of equality legislation in the UK (Hockings, 2010; May, H. & Bridger, 2010) and further our understandings on the progress of these changes and how they might need to be addressed in the future.

A further strength of this study is the choice to include lecturers from different English universities. This method of sampling gave the study a greater depth and richness than using only one institution. However, it was found that the views of lecturers were similar for all three university contexts, and. whilst generalisation of the findings to a wider population was not a goal of this interpretative naturalistic inquiry, it is interesting to find little difference between the experiences of lecturers in similar institutions. This is the first study to focus on lecturers across more than one university, and to focus on the English context. O'Donnell's (2012; 2016) study focused on one university in Scotland; O'Shea et al. (2016) conducted a similar unilateral study in Australia and Hemmings et al. (Hemmings et al., 2013) presented evidence of the

influences at play for lecturers on one degree course at an institution in Australia. This improves the rigour of this study, giving wider credibility to its findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) which was an important goal for this study. The originality of this doctoral research and its wider credibility representing lecturer's experiences within the HE sector are key strengths.

5.5 The limitations of the study

As with many things, what is a strength of this study can also be considered a weakness. I consider the recruitment of participants from three different universities a strength of the research supporting my claims for credibility. However, I would like to have recruited from more universities. Using a snowballing technique worked very well to provide suitable participants for the study, but it is a lengthy and arduous process. As a lone researcher with the temporal constraints of doctoral research, a larger number of participants was not achievable. The interview method generated rich and appropriate data to analyse, but there is scope to widen the number of respondents and the diversity of their identities and work locations. Chapter 3 discusses the participants recruited for the study and acknowledges the lack of diversity of the sample, perhaps reflecting the lack of diversity in the academy on the whole (Bhopal, 2015). The professional network of colleagues that I called upon to recruit participants meant the study was limited to lecturers from post-1992 universities. Whilst this study presents the plausible accounts of reality for these participants it is appreciated that there may be other realities present for a wider group of lecturers in the variety of contexts in English HE (Clegg, 2008; Henkel, 2000; Rosewell & Ashwin, 2019) especially related to contextual differences arising from historical purpose, the size of student body, and responses to government policy between post 1992 and research intensive universities (Brown, 2011; McCaig, 2015; McGettigan, 2013) . There may be scope to widen future studies to recruit participants with a variety of identities and to compare realities cross sectionally across groups and from more research-intensive universities; this is discussed in section 5.9 as a future direction for research.

This study took a specific and original approach to IP within universities. It explored the relationship between lecturer, policy and structural context using a critical realist concept of the internal conversation and sociological concepts such as the policy positions of actors and policy discourses from a framework developed by Maguire, Ball

and Braun (2011). This was successful in addressing the research questions, but it could be a limiting factor of the research. I became aware that, despite the rich and illuminating responses from participants, I was missing the details of how they developed their teaching practice on a short, medium- and long-term basis. This may be seen as a limitation of this study, and there is scope again to develop this field with a closer examination of the *busy-ness* of teaching in HE with a longitudinal case study ethnographic methodology to foreground the nuts and bolts of what lecturers do.

I worked hard to overcome my inexperience as a new researcher during the data collection phase, and relied upon my carefully thought-out ethical and sensitive position. I also knew, or thought I knew, how these participants worked and felt and talked about their roles and responsibilities as I had been a lecturer for nearly 30 years. The interview process threw up some unexpected emotional tensions as discussed in chapter 3. I was unprepared for the levels of discomfort and distress that participants opened up about in their interviews. I would have liked to help those people who were clearly struggling with their workloads and their discomfort at not being able to achieve what they thought they should be able to. It presented me with an ethical dilemma concerning whether I should step out of the researcher role to offer professional comfort and support. I chose not to, and regret that I was not better prepared to support my participants and help them develop their teaching practice or cope with accepting the limitations that their university contexts place upon them. I am confident that I made a difference to the practice of participants by raising awareness of IP, but the study could have done more to practically support participants.

5.6 Summary of the findings

The study found that, in relation to the research question which asked 'In what ways do academic teaching staff understand, interpret and implement inclusive practice?' understandings were varied and inconsistent. Understandings were characterised by misunderstandings and confusion from some lecturers, which was a significant and unexpected finding illuminating Fraser and Honneth's argument that to achieve equality there first has to be a recognition of inequality (2003). Most lecturers, however, were able to articulate their knowledge and understanding around the policy. These were found to be based on libertarian ideas of social justice involving

deficit discourses and a need for compensation to achieve inclusion and equality for groups of students who became 'othered'. This finding was one which was supported by previous work (Atkins, 2016; Bolt, 2004; Claiborne, Cornforth, Gibson, & Smith, 2011; Gibson, 2015; Lewthwaite, 2011; Madriaga et al., 2010).

IP was firmly associated with disabled students, rather than a range of students, in the minds of lecturers, and was synonymous with a policy of 'reasonable adjustments' which is a process to support disabled students and more recently students with health issues. The research found that lecturers are conceptualising IP as those activities that they need to do for each individual student, when conceptualisations of IP recognise that it should be a broader orientation to support all groups of students without the need for individual adjustments (Bridger & Shaw, 2012; Hockings, 2010; May & Bridger, 2010). Similar problems were found for lecturers as they confuse other inclusion-related concepts such as widening participation (WP) with IP. What was surprising about this finding was that this study took place almost a decade after legislation and policy formation in the UK which sought to develop inclusion and IP in HE so that it became mainstream (Bridger & Shaw, 2012). This study therefore questions the impact of legislation and problematises the idea that universities have reached a stage of 'mainstreaming' inclusion through IP policy within their cultures, management and processes.

An important finding which extends and develops our understanding of teaching and learning practice was the discomfort and insecurity felt by lecturers about IP. As expressed by Altin:

> I'm thinking, 'Do I do it?' I think I do, but do I, though? I'm not sure. Altin (Northern, 3 years)

The understandings of lecturers, which they draw upon for their practice, are questioned and troubling. I concluded that IP is not a well understood concept, it is not a 'policy' which can easily be achieved and there is much confusion and self-doubt in the minds of lecturers. This finding is of great significance for my professional practice, and has implications for how individuals and universities should develop their future approaches to achieving inclusion and equality.

To address research question two the study located policy within its context and the interviews drew out how lecturers formed their understandings based on how their

universities developed policies and communicated in the everyday cultural process in departments. Lecturers discussed the absence of inclusive policy discourse within the operation of university life through meetings, strategy documents and conversations with leadership teams. There was considerable scepticism of any top-line statements which purported that inclusion was a priority within the university – a finding supported by literature (Ahmed, 2007; Pilkington, 2008; Pilkington, 2014). Universities seem to rely on passive methods of policy discourse and policy subjects were developed through emails and online methods. These were unpopular with lecturers and were dismissed along with the value of academic development events quite strongly. Given the evidence of misunderstandings held by lecturers, it could be concluded that these methods have limited success and influence and the implications are that these practices will need to be reconsidered by universities.

There was evidence in the lecturers' responses that they used their professional experiences and, most significantly, professional networks to inform and shape what they saw as enacting IP. For many lecturers this meant acting pragmatically when individual students needed support to succeed – often under the radar of university policies and processes. They did what was needed to get the job done. They reported relying on their common sense and lamented that their academic roles had become less about curriculum and more about pastoral support.

