

**Accessing views on learning
from a selected group of young people
who are Profoundly Deaf.**

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my wonderful, supportive husband Tawona Moyo and our amazingly encouraging daughters, Alicia Moyo and Georgia Moyo. They inspired me to persevere with my studies. A special thank you to Georgia Moyo for her incredible, motivational and invaluable support leading up to my viva.

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Abstract

This study used focus group methodology to access the views on learning of Key Stage 3 pupils who are Profoundly Deaf, educated within a mainstream school resourced for pupils with hearing difficulties. One of the main aims of the study was to access the young people's views using their preferred language, British Sign Language (BSL). The study had two elements, one of the chosen methodologies was focus groups, but another was participatory action research. A case study approach was also utilised. The participatory action research element of the methodology involved a Profoundly Deaf young person with British Sign Language as his preferred language volunteering to be involved in moderating the focus group and taking part in aspects of the research process. Thematic analysis of the young people's focus group discussion revealed some interesting themes, in terms of what influences their learning: motivation, access to additional support and the importance of the Deaf community. An attempt was made to go beyond an analysis based on content; further analysis of the young people's interaction was carried out. The findings highlighted the young people's insight into their learning experiences, but also the complex, though remarkable nature of British Sign Language. The study reminds professionals of the importance of actively encouraging pupils whom as individuals within society are marginalised, to express their views and increase their participation in research. It is stressed that professionals need to be pro-active in developing appropriate methods that are personalised to meet the needs of all individuals. Focus groups with modification may prove useful to Educational Psychologists and young people in ensuring young people's views can be shared across disciplines.

Definition of d/Deafness and glossary of terms

Definition of d/Deafness:

A definition of deafness and brief information about the categorisation of deafness will now be provided for the reader, so information and some understanding can be gained about the nature of the deafness of the young people involved within this study.

While what follows is a definition of deafness it should be acknowledged that deaf individuals as hearing individuals vary from one individual to the next and we should always guard against stereotyping. In fact, there is perhaps greater variability among deaf individuals than hearing when one considers factors such as whether deafness: is hereditary or adventitious; due to physiological factors linked to their deafness for example, the degree and quality of hearing loss, or other possible concomitant impairments. Also, whether a deaf individual was born into deaf or hearing families, the extent of linguistic and non-linguistic interpersonal experience and the quality and sort of education the individual receives. Although, it is difficult to decipher whether these factors are more significant than the many factors that affect hearing individuals, these factors are in addition to those typical sources of variability that can have an impact on development and so are likely to produce a more diverse population. However, Myklebust (1960) as a definition to the term deaf, suggested it includes those individuals in whom the sense of hearing is non- functional for the ordinary purposes of everyday life.

The term hearing impairment is generally used to refer to the spectrum of hearing losses from mild to profound. Impairments that cause hearing loss are typically categorised as either conductive (involving the middle ear), sensori-neural (involving the inner ear and proximal connections to the brain) or central (involving auditory centres of the brain and the distal connection of the auditory nerve) however, in all three circumstances the measurement of interest is the loss of pure tone receptivity in the better ear, identifying the limit of potential hearing. Therefore, the degree of deafness can be determined by

audiological data. Hearing is regarded to be within the typical range with losses up to 25 db. Hearing impairments of losses of 26-40 db in the better ear are considered to be 'mild,' while losses of 41-55 db are considered moderate, losses of 56-70 moderately severe and those 71-90 db severe. Losses of over 90 db in the better ear are considered to be a profound hearing impairment.

The above definition is of course based on merely a medical perspective. While the young people within this study were Profoundly Deaf it should be acknowledged that within this thesis the term Deaf is used to refer to those Deaf young people who consider themselves as culturally Deaf, who use sign language as their preferred language. The use of the term Deaf therefore follows a convention that was put forward by Woodward (1982) and later developed by Padden (1988) to refer to members of a cultural minority group that uses sign language as its preferred language. More recently Ladd (2003) provides a detailed analysis and discussion of Deaf culture and associated definitions and terms. Although, there is often variation to the use and definitions of deafness; Ladd describes the distinction between 'deaf' and 'Deaf.'

deaf (with a lower case 'd'):

'is used to refer to: "those for whom deafness is primarily an audiological experience. It is mainly used to describe those who lost some or all of their hearing in early or later life, and who do not usually wish to have contact with signing Deaf communities, preferring to try and retain their membership of the majority society in which they were socialised". This group choose to use speech and lip-reading and regard English as their first language.'