Much supportive and valuable work was happening to enable individual students to pass their courses, and this was how lecturers felt they had to behave in order to overcome the constraints which prevented them from doing the job they would like to do. These constraints equated to powerlessness, space and time. Participants experienced an unequal power balance when it came to negotiating their practice between management and their position as academics. Managerial priorities seemed to be fixed upon the 'business' of a university rather than delivering changes to pedagogy that could help deliver IP. Many responses talked about being 'only' a lecturer and being powerless to bring about change faced with the dominant ideas and practices within their department, or worse being actively prevented from changing their teaching practice for the better, as they saw it. For IP to be part of the pedagogical practices of lecturers requires flexible structures, processes, and an

enabling culture within university departments and subject groups to new practices and changing existing practices (Bridger & Shaw, 2012; Hockings et al., 2012).

In a sense, the space to experiment is required to enable new practices to be tried and rejected or adopted. There was much evidence in my findings that this feeling of space to work and push boundaries was not the experience of lecturers working currently in these universities. The opposite seems to be true. Participants identified that the systems forming university cultures worked against their agency to determine their pedagogical practice and, when combined with burdensome workloads and a sense of having no time to plan their teaching, this is a powerful finding of this research. It has been identified before that neoliberal performativity audit cultures have led to changes in the nature of academic work (Henkel, 2005; Kenny, 2017; Sang, Powell, Finkel, & Richards, 2015). Specifically, Hemmings et al. (2013) identified that universities have presented barriers and constraints to practice which are out of lecturers' control, but stifle effective IP implementation. The findings of this research indicated that there are a combination of constraints, thus developing knowledge about the challenges that policy contexts present in universities for lecturers as policy actors.

In summary, the study found that lecturers experience everyday dilemmas of practice involving inclusion and equality issues which are often unresolved or resolved unsatisfactorily. Influencing those dilemmas and constant choice-making processes are the contingencies of situated contextual factors that inform, constrain and shape lecturers' choices in how they practice which are located in IP as a policy subjects, discourses and structural contexts that play out in English universities. There is constant tension in this process of making choices which are ultimately constrained, difficult to resolve and have consequences for lecturers' personal and working lives. This research found that lecturers are often caught between the fuzzy aims of policy as articulated at national and local level and the coal-face demands of being a lecturer who faces students and deals with everyday dilemmas of practice in a pragmatic, value-based way. This high degree of responsibility and autonomy felt by lecturers was found in my study to cause a high degree of self-doubt, stress and anxiety due to powerlessness, lack of space and time to practice and bring about change.

5.6.1 An illustrative vignette: the module review meeting

It seems important to bring to the fore an understanding of how the dilemmas of practice occur and contribute to the construction of barriers to practice in everyday policy enactment within universities. Vignettes are seen as useful ways to gain a better understanding of the participants perspective and allow an opportunity to vicariously visit the experiences (Ely et al., 1997). I have created a vignette of a scenario common for lecturers involved in daily enactments of policy. This vignette highlights the dilemmas of practice that occur in the enactment of IP policy for many lecturers and give illumination to some of the findings outlined in the previous section.

The module review and development meeting

Diane is a course leader, and as a module leader with 25 years' experience, she leads the meeting. She prides herself on her strong personal values to help students, enjoying being a nurturing mother figure for some. She knows she has *professional* common sense, and relies on this and a network of colleagues to shape her practice:

> So, we have the feedback from last year's module which is ok, not glowingly positive but no significant problems. I don't know about you, but I am up to my ears with trying to write up that journal article and a raft of new modules to develop. Shall we just continue with what we did last year? If it is not broken…

Faisal is a seminar tutor who teaches two groups of students on Diane's module. He has a doctorate, a post graduate certificate in HE teaching and learning and three years' teaching experience but has not yet led a module. He wants to make a difference and use the principles he studied as part of his teaching qualification and his awareness of equality, diversity and inclusion principles. He wants to include some principles of IP on this module. He recognises that it is too 'white' in its approach, and has an outdated formal assessment. He contributes to the meeting discussion:

> Everything went well last year but I was wondering if we could make a few changes to improve the inclusion of different sectors of the student population…for the assessment?

Dianne encourages him: "Go on…"

Faisal explained:

> I had a great many students with learning statements (see glossary), and I do try to accommodate all the student needs but might it be time saving if we change the assessment to a more flexible range of options. That way we are being inclusive and might help more students improve their grades.

Diane:

> I know… I spent many an hour with students taking them to the counselling service or the disability assessment centre and dealing with all the extensions last year, but have you ever tried to get any assessments changed? We have missed the faculty deadline now any way to make changes. I know they won't accept vagueness or flexibility as you say. I have tried many times to do that and been told by the quality team, we want innovation just not that kind of innovation – student retention you know! Anyway, most students manage to achieve in the end don't they. They are all in the same boat.

Dianne's inner conversation revealed her dilemma. She thought, "I *know* we should do something about this but it's easier to do what I did last year and not make a fuss, go along with what we have always done. It's fair enough if all students have to do the same thing. I just cannot cope with more work anyway."

Faisal sees this every year. He reluctantly accepts it, but he is unsure as to how he could implement any changes or what IP really actually involves. He will try to use different examples in his seminars from the ones that Dianne uses in her material to try to introduce some multiculturalism and internationalisation. However, he will keep that to himself – Diane might not like it. As for the assessments, he will spend more time helping individual students who need it in time outside of the module. He enjoys getting to know them on a more individual basis anyway, and he knows his support helps them to achieve a better outcome. It is just a shame that he cannot do that for all the students and that it takes so much of his energy.

This vignette seeks to highlight how everyday exchanges enact and constrain policy in universities. Faisal and Dianne are both disempowered by the systems within which they work forming stressful dilemmas of practice. Their understandings of inclusion default to learning support mechanisms related to disability rather than inclusion in its wider sense. Moreover, it raises the issues of unequal power relationships within teaching teams which reinforce and replicate the status quo and act against agentic behaviours.

5.7 Implications and recommendations

These findings have implications which point to the need for change within universities in order to challenge existing dominant thinking, to challenge the approach to IP that has been adopted, and move towards an acceptance that how to adopt an IP teaching approach for most lecturers remains almost unknowable and unachievable. Ignoring this need for change would lead to the continued failure of HE to meet the social

justice goals of inclusion and reinforce the procedures and practices that have led to differential outcomes and experiences for many groups of students.

The findings demonstrated that policy actors – in this case lecturers – despite many years of legislative direction; national and local policy direction; and professional body guidance and advice, are still misunderstanding what inclusive teaching practice is. IP policy enactment is dependent on the individualistic interpretations and actions of those policy actors who this study found to be developing relationships with individual students to support them as their needs became evident. Lecturers were rarely drawing their knowledge from university, government or academic sources. The implications of this is that IP is ad hoc, inconsistent across types of student groups, reproducing inequalities and the element of chance whether a student is included or not.

This research highlights the importance of the lecturer and their practice in improving inclusion. It implies that measures to enable lecturers debate, discuss and have those discomforting discussions about difference are necessary for universities to start to move closer to an inclusive institution. The first step may occur by acknowledging that there is a problem in English universities of misrecognising inequality. The implications of this study on my practice as a lecturer are transformative. I have challenged my own assumptions and practices and conclude that my pre-study desire to develop colleagues' teaching skills was naïve. Changing values, norms and perspectives held by lecturers requires their deep individual reflection, but also institutional cultural change. Discourses around the problem of difference which acknowledge the way some groups in universities have been privileged more than others need to be commonplace in the everyday practice of lecturers' business and promoted by university leaders and managers.