(Ladd 2003 in Wilson and Hoong sin 2016 p 12)

Deaf with an upper case 'D'):

'is used to refer to: "those born Deaf or deafened in early (sometimes late) childhood, for whom the sign languages, communities and cultures of the Deaf collective represents their primary experience and allegiance, many of whom perceive their experience as essentially akin to other language minorities." '

(Ladd 2003 in Wilson and Hoong Sin 2016 p 12)

It is important to be aware that Deaf people's preferred language is sign language and they do regard themselves as a linguistic and cultural minority (Skelton and Valentine 2009). Deaf people do not view themselves in medical terms and do not perceive deafness to be a disability (Atherton 2009.)

Glossary of terms

Bilingualism:

A general definition of Bilingualism could be described as the ability to speak two or more languages. However, as Swanwick and Gregory (2007) point out, within education a more flexible definition is required:

'as the need for equivalent levels of competency in each language is not assumed.'

Swanwick and Gregory (2007) p28

Therefore, Fitouri (1983) definition is offered which suggests:

'The bilingual child is one who is learning and using two languages (of which one is mother tongue) regardless of level of achievement in the language at any period in time.'

(Fitouri, 1983 in Swanwick and Gregory, 2007 p28)

Bimodal bilingualism:

'language learning situations that involve the use of two or more modalities (sign, text and speech) and two or more languages.' Swanwick (2016) p 3. Swanwick's extended use of the term originally used by Ormel and Giezen, (2014) to refer to sign language and written language.

Cued Speech:

a method that is neither sign language nor speech, rather a visual way to represent the phonology of the English language.

Finger Spelling:

Is a manual way of representing letters of the alphabet in order to spell words. BSL uses a 2 handed finger spelling alphabet.

Non-manual features of BSL:

Are movements of the head, shoulders, eyebrows, mouth, cheeks, changes in eye gaze, body shift etc. which are used to convey additional information or meaning in Sign Language.

Sign Bilingualism:

The ability to use two or more languages at least one, of which is a sign language.

Sign Bilingual education:

‘...is an approach to the education of deaf children which uses both the sign language of the deaf community and the written spoken language of the hearing community.’

Gregory (1996) p 1

Therefore a sign bilingual education within the UK is an approach to the education of deaf children that uses BSL and English.

Sign Supported English:

When English is presented in a signed form, which takes the signs from the lexicon of BSL; though uses them in conjunction with English- utilising English grammar.

Total Communication: The term Total communication can be used to describe a variety of approaches, originally it was used to refer to the philosophy where deaf children used the complete spectrum of language modes – child devised gesture, the language of signs, speech reading, finger spelling, reading and writing and the development of residual hearing for the enhancement of Speech and Speech reading skills (Denton 1976).

Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of Positionality

This research is important to me because of my interest in Deaf education. My interest in Deaf education goes back almost 20 years. In the late 1980's British Sign Language was becoming more visible and reflecting on this now, this was likely to have been a result of the work of Stokoe in the 1960's and later Mary Brennan in the 1970's, who coined the phrase British Sign Language. At the age of 19 years old I became increasingly aware of sign language and decided to learn British Sign Language. I took a beginners course at a local adult education centre, run by a Deaf adult. The course also involved aspects of Deaf awareness. I had a remarkable tutor who was knowledgeable, intelligent, and humourous. However, she also had a more austere side to her character; as her students we were encouraged to focus in sessions and strive not only to improve our sign language skills but, take opportunities to become involved within the Deaf community. I became increasingly passionate about British Sign Language and so continued my learning. I took my then 'Stage 1' examination, then my 'Stage 2' and later embarked on a British Sign Language course at the NVQ3 level. In parallel to learning sign language however, I was continuing other studies too.

I always wanted to teach from a young age – I would tell my parents that I want to be a teacher. Interestingly, I was never really sure of what I would teach in terms of a subject; being a teacher for me was about generally being involved with education and encouraging children's learning. Perhaps, this is why I later focused on Primary education. However, I should mention that my bias in terms of learning was very much orientated towards the Sciences as opposed to the Arts. I really enjoyed studying the physical Sciences 'Chemistry, Physics and Biology.' Anyway, I vividly remember my A 'level Biology teacher suggesting that I apply for a degree course and then undertake a Postgraduate Certificate in Education course instead of solely embarking on a Teacher training course.

She was advising me to keep my options open in case I did not enjoy teaching; I may then still have avenues available to me. After, consideration of this advice I began to try to identify 'what' subject I might choose to study. At the time, my parents owned mainly medical books but, also a number of books linked to Sociology and Psychology. On reading one particular Psychology book (an introductory text) I became fascinated and so decided to study Psychology.

On my undergraduate Psychology course I tended to gravitate towards studying the more classically 'science' orientated modules such as 'Cognition and Learning' and 'Brain and Behaviour.' In the area of Cognition and Developmental Psychology, I was intrigued by the work of Piaget (1936) and Vygotsky (1963). However, to my delight, within the Cognition and Learning module there was a topic on 'Deafness' which I obviously decided to choose to study. By this time I had knowledge of the mechanics of sign language but, began to learn more about the linguistics – the grammar, syntax, morphology etc. and the work of William Stokoe in the 1960's.

Later, quite fortuitously, in the city the university where I studied my Post-Graduate Certificate in Education was situated, Total Communication approaches were prevalent, and also within the city's schools Sign Bilingual approaches were emerging, so again, I chose modules linked to my interests; this time 'reading.' I was fortunate to be allowed the privilege of supporting Deaf children with reading within a school resourced to meet the needs of Deaf children.

On completing my Post Graduate Certificate in Education I did consider whether to continue further training to train as a Teacher of the Deaf. However, I secured a teaching post in a mainstream primary school and began teaching there. I really enjoyed the years I spent teaching, although, this was for a relatively short time. I taught in a school where I felt I was making a difference in the lives of the children and families I worked with. The school was in a socio-economically deprived area and the children had diverse needs. However, after two and half years, I did miss studying. I was interested in studying more academically about how children learn. Therefore, I applied to study Part A of a Professional

Doctorate course that led to a Masters qualification in Educational Psychology. I felt this offered me the best of both worlds; the opportunity to still be involved with teaching and learning but, also Psychology.

My interest in Deaf education continued and I took the opportunity to experience sign bilingual settings while continuing to consider issues of inclusion. I also had opportunities to support staff teaching Deaf pupils. When I began work as an Educational Psychologist I had the opportunity to work collaboratively with the specialist EP responsible within the EP Service for supporting Deaf pupils in a range of settings. I was able to use my previous experience and knowledge supporting teachers, Deaf pupils and their families. I continued to take specialist courses linked to Deaf education and became increasingly involved in working in a specialist capacity within mainstream schools resourced to meet the needs of Deaf pupils, and also within Deaf special schools.

I later applied for a post within the authority where I currently work. The post was Senior Practitioner Educational Psychologist with a specific remit alongside my generic role, of supporting staff, young people with sensory, physical and medical difficulties and their families. Although, my role has changed over time, I do still have some opportunities to support Deaf young people educated in mainstream schools within the authority.

Throughout my early interest in Deaf education I could see the parallels between Deaf individuals and other marginalised groups. I continue to see the parallels, even today, of how certain groups are treated within society and this makes my involvement in this study personal. I always want to challenge inequalities, therefore I feel further drawn to the area of Deaf education.

I should also mention that I have always adopted a feminist perspective and I feel this transcends this study. A feminist perspective to me is not only focusing on women's issues or matters in the lives of women, but, also entails advocating for other marginalised groups. Burman (2006) illuminates how feminist work promotes discussions of 'power, subjectivity and political commitment in

research.’ (Burman 2006, p120). In fact, as Willig (2004) states there is no one feminist epistemology or even methodology. A view supported by Harding (1987), Abbott and Wallace (1990). Within this study, you will see I have been specifically influenced by the work of the feminist researcher Wibeck (2001).