This study found that IP was not part of the policy discourse at department level, or at university level. One finding seemed to have implications for the way that lecturers prefer to learn. The findings showed a distrust and dislike of formal, top-down academic development methods and that lecturers prefer to use their informal networks of trusted colleagues. The implications for universities may be that their energy and resources could be more effectively used elsewhere. A recommendation put forward here is that universities move towards more local-level academic

development which involves the support of informal networking for colleagues. Subject, course or module teams need time and space to develop supportive relationships for colleagues to minimise the loneliness of the academic that participants talked about. To have those difficult conversations about policy, lecturers need to be able to contact and relate to each other regularly. The changing nature of academic work in neoliberal policy contexts has brought the issues of performativity, managerialism and casualisation of the profession to the fore. This study suggests that a collegiate approach to policy enactment would be beneficial.

Policy subjects (what we can talk about in relation to IP), and visible policy artefacts, (procedures and processes related to IP), were found to be peripheral in the experience of lecturers. The implications of this is that universities seem to be promoting a top-level commitment to inclusion but failing in continuing that commitment in the day-to-day work of departments. How lecturers experienced IP was through email and staff intranet sites rather than in meetings or in action in quality processes and paperwork required to support students in their modules. This was not found to be successful, and a key recommendation from this study is for universities to develop more local-level policy artefacts that act as reminders for IP in the daily lives of lecturers. IP needs to be more obvious, in guidance notes for module guides, for module development, for validation documents and for the setting of assessments and deadlines (or the removal of them).

Lecturers have been reliant on reasonable adjustments measures through student learning plans, and IP policy artefacts and universities need to challenge the reliance on those. The way universities have responded to inclusion and equality could be path dependent; certainly lecturers have become reliant upon the practical paths put forward for supporting disabled students. This is a limiting factor preventing universities from making wider and more bold changes to culture and practice. There are many criticisms of the reasonable adjustment process, and whilst it might feel like a safety net – at least for students with a disability – reliance on it distracts universities from becoming truly supportive for all students.

It is suggested by the findings of this study that the policy context within universities has been restrictive and has constrained lecturers' ability to develop their teaching practice – especially inclusive teaching practice. Changes to cultures within universities

are difficult (Trowler, 2014; Trowler, Fanghanel, & Wareham, 2005) but changes to institutional bureaucracy must be significant and a priority. Systems and processes must be flexible to enable changes which benefit students to be implemented; they must support lecturers to develop their practice. The implications of this study are that lecturers need to be empowered to develop their teaching and make changes to modules in line with their values. They need the space to make that change, physically by the reduction of student numbers in sessions or more time to teach groups which increasing include students with different learning needs, cultural backgrounds and different perspectives, but also by being free of institutional bureaucracy which discourages and prevents creativity. Finally, they need to be allowed time to think about their professional practice, to develop their materials and to be able to manage their workloads with less stress. Gibson suggests that IP measures are a "proactive choice which needs energy from educators" (2016, p.45) and this is true in this study, but it does not give sufficient acknowledgement to the important structural constraints to academic practice that this study found to be the most crucial factor in enabling lecturers to develop their practice.

A final but important recommendation for universities and professionals working within them involves shifting the emphasis in HE from the existing reliance on conceptions of inclusivity and equality based on distributive forms of social justice to define inclusion and IP to a capabilities approach (Sen, 2006; Nussbaum, 2001) to achieving social justice. This is a recommendation to move from the general statements of commitments to inclusion, equality and concepts like the social model of disability that universities often present to a specific focus on theoretical principles to organise the strategy, processes and cultural ethos of the university. The capabilities approach, as proposed by Nussbaum (2001; 2013), considers education for human development as social justice and proposes that every person's differing needs and potential should be taken into account to enable each person to flourish. Nussbaum puts forward ten principles which 'are useful and valuable principles which can be used to challenge practice in HE' (Mutanga & Walker, 2015; Walker, 2003) and for lecturers to bear in mind when approaching their teaching and learning practices. Disrupting the deficit discourse that dominates HE landscapes, as found by this study and many others (Atkins, 2016; Cameron, 2016; Gibson, 2015; Hardy & Woodcock, 2015; O'Shea

et al., 2016) may be achieved by the promotion of a capabilities approach to all students – not just those with protected legal rights and characteristics.

5.8 Contribution to knowledge

Whilst earlier studies have indicated lecturers' teaching and learning practice as a barrier to equality, this study provides an up-to-date picture of the situation 10 years after key legislation and policy development in the UK, when it might be expected that policy should be evident in practice. The implication of the research – that change in universities is required to meet social justice obligations – also contributes evidence to inform that change process. It provides evidence of the need for change in addition to outlining areas which need addressing. It builds upon an Australian study (Hemmings et al., 2013) and a Scottish study (O'Donnell et al., 2012) which point to a lack of lecturers' knowledge and the influence of structural conditions as factors in constraining lecturers' IP. The findings of this study extend knowledge to provide further detail of the influence of those structural constraints, and they provide a more nuanced picture of the misunderstandings held by lecturers about IP and how their professional knowledge and practice is constructed. Of significance is this study's finding of the doubt and discomfort felt by lecturers in relation to IP and inclusion which other studies have not explored. In this way, academic knowledge is developed and extended, and it is hoped that this will inform and influence universities as they develop their policies and strategies for improved social justice.

The aim of a professional doctorate is to improve practice alongside contributing to knowledge – and there is a sense in which this study makes a theoretical contribution to knowledge as it contributes to understanding towards a sociology of policy enactment in universities. It affords us a clearer picture about how IP policy is enacted in universities. In taking this original approach to how policy is done in universities, it extends an understanding of the theoretical model put forward by Ball, Maguire and Braun (2012) from a schools context to a HE context. It could be seen that universities have a range of policy actors that are slightly different to those identified in Ball et al.'s schools typology, which identified 8 fluid and overlapping types of policy positions taken by actors: narrators, entrepreneurs, outsiders, transactors, enthusiasts, translators, critics and receivers. This study found that there seemed to be greater evidence of policy actors who exhibited behaviours similar to receivers: people who, in

doing policy work, are coping *and just getting by* more than any other actors. This contrasts with enthusiasts for example who embrace and engage with policy. There are differences from Ball et al. in the proposition that it is mostly inexperienced teachers who take on the role of receivers and feel "assaulted" (p. 64) by policy demands – and are dependent on others for their policy understandings. In this study, most lecturers were found to have this policy experience and position regardless of their level of teaching experience.

There was found to be a high degree of misunderstanding and discomfort with policy enactment for many lecturers in this study. Ball et al.'s typology, whilst recognising the disruptive influence of "murmurings" (2012, p. 61), does not appear to adequately deal with this type of policy actor position in a university context. The policy work role of Ball's 'critics', who may maintain counter-discourses and monitor management activity, is useful in the context of this study in many respects. There were certainly findings in this study which indicated some lecturers were unaware of IP and unwilling to learn about it, but this seemed to fall short of an open critical counter-discourse of IP. There was evidence that other lecturers were conscious and critical of any management involvement in their professional practice. One particularly strong theme related to the pragmatic resolution of the dilemmas of practice lecturers felt when confronted with IP. Innovative, subversive ways to get around the institutional brick walls (Ahmed, 2012) were found, and lecturers were able to deliver what they believed to be good student support. Again, this behaviour does not sit comfortably with Ball et al.'s policy positions, possibly due to contextual differences – for example the level of autonomy which university teachers enjoy, compared with teachers in a schools setting. These differences and slight departures from Ball et al.'s theoretical typology of policy positions constitute a significant contribution to knowledge for this study which extends and deepens knowledge of policy enactment to a university context.