Reflexivity and criticality are also important to me. As you read through the study you may perhaps get a sense of the tensions I experience as I reflect on the study based on my earlier background and grounding in a positivist perspective. Being involved with this study has been an interesting and amazing journey. I have learned so much: theoretically, professionally, conceptually and personally. I most definitely feel that when it comes to exploring issues affecting humans or human behavior, the complexity of human nature and unpredictability of social phenomena dictate the need for a more qualitative approach. As Wellington (2015) suggests reality is a construct devised by humans, it is the researchers aim to consider perspectives and shared meanings and then to create insights into situations, such as school or classroom settings. The issues briefly mentioned here are discussed further in the Methodology Chapter of this study.

To conclude, as I hope will be apparent as you read through the study, it was important for me to access the Deaf young peoples’ views about learning using their preferred language, British Sign Language (BSL). I was interested in the pupil’s realities and possibilities for their learning to be influenced. I sincerely hope others will be interested in these young peoples’ views too. It is exciting to contemplate where the journey that has arisen from this study will lead next, but I sincerely hope it will be to a place where I can increasingly contribute within the area of Deaf Education. It would be extremely pleasing to me if this case study was deemed by others to be illuminating, insightful, accessible and engaging and perhaps one day lead as Wellington (2000) suggested can occur, to subsequent research that could be disseminated widely, be vivid and of value in teaching.

Intentions of the study

This study is designed to explore what supports young people to learn and provides young people with the opportunity to express their views regarding their learning. Many areas will be considered and the issues they raise explored.

What supports learning has been widely debated within Education and Psychology with different theories of learning espousing the primacy of different factors, social, behavioural or cognitive. Pertinent to this study is a Social Constructionist perspective. Such a view is deemed important as Rosenthal and Zimmerman (2014) point out Social Learning Theorists assume that neither thought nor environmental context can be studied or usefully discussed in mutual isolation. A Social Constructionist perspective such as proposed by Vygotsky (1978) suggests a view of learning where the learner is perceived to be an active participant in the construction of her/ his own new understandings rather than merely the recipient of transmitted knowledge.

As active participants in their learning it only seems appropriate that young people should be consulted regarding their views on learning. Taking account of the views of children and young people has been widely acknowledged to be important as evidenced by The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). Educational Psychologists are increasingly adopting a pivotal role in representing or exploring and advocating the importance of children's views. (Billington 2006, Gersch, Holgate and Sigston 1993).

With respect to children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) within the UK, over the years there does appear to have been an under representation within the literature of studies accessing pupils' views regarding their learning and what would further support their learning. However, now more studies exist for example, Lyle et al (2010), Ruddock (2007). This study could be perceived to be related to these studies as the aim of these studies is to access the views of pupils with SEND regarding their learning with the aim of highlighting that from early on children and young people are insightful and can analyse their experiences of learning within school in a constructive manner, so they are able to make a valuable

contribution to the development of strategies for improving their learning and raising achievement. However, when specific groups are considered such as pupils who are Profoundly Deaf, there are few published studies within the area of Education that have consulted these pupils regarding their views on what may improve their learning. This is astonishing when one considers the plethora of historical literature regarding the different professional views, often relatively controversial regarding what supports these pupils learning. (See later in the Literature Review section). Profoundly Deaf children have historically and are still performing at significantly lower levels than their hearing counterparts. The underachievement of deaf children in general is a key issue.

In fact, it is interesting to note that Groce, 2003; International Disabilities Rights Monitor (IDRM) 2004 noted that extremely little information and research can be found on people with SEND. It is perhaps fair to state, that globally deaf individuals are among some of the most marginalised individuals in society.

The study

One of the study's aims was to access the views of Profoundly Deaf young people within the Key Stage 3 age range educated within a mainstream school resourced for pupils with hearing difficulties, in order to ascertain what could aid or improve these pupils learning. The pupils' views were accessed using their preferred language – British Sign Language (BSL). It was hoped that the study would allow this particular group of young people's views to be accessed. Also, that an increased awareness of these young people's specific views may be helpful to staff working within the resource base and advance thinking in the area of achievement of Profoundly Deaf children and young people.

However, it should be noted that no claims are being made that the views of this specific group of Profoundly Deaf pupils can be generalised to other groups of Profoundly Deaf pupils, this will be discussed further within the Methodology section.

Another aim of the project was to consult young people within the Key Stage 3 age range educated within a mainstream school resourced for pupils with hearing difficulties about their views of what influences their learning, then through discussions with school staff, it was hoped that it may be possible in the long term, to modify the learning experience of Profoundly Deaf young people and attempt to increase their attainments. The study was in two parts so the chosen methodology was a mixed methods approach, utilising focus groups and participatory action research. The study also utilised a case study approach. To use the focus group methodology with Profoundly Deaf young people required modifications, therefore several modifications were employed. The participatory action research element of the methodology involved negotiating the involvement of a young person who is Profoundly Deaf with British Sign Language as their preferred language, to be involved in moderating the focus group. The idea for this element emerged out of an unpublished paper I wrote in 2009 – ‘Under what conditions is it possible to use focus group methodology to access the views of pupils who are Profoundly Deaf’ and through my professional practice. Also, as a response to a professional relationship that already existed with a young person who previously took part in a focus group that I had conducted previously while working within a different local authority, than the one I currently work for. This pupil had actively participated in a generic focus group within her school; the aim of that focus group was to evaluate the work of SEAL (Social, Emotional Aspects of Learning). This young person commented on how she had enjoyed the process; therefore it was hoped that this individual if invited to, or any other/s may be keen to be involved in moderating a focus group or conducting research.

Training in the use of focus group methodology was provided by me as the researcher, so that the young person could adopt a co-researcher approach. The aim of such an approach was to involve young people in each stage of the research process and include this and other young people's extremely valued and unique perspectives, as individuals who are Profoundly Deaf with British Sign Language as their preferred language. There would also be a crucial aim within the research of sharing skills and knowledge. It was hoped that this aim would not only apply to the young person, or any other involved with moderating the focus group, but would transcend this individual into the school community to which that young person belongs and ultimately perhaps, the wider local Deaf community.

In order to recap, the overall aims of the study included:

- accessing the views of Profoundly Deaf young people within the Key Stage 3 age range educated within a mainstream school resourced for pupils with hearing difficulties, in order to ascertain what could aid or improve these pupils learning.
- perhaps, through discussions with school staff, in the long term to modify the learning experience of Profoundly Deaf young people and attempt to increase their attainments.
- involving young people in each stage of the research process, sharing skills and knowledge

Organisation of the study

In order to document the study it has been organised into individual consecutive chapters entitled: Introduction (current Chapter) Literature Research, Methodology, Method, Data analysis and Results, Discussion, Implications of the study and Conclusion. Within the Literature Research section (Chapter 2) a review of the literature relevant to the current area of study will be provided, including: historical information/debates regarding the education of children who are Profoundly Deaf; current views towards the teaching of Deaf children; issues linked to Mainstream Education, Integration and Inclusion and the current achievement levels of Profoundly Deaf children and young people. Although, this study does not adopt a Disabilities approach per se, work in the area of Critical Disability Studies is also explored within Chapter 2, for the valuable and insightful issues this area raises. The development of pupil voice; the assessment for learning agenda; the role of the Educational Psychologist in representing and advocating children and young people's views; using focus groups to gather the views of children and young people; considering possible modifications required when using a focus group to access the views of a group of Profoundly Deaf young people are also, included in Chapter 2. The Methodology Chapter (Chapter 3) is where I outline my own approach to the methodology of the study and explore some of the issues involved in conducting this study. After this within Chapter 4, a table is presented detailing the procedure I followed and a timeline, which is preceded by a more detailed narrative description outlining the 'Method' of the study. The next Chapter, Chapter 5 will present the Results in both figurative and narrative format. Within this Chapter prior to the Results being presented, there will also be an exploration of the Analysis of the Data. Chapter 6 will end with a discussion of the results, including a critique of the analysis of data, including the use of thematic analysis. A critique of the study will also be provided within this Chapter, focused on the methods utilised; starting with the use of a focus group as a method, the participatory action research aspect of the research and the case study approach. Implications for the young people, staff within the Resource Base and school, also, EP's, in addition to concluding comments will end the study – Chapter 7.

As the study involved a case study approach a description of the research study site will now be provided:

Description of the research study site

The Resource Base and wider school

The Resource Base for children and young people who are deaf or have hearing difficulties is located within a large state comprehensive school within a major city. There are approximately 1400 children and young people on roll within the school. The school is located within a relatively varied neighbourhood both socially and culturally. A brief summary of some of the key demographic indicators linked to the wider pupil population at the case study school will now be provided. The analyses are based on data gathered from the school census for the 2011/12 academic year.