I put forward one further policy position to those in Ball et al.'s typology that could be identified from the findings of this study and seems worthy of further research and consideration: that of *subversive* policy actors who, as receivers of policy, take outwardly accepting positions and receive it positively but then find ways to deliver policy as they see it needs to be enacted – often getting around barriers in the process.

This requires immense policy effort and is stressful, discomforting and a source of professional doubt about their own efficacy.

The contribution of this study to my professional knowledge and practice is significant. Inclusion and equality are complex subjects, and I know why lecturers are confused and dismayed by these theoretical debates and arguments. To find a personal position on these philosophies and translate that into practice is even more challenging. Nevertheless, this study has enabled me to do just that. It has increased my knowledge, sharpened my thinking, shifted my assumptions and brought me to a better and extended professional understanding of my role as a lecturer trying to work with social justice principles. That greater knowledge will contribute to how I teach, advise, support and work with students and colleagues to promote the principles of inclusion and equality. The professional contribution to knowledge is personal, and the intention is that it will be professional as I disseminate my work to colleagues formally and informally through conferences and within my university.

5.9 Future research directions

This study approached the issue of inclusion and IP in English universities from the perspective of policy enactment. This is an original approach, and one avenue for further research would be to apply this approach more widely to develop a greater understanding of how IP policy is done in HE. For example, a wider incorporation of the role of other policy actors such as academic development teams, professional student support and administrative workers and managerial workers would provide a full picture of how IP policy is done. It would be beneficial to explore Ball et al.'s policy actor typology as discussed previously in section 5.8.

I have addressed the issue of IP only for full-time and permanent contracted lecturers in this study. Given the rise of the casualisation of academic labour in the UK HE sector (Brown, Yasukawa, & Goodman, 2008; Bryson, 2004), it would be beneficial to explore similar research questions about IP with part-time and temporary lecturers. The small-scale study I was able to undertake does not make a claim for the findings to be applicable generally across the English HE sector. There is possibly a case for the findings to be more widely credible within the post-1992 university sector. For a claim of wider generalisation to be made, further research on IP in a broader range of

universities – including research-led universities – is recommended and a desirable future research direction.

During this study there were many avenues which interested me, but I was mindful of the boundaries of the study. Possible areas for further research include the changing role of academic lecturers and the extent to which pastoral care is becoming part of their work within changing HE contexts, given the rise of issues related to student mental health (Quinn, Wilson, MacIntyre, & Tinklin, 2009; Thorley, 2017; UniversitiesUK, 2013). Also of valuable interest is how lecturers develop professionally – future research might usefully focus on the importance of informal professional networks on professional practice and the experiences and relevance of professional teaching qualifications and schemes on professional practice in HE.

5.10 Dissemination

Throughout the doctoral process I have shared my work in numerous ways. Within my institution I have presented at three internal conferences, in 2017 and 2019. As the work developed, I presented a paper at a regional conference held at a Yorkshire university in 2018. Internationally, a paper was accepted as a poster symposium at the University of Jyvaskyla, Finland, in 2018. Nationally, an abstract has been accepted for the British Educational Research Association conference 2020 in September 2020 (now postponed). It is intended that the work will be disseminated further through personal professional networks, along with publication of papers to demonstrate the findings, and an abstract will be submitted for the Society for Research into Higher Education conference in 2021. The challenge remains to disseminate the findings of this research within my professional practice arena in my own higher education institution (HEI) and more widely within academia in England.

5.11 Autobiographical reflection

Undertaking this doctoral study has been an invaluable learning experience in several ways. I have gained an understanding of the nature of research and the challenges that planning a research project puts forward. I have learnt that the research process is non-linear; in fact describing it as a cyclical process seems too simplistic. Research is a juggling process. For example, I continued recruiting participants whilst transcribing and analysing interviews with earlier participants. I felt most affected by the need to be meticulous in keeping track of the research in order that I did not miss anything

important. I also learnt that sometimes during a demanding and exhausting research process moments of revelation occur, stimulating ideas and reaffirming the need for the research to be undertaken.

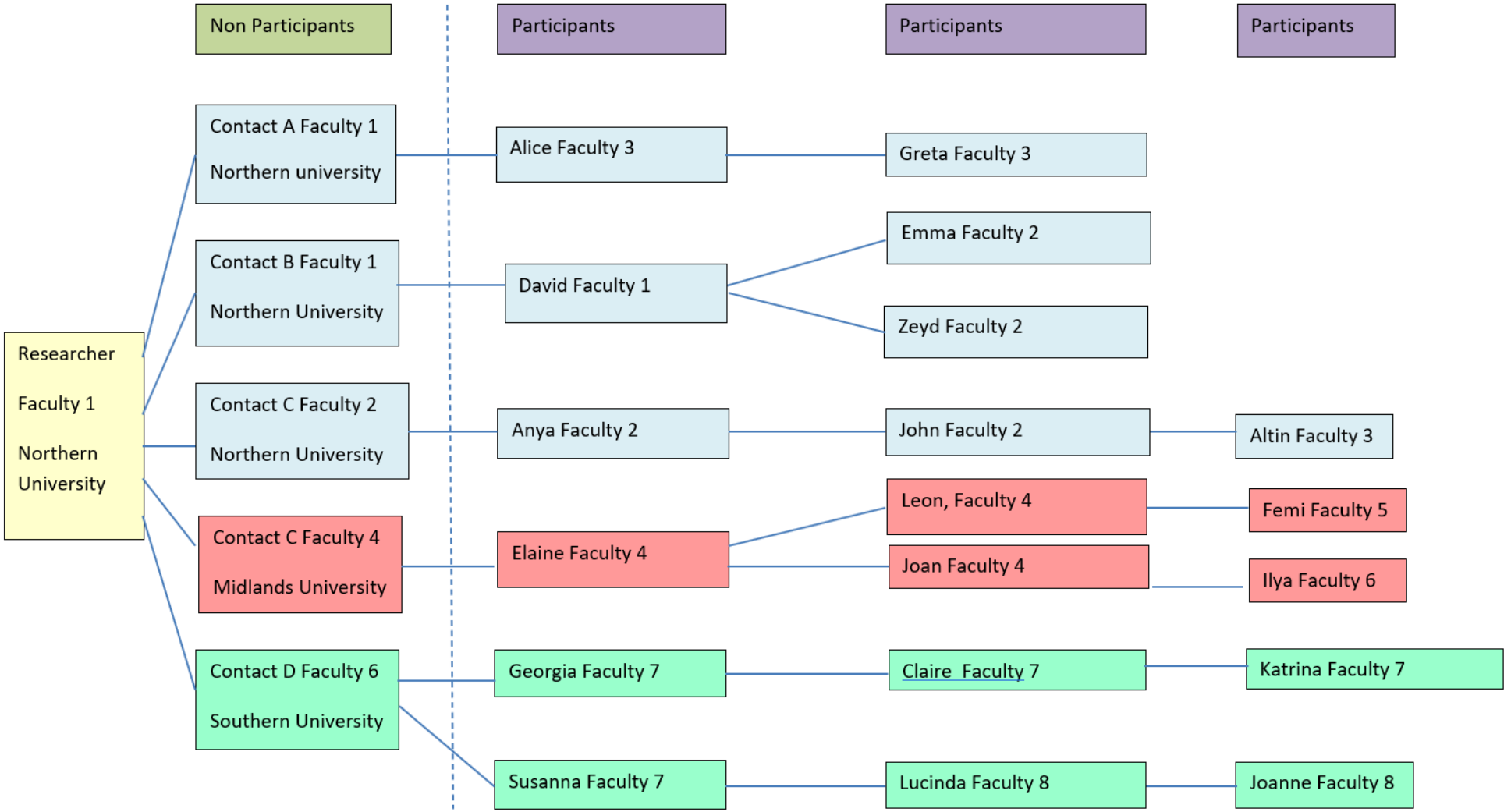
This research study has also provided some important ideas which have led me to examine my own professional values, and has provided some possible changes and improvements to my own practice. As well as adopting the recommendations outlined in section 5.7, I intend to focus on adopting the *capabilities approach* to social justice with my students in my professional practice, as far as I am able. I now have a growing awareness of the structural constraints that might limit my ability to do that. I have also begun to question how I have worked in module teams in the past, and how I might work with colleagues in my department and on my courses and modules to minimise the effect of power relations that might lead to variable experiences for students.