Demographic Indicators:

The Rate of Eligibility for free school meals.

The rate of eligibility for free school meals at the case study school in 2012 was 20.2%

The percentage of pupils for whom English is not their first language.

The percentage of pupils for whom English was not their first language who attended the case study school in 2012 was 7.3%

The recorded number of pupils in public care on roll at the school.

*The number of pupils in public care on roll at the case study school in 2012 were <6.

The proportion of pupils of black and bilingual backgrounds.

Data is collected on first language, not on 'whether or not' a child is bilingual. 10.5% of pupils were from a black background (please note that this includes Black African, Black Caribbean and any other Black backgrounds).

The percentage of pupils identified with SEND.

37.1% was the percentage of pupils classified as school action, school action plus or having a statement. This is not comparable with the current methodology for identifying SEND children, so caution needs to be exerted if comparing to more recent data.

*Although, specific information was held by the Local Authority on the number of pupils in public care on roll at the case study school in 2012, it was not possible for this information to be provided because to provide the specific statistical information could potentially have led to identification of young people. This would then constitute personal data and as such would breach principle 1 of the Data Protection Act under Section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act. In order to comply with obligations to assist requestors under the Act, instead of withholding the information in its entirety the Local Authority has shared the figure of '<6.'

The children and young people within the Resource Base are taxed in from all over the city if they require more support than can be provided in their local mainstream school. The majority of deaf children and young people are bilingual using both British Sign Language (BSL) and English in their everyday lives. The school has a bilingual policy which develops the use and understanding of both languages. Both languages are also used to access the mainstream curriculum.

The curriculum within the Resource Base and wider school.

The deaf young people largely follow the same curriculum as their hearing peers and are taught mainly in the mainstream supported by specialists; though additional support, if required, is available to all deaf young people within the Resource Base. The access to additional support within the Resource Base enables information accessed in lessons to be repeated and learning reinforced. English is taught separately within base lessons by a qualified Teacher of the Deaf.

At key stage 3 pupils study a wide variety of subjects in each year group for example, Maths, English, Biology, Physics, Chemistry, History, Geography, languages: French, German, Spanish, community languages such as Punjabi and Urdu (in order to reflect the wider community of the city and school) Music and Drama. During year 9 pupils choose the subjects that they want to study in Years 10 and 11. At key stage 4 a range of academic, vocational and technical qualifications taught by specialist teachers are available to the young people. However, throughout the school a strong focus on literacy and numeracy is advocated; these subjects are embedded in every subject; while staff attempt to provide a comprehensive and balanced curriculum that will ensure skills are developed beyond merely subject knowledge.

The school also have partnership links with local providers to enable a small number of pupils to have the opportunity to follow a more practical curriculum such as motor vehicle, building and animal care courses. However, pupils following a more practical curriculum continue to study Maths and English at GCSE level.

The deaf young people interact with hearing pupils within the school in lessons and during social break times. A number of hearing staff and pupils are able to sign, also there are free British Sign's language classes run throughout the school year. Deaf awareness training is delivered to the school staff every year.

The school has an active school council with representatives from each year group who contribute to the decision making process in the school, so that pupils can express their views regarding the direction of the school.

The specialist staffing within the school.

Children and young people who are deaf within school have access to a team of specialist staff including Teachers of the Deaf, Deaf Instructors and Communication Support Workers who all work collaboratively to promote the educational inclusion and achievement of children and young people with an identified hearing difficulty.

The Teacher of the Deaf role is to provide specialist input for the children and young people enabling them to achieve the best possible outcomes. They plan, deliver and evaluate specialist teaching and provide support programmes for the children and young people. Staff also assess and monitor the individual needs and progress of the children and young people providing reports and advice, as appropriate. The Teachers of Deaf also provide training and advice to mainstream staff, other professionals and families. They work in partnership with the mainstream staff to encourage the maximum educational access, inclusion, development and progress of children and young people who are deaf or have hearing difficulties. The social and emotional welfare of the children and young people including independence, self-esteem and emotional resilience are promoted by the Teachers of the Deaf.

The role of the Deaf Instructor is to encourage effective communication skills for the children and young people. This involves teaching, developing and facilitating the use of BSL for the children and young people, also monitoring and reporting on the children and young people's progress. In addition, the Deaf Instructors provide additional teaching and support of mainstream curriculum materials and concepts through the use of sign. Deaf Instructors are instrumental in the delivery and/or assistance of Deaf Awareness training to mainstream colleagues.

The Communication Support Worker role is to facilitate access for deaf learners via British Sign Language by providing communication support for staff, children/ young people and parents in a range of situations as well as, adapting materials and delivery of curriculum content.

A Speech and Language Therapist visits the school on a weekly basis.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

To begin this chapter, historical information/debates regarding the education of children who are Profoundly Deaf will be provided. This will be followed by an outline of current views towards the teaching of Deaf children; Bilingualism and the education of Deaf children will be explored within the context of mainstream education. Next Inclusion will be considered through its inception from Integration. Then the main challenges pupils who have a hearing difficulty may still face today within mainstream schools will be explored and the current achievement levels of Profoundly Deaf children and young people presented. Importantly, a section on Disability Studies will follow with a focus on Critical Disability Studies, in order for me to be in a position to demonstrate the need for my study to be located within so called 'mainstream' studies. Often pupils with different needs views are not included or documented within mainstream literature and I feel strongly that all young people's views should be. There should be no so called 'Normal' that is perceived as mainstream, all young people with diverse needs or backgrounds, views should be deemed to be part of the mainstream. This viewpoint will be demonstrated and discussed later within this chapter; this thinking is in line with a Critical Disabilities stance. What will then follow is an exploration of the development of Pupil Voice (which will be re- construed as 'Pupil Views'- making the term more applicable to those whose preferred language is not spoken) and Pupil Participation. Frameworks of Pupil Participation will be considered and critiqued while the benefits and challenges of Pupil Voice and Pupil Participation will also be highlighted. During consideration of the area of Pupil Voice and Pupil Participation, the Assessment for Learning agenda will be examined and the role of the Educational Psychologist in representing and advocating children and young people's views. The method of using focus groups to gather children and young people's views will be briefly mentioned but, along with the possible modifications required when using focus groups to access the views of Profoundly Deaf young people; these areas will be explored critically in more depth within the methodology chapter. Finally, the importance of why we should attempt to access the views of young people who are Profoundly Deaf will be stated along with the research question of my study.

Historical information/debates regarding the education of children who are Profoundly Deaf

Over the years there has been much debate/discussion about the Education of Deaf children, but considering 2014 marked the 150th Anniversary of Gallaudet University (Gallaudet University-is a federally chartered private university for the education of individuals who are Deaf situated in Washington D.C) we still have a lot to learn. Views about the education of Deaf children have over the years been highly controversial. The debate over the education of Deaf children has been extremely emotive and political. There have been emotionally charged debates and conflicting views about how best to educate Deaf children. What follows is a brief outline of the differing viewpoints/ debate over the past 100 years. As mentioned the debate has encompassed conflicting views about the best way to educate a Deaf child. In this summary an attempt is made to describe the different approaches subjectively. It should be stressed that the following overview serves to provide information/knowledge about the different methods without purporting one method over another and while also trying not to inject any bias from the author's – my perspective.

Specifically over the past 100 years the education of Deaf children has been polarised into two main viewpoints. Those who purport Sign Language (the manualists) to be the most effective method for teaching Deaf children and those who purport speech and lip reading for communication (the oralists) as the most effective method. There was a third group though, those who believed Cued Speech (a visual representation of English signs) was the way forward in the education of Deaf children. It is important to be aware of the history behind the education of Deaf children because it has been controversial and having an insight into the issues helps us to realise that we should not expect or advocate that there is one right way to educate all children. The importance of seeking the views of those who any adopted system impacts on is also magnified.

During the early part of the 1800's, Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet (a teacher) came to England to attempt to learn a teaching method suitable for teaching Deaf students. He approached a school called Braidwood, but, they were reluctant to share their teaching methods. Braidwood's methods were oral in nature and so reliant in speech and lip reading. Fortuitously, at the same time as Gallaudet was in England, a French priest called Roche-Ambroise Sicard, a teacher of the deaf, was travelling around England, demonstrating his method. Gallaudet went to the demonstration, and was impressed by Sicard's Sign Language method. He so brought Sicard's methods to Connecticut with the support of Laument Clerc, a gifted Deaf teacher.