One of the most important things I have learnt from this research is that my colleagues are discomforted by difference and unsure about how to tackle it. For the future, this requires us to recognise difference professionally and to have difficult conversations. I hope to be able to facilitate and encourage those conversations in my faculty, university and beyond.

A policy for inclusion in HE in England requires acknowledgement of the limits to success and requires determined and sustained clarity of objectives which have an increased prominence in university policy discourses, and the development of enabling institutional cultural structures which demand relevance in the neoliberal managerial contexts of universities to support those who have a responsibility to deliver policy outcomes in their everyday professional practice.

Appendix

Appendix 1: Snowballing sampling stemma diagram



Appendix 2: Participants' characteristics

	University	Age	Experience	Qualification	Ethnicity	Gender
1 Anya	Northern	32	New doctorate 3 years teaching exp	Doing new HE PG	European White	F
2 Joanne	Southern	47	20 years	None	White British	F
3 Claire	Southern	52	20 years teaching	None - working on Fellowship of HEA	White British	F
4 Joan	Midlands	40	10 years	FHEA	White British	F
5 Leon	Midlands	48	10 years +	None	European White	M
6 Lucinda	Southern	51	20 years	FHEA, HE PGCE	White British	F
7 Katrina	Southern	49	20+ years	SFHEA,	White British	F
8 John	Northern	36	10 years exp	FHEA	White British	M
9 Zeyd	Northern	37	3 years exp	HE PGCE	Black British	M
10 Femi	Midlands	31	5 years	HE PGCE	White British	F
11 Ilya	Midlands	30	5-6 years	HE PGCE	Black British	F
12 Emma	Northern	56	25 year +	None	White British	F
13 Altin	Northern	28	3 years	HE PGCE	White European	M
14 Georgia	Southern	42	10 years	None	European White	F
15 Greta	Northern	53	25 years	PGCE	White British	F
16 Elaine	Midlands	29	4 years	HE PGCE	European White	F
17 David	Northern	60	30 years	None	White British	F
18 Susanna	Southern	53	25+ years	None	White British	M
19 Alice	Northern	38	10 years	HE PGCE	White British	F

Appendix 3: Examples of participant information and consent forms

Participant information Form

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask the lead researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

Research working title: Exploring the relationship between policy and teaching practice within English universities.

Please will you take part in a study about policy implementation in universities and how this affects teaching practices of lecturers. This research is a study for a Doctorate of Education qualification in the Institute of Education at Sheffield Hallam University. It is following the principles of the British Educational Research Association code of ethics (This can be read here: https://www.bera.ac.uk/researchers-resources/publications/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-2011) in addition to the Sheffield Hallam University research code of practice (This can be read here: https://www.shu.ac.uk/research/ethics-integrity-and-practice.)

You have been asked to take part because you are a lecturer who works in an English university. It is up to you to decide if you want to take part. A copy of the information provided here is yours to keep along with the consent form if you do decide to take part. You can still decide to withdraw at any time without giving a reason or you can decide not to answer a particular question.

You will be required to talk about your experiences working as a lecturer during an interview. This will last approximately one hour and will be audio recorded. You will only be required to be interviewed once. The interviews will take place in a location which will be mutually agreed upon but this will be a private room in a publically accessible location. The recording will then be transcribed to enable the researcher to review and analyse the responses. You will be asked to review the transcript to confirm that you are still willing to participate and that you are happy that the transcript accurately reflects the meanings of your responses. You will be able to withdraw your consent to participate in the research up to one week after you have received your transcript. You will have the opportunity to discuss the interview and research up to that point. After this point the transcripts will be anonymised with a pseudonym and stored securely in accordance with Sheffield Hallam University's data management policies.

Confidentiality statement

This research will recognise your right to privacy and will treat participants' data as confidential and make every effort to preserve anonymity. There is a data management plan in place for this research. Your data will be stored in Sheffield Hallam University data management repository under a code name and once stored this will not be traceable to you. Your personal contact details will be stored securely and will be removed from the data file once you have given your permission for the data to be used in this study.
If, in the course of the research, you mention anything which might identify you this will be redacted from the interview transcript.

Please note that assurances on confidentiality will be strictly adhered to unless evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered. In such cases the University may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies/agencies.

Wrong doing or harm would not include evidence of poor teaching practice or omissions of practice. In this case, please be assured that evidence of this kind would not be given to relevant employers.

There is very little risk for you if you agree to participate in this research. The risk identified is that you may be recognised from your responses that are written about in the final thesis. Measures described above are in place to minimise this risk. The possible benefits of this research are that it may contribute to development of future professional practice and may improve how universities support policy implementation and change.

The data will only be accessed by the researcher and two supervisors. The contact details of these are given at the end of this information. Once the study is over the researcher will be responsible for the raw data. This will be stored securely for ten years. It will not be passed onto anyone else.

The study will last for 12 months before it will be written as a thesis which will be available from the University library and research repository (SHURA). The results from the research may also be presented at academic conferences and published in academic journals. You may request a copy of the thesis from the researcher.

If you wish to ask any further questions or seek clarification, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher on the contact details below.

These are also the details of who to contact if you have any concerns or if adverse effects occur after the study are given below.

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The University undertakes research as part of its function for the community under its legal status. Data protection allows us to use personal data for research with appropriate safeguards in place under the legal basis of **public tasks that are in the public interest.** A full statement of your rights can be found at https://portal.shu.ac.uk/departments/srd/other/sec/ig/pages/data-protection.aspx . However, all University research is reviewed to ensure that participants are treated appropriately and their rights respected. This study was approved by UREC with Converis number XXX. Further information at https://www.shu.ac.uk/research/ethics-integrity-and-practice

You should contact the Data Protection Officer if:	**You should contact the Head of Research Ethics (Professor Ann Macaskill) if**
• you have a query about how your data is used by the University • you would like to report a data security breach (e.g. if you think your personal data has been lost or disclosed inappropriately) • you would like to complain about how the University has used your personal data DPO@shu.ac.uk	• you have concerns with how the research was undertaken or how you were treated a.macaskill@shu.ac.uk
Postal address: Sheffield Hallam University, Howard Street, Sheffield S1 1WBT Telephone: 0114 225 5555	

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF RESEARCH STUDY:

Research working title: Exploring the relationship between policy and teaching practice within English universities.

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.		
2. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction and I understand that I may ask further questions at any point.		
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.		
4. I agree to provide information to the researchers under the conditions of confidentiality set out in the Information Sheet.		
5. I wish to participate in the study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.		
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.		

Participant's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Participant's Name (Printed): _____

Contact details:

_____

_____

Researcher's Name (Printed): Karen Soulby_____

Researcher's Signature: _____

Researcher's contact details:
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Please keep your copy of the consent form and the information sheet together.

Appendix 4: Codebook

This is an example of the nodes that were created in NVivo during the data analysis phase. It became the basis of a codebook which I used to make decisions about the relevance and significance of participants comments. It is presented here in the format that was used in NVivo and shows the notes that were made against identified themes as the analysis progressed.

Nodes\\Emotional affective responses

Range/ types of emotions felt by participants when thinking about IP. Range of states about how people feel about Ip or how it makes them feel when implementing

Name	Description
anxiety	mentions of feeling anxious, thinking negatively about the job and IP
cynicism and anger	any mention or comments that are indicative of cynicism, anger towards IP , or the training academic development or to university
difficult	any mention of how difficult lectures find IP or developing their IP practice, or being a lecturer
Fear of getting it wrong	expressions of fear about what they are doing is wrong, getting it wrong with students, getting it wrong for their employers
left to own professionalism	mention of working alone, no support, working as an individual, not getting any help, assumption that they already know what to do.
overwhelming	feeling that it is overwhelming
powerless	mentions of feeling powerless to improve IP or in the job generally

Name	Description
should know or do more	reflection of inadequacies
Trying	evidence of willingness to strive, try, and wanting to be a better or good lecturer for the students
uncomfortable	mentions being uncomfortable in situations

Nodes\\Engagement with Uni policy and processes

Research question 2 - in what ways do staff engage with university policies and processes in relation to IP

Name	Description
academic development events	code for attendance or engagement with any event led by university academic development
academic development teams	code any contact with individual support from academic development teams or staff
confusing messages	confusion about what should be doing or what the message is from the university
external examiner	any mention of external examiner
ill formed policies	staff thoughts of the policy which are negative, not clear on policy message
intranet	contact with IP policy via staff intranet
Knowledge from experience	use experience to develop IP practice
no development opportunities	no awareness or engagement with IP policy

Name	Description
policy communication	ways that uni communicates IP policy
policy as rhetoric	cynical view of policy says one thing but in reality it means another
support from colleagues	development and advice from colleagues
Teaching qualifications	gain knowledge and ideas from teaching quals
university leadership managers	experience of contact with managers and leaders to help with IP

Nodes\\Experiences of Implement IP

descriptive, process coding

Name	Description
activities - varied examples	Examples of classroom activities participants view as IP. Can include any teaching, learning, assessment activity. Can include any recognised pedagogical tool or theory. Do not include any references to relationship building or use of learning contracts. Do not code planning for teaching. Do not code individual adaptation of teaching individuals
consider learning contracts	mentions of learning statements/contracts/support statements as IP
Contextual Barriers felt in implementation	Any mention of barriers which lecturers perceive hinder their ability to teach inclusively
Bureaucracy and pressure of expectations or workload	any mention of red tape, bureaucracy, management expectations, work loads

Name	Description
Lack of time	mention of reduced time , felt lack of time, not enough time, to improve teaching practice or attend training events, or to expand professional development
other priorities Employability	any comment relating to different or more important things, policies to take into consideration
practical issues number of students	stretching of resources eg large number of students , lots of different abilities and range of backgrounds
problems with professional body or subject requirements	any issues related to courses and teaching practice related to subject disciplines which make it difficult to practice IP
problems with team teaching	lack of autonomy with materials and teaching plans as teaching in teams, loss or no powere to make changes or influence others
removal of lecturers professional judgement	mention when it is the lecturers personal judgement, or that they use their judgement to address and support students, state a problem with removal of this by university policy and procedures
stress or exhaustion	tiring, difficult, stressful etc negative impacts on well being
stretching of teaching role	related to how the lecturers feel stretched or unable to keep up with teaching expectations or professionalism, include mentions of moving or changing role expectations or activities
course and module developed to support	comments relating to any course support or modules developed to give support to all students bt also to help those students with particular needs
don't do any IP	stated that they don't do any IP activities or take it into account

Name	Description
emotive responses	any emotive/affective comments,
Equal treatment - no special practice	statements that they treat all students equally so no need for any changes to practice
individual case adaption of teaching style	examples of how lecturers change their practice on an individual basis for students
lack of knowledge or understanding	comments that indicate or admit to a lack of knowledge about how to do it
lecturer student relationship	mentions of relationship building, getting to know student needs, focus on relationship as opposed to teaching practice
staff being subversive creating own flexibility outside uni systems	creating own flexibility outside uni systems, adapting the rules to suit them, going underground outside normal systems to support students
Teaching practice and planning	any activities mentioned which include thinking about or planning personal teaching material, or teaching approaches or planning
test node	
use technology	mentions of using technology to help IP teaching practice

Nodes\\Understandings and interpret of IP and inclusion

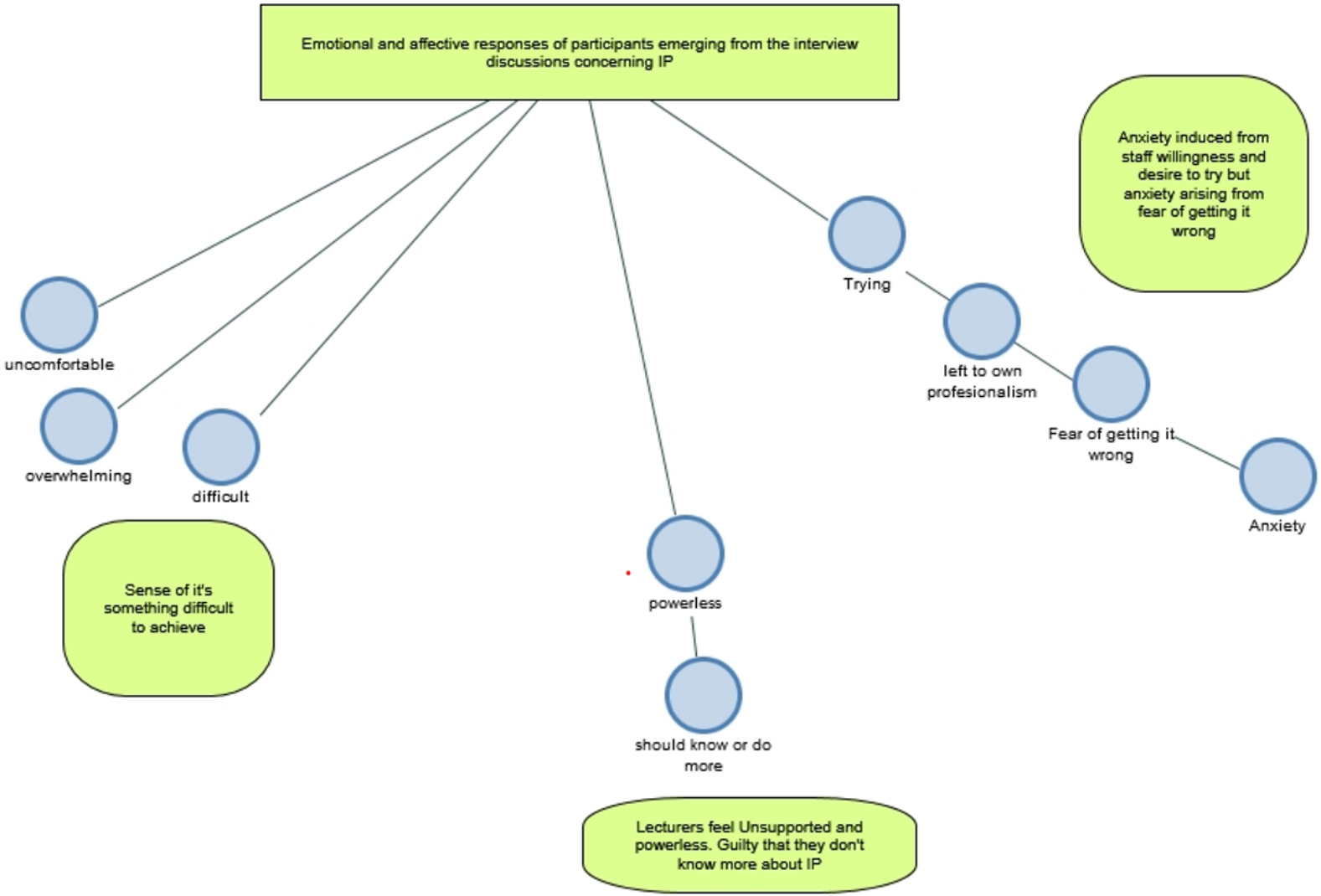
descriptive, holistic codes, process codes, in vivo codes. Include any responses which are about how lecturers understand IP or inclusion. Also include negative responses or response which indicate lack of knowledge

Name	Description
awareness of gov policy	comments referring to knowledge of equality, inclusivity, any strategy from government or academic professional bodies about HE sector
Emotional response to IP	in vivo words which relate to feelings, emotions, senses about IP, the process of IP or inclusion and equality concepts
desire to be correct	uncertainty but seeks to want to be correct about Ip
individual understanding	notes that maybe this is not a general understanding or there might be different understanding
sense of know it exists but not sure	
struggles or difficulty	
uncertainty about IP	
unsupported	looks to university/ others for knowledge and support
in vivo definitions of IP	any notion of what IP means, any comment about definitions of IP, any comment about personal understandings, any mention of theoretical understandings,

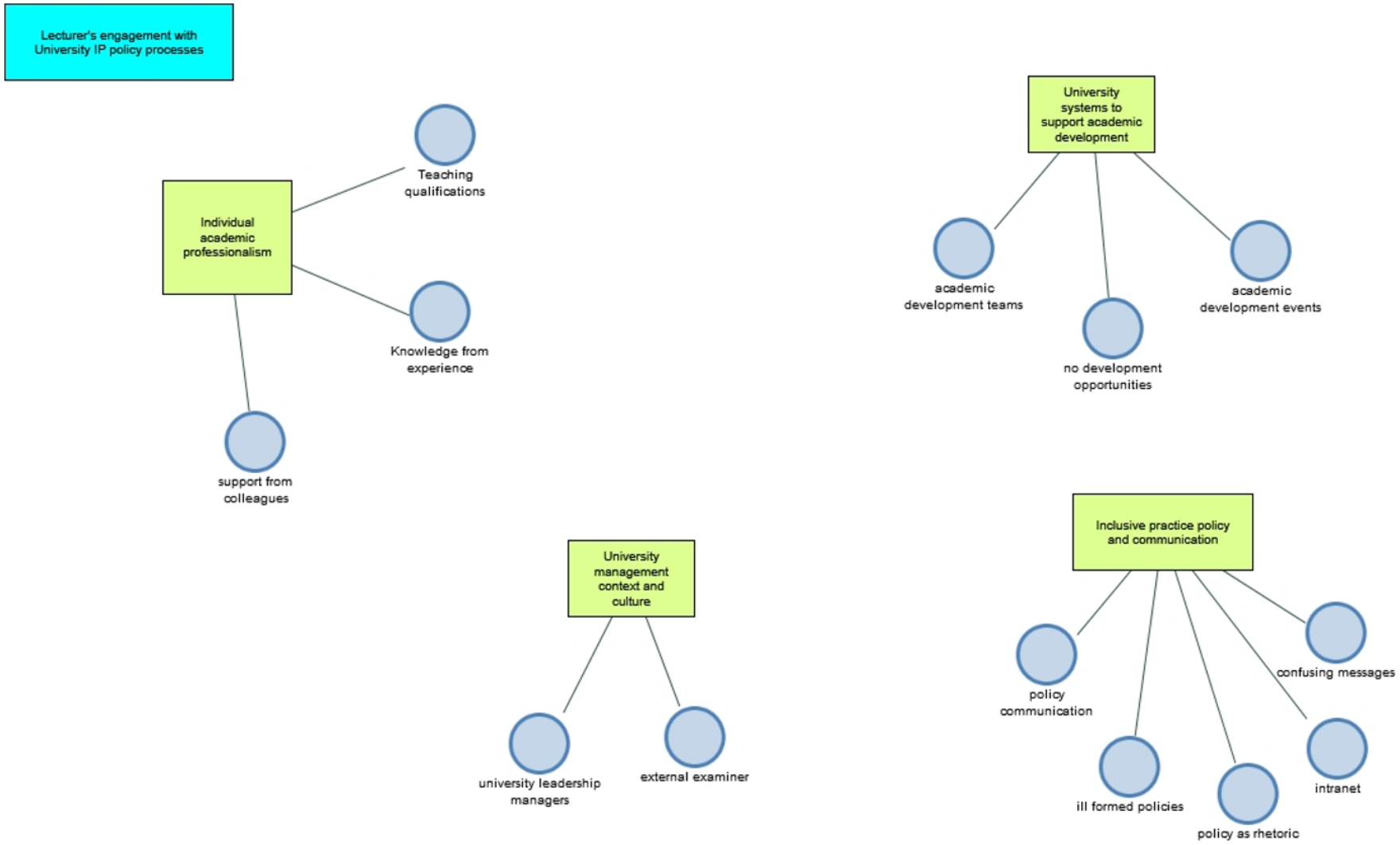
Name	Description
anticipatory needs	any comments that appreciate the needs to anticipate and adapt whole practice rather than reasonable adjustments
equal opportunity	any response which refers to IP, inclusion or equality as creating or supporting equal opportunity for students to succeed
equal participation	Definitions of IP which mention equal participation - participation can mean in any way usually in the teaching activities
equal understanding	mentions of IP I d E as creating equal understanding
Treating equally	mention of being EQUAL, treating students equally
IP as learning statements	mention of systems Unis put in place to help students - learning statements/ contracts
IP as university policy	any mention of IP as a policy, a recommendation from uni as directive or strategy
IP understood as widening participation	mention of IP as widening participation, as access for students to HE
learning styles	mention of association of IP with actions which accounting for different learning styles
No knowledge of IP	Include comments that demonstrate unable to talk about IP, unaware or confused about what IP is, lack of knowledge, admissions of lack of knowledge, process coding here
not accepting of IP	negative understanding or feelings about whether IP is appropriate, necessary or needed

Name	Description
personal teaching style	mention of personal preferences, values, activities, down to the individual. academic roles and responsibilities
Practical teaching activities	include any mention of making special teaching materials, making adaption to materials for the purpose of anticipatory reasonable adjustments

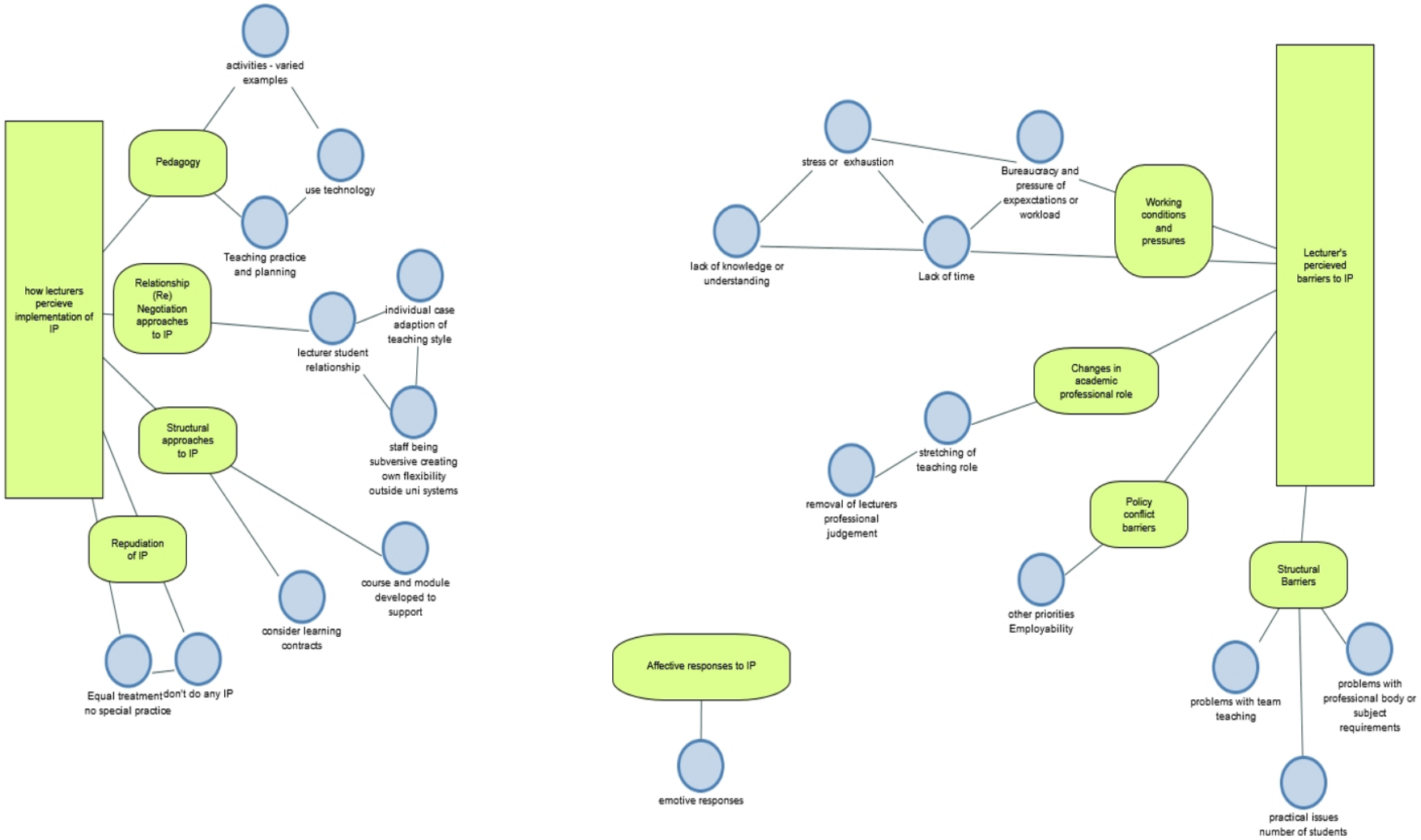
Appendix 5: Concept map created during the data analysis phase with NVivo



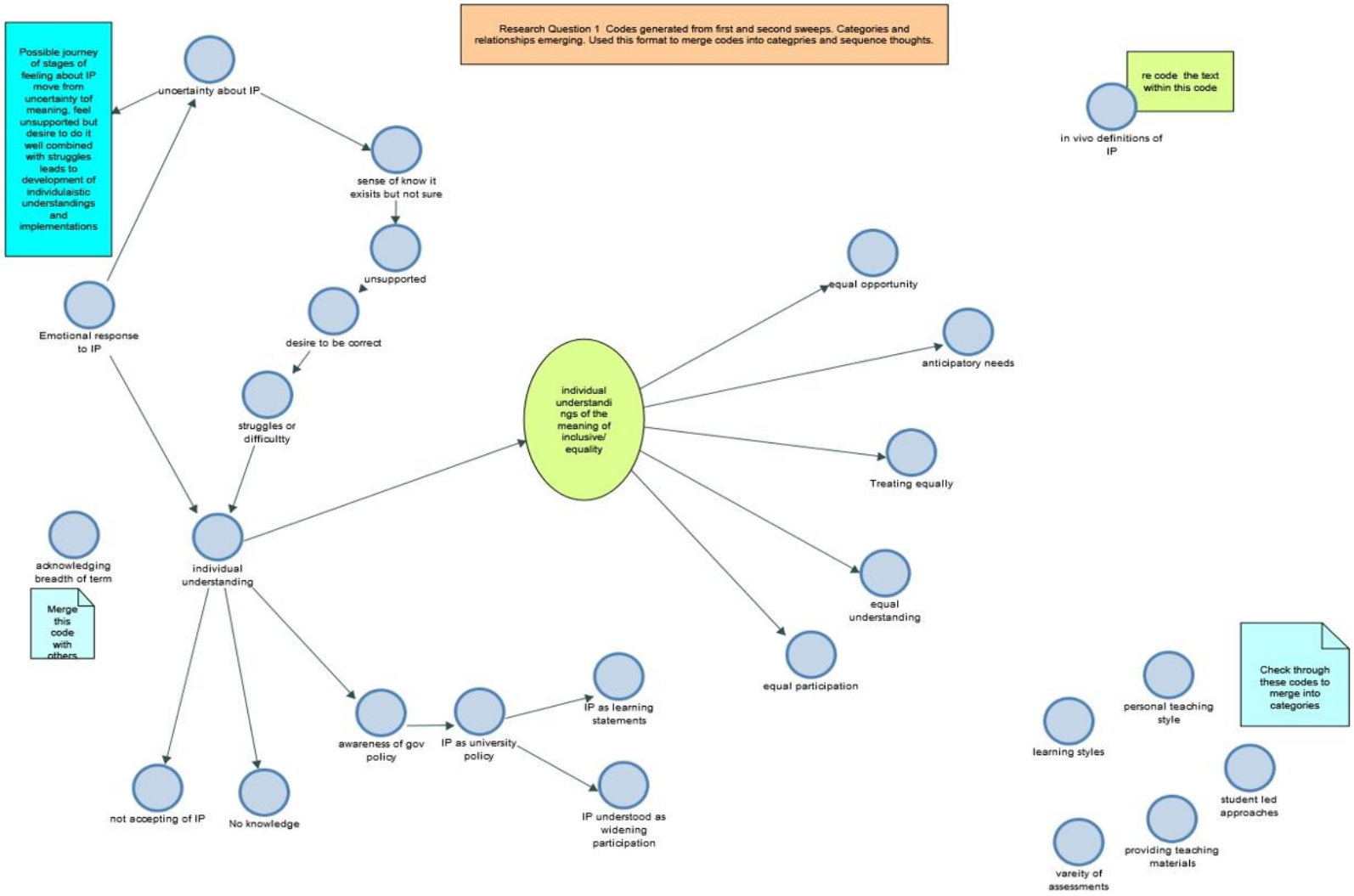
Appendix 6: Concept map created during the data analysis phase with NVivo



Appendix 7: Concept map created during the data analysis phase with NVivo



Appendix 8: Concept map created during the data analysis phase with NVivo



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