The two men set up the Hartford School, later known as the American School for the Deaf in 1817. The method of teaching instruction in the school was Sign Language. Over the following 63 years Sign Language instruction predominated. Almost half of all Teachers of the Deaf were Deaf themselves and a number of Deaf individuals set up their own schools. During this positive era of signed Deaf education, congress established the National Deaf Mute College in 1864, known today as Gallaudet University. However, this approach towards using Sign Language to educate Deaf individuals was to change quite catastrophically after the Conference of Milan (1880).

The Conference of Milan was an international conference that debated the two major instructional methods used to educate Deaf individuals at the time. Prior to the Milan Conference there was much disagreement about which method was better Sign Language or speech. The conference actually took place in 1880. The outcome of the conference was that the oral method was deemed the better method. This had an impact on the teaching of Deaf individuals for the next eighty years. Within the following twenty years the number of Deaf teachers teaching Deaf pupils fell to 1/5 of the total teachers. The Milan conference had a profound effect on the Deaf Community. Youngs (2013) charts the developments around the time of the Milan Conference and describes the devastating effect it had on the Deaf community. Signing in classrooms was often forbidden and there were reports of children being

punished physically if they signed. These attitudes and practices lead to signing occurring in secret. The rationale given for Sign Language to be forbidden was that those educators who purported an oral approach believed that if a Profoundly Deaf child signed he or she would not learn how to speak. It was believed that because English is such a difficult language to lip read, many words looking identical when spoken, in order for an individual to lip read effectively, it was suggested that they must have an excellent grasp of English language. This viewpoint was disappointing for many because most of the Deaf people at the time were not familiar with English and did not have a grasp of the language; though were expected to learn their lessons and communicate without the required tools. This led to frustration among Deaf individuals towards the system and the system achieved poor academic results, which only seemed to make the situation for individuals who were Deaf even worse.

In the early 1960's William Stokoe wrote 'Sign Language structure.' This work purported that American Sign Language (ASL) was a language on a par with any spoken language. Recognition of sign language eventually came through the work of Stokoe in the 1970s, and Mary Brennan, who coined the term British Sign Language (BSL) in 1976 for the sign language used by the Deaf community in the UK. It is unfortunate that before the late 1960s and early 1970s, sign languages were not considered proper languages but were seen as crude systems of mime and gesture despite the fact that sign languages had been utilised for many years by Deaf people. Evidence for this can be seen from descriptions by Augustine (AD 354-430) and the first documentation of sign language in Britain by Bulwer (1644). At about the same time as sign languages were rightly being recognised as true languages, the dissatisfaction with oralism was increasing. Critical to this dissatisfaction was a seminal study by Conrad, which considered a cohort of Deaf school leavers in the 1970's. He discovered that Deaf pupils left school with: median reading ages of 9 years old; poor speech intelligibility and lip-reading skills no more advance than

those of the hearing population, even though they had received specific training in this area (Conrad, 1979). This poor achievement was also demonstrated in other studies from different countries. Therefore within the education of Deaf children the use of sign languages started to be reconsidered.

Of the studies of d/Deaf children's achievement over the years there are a number that indicate that Deaf children of Deaf parents were more successful academically than those with hearing parents. For example, Meadow, (1968); Vernon and Koh (1970); Vernon and Koh (1971); Balow and Brill (1975); Brasel and Quigley (1977) Quigley and Paul (1984); Kampfe (1989), Griffith, Ripich and Dastoli (1990). Results emerged that Deaf children of Deaf parents were more successful academically than those with hearing parents in studies of reading, writing and academic achievement also, in certain aspects of spoken English. Educators attributed this to the early use of sign language in these families and this lead to the conclusion that sign language could be beneficial in the education of Deaf children.

It should be noted though, that in the cognitive area of literacy development there are historical studies that suggest caution should be used in implicating a relationship between early linguistic (manual) interaction and improved performance (for example, Schlesinger and Meadow, 1972a). Also, of course, the issue of greater achievement by Deaf children of Deaf parents is more complex than this. It could be argued that this greater achievement could be because the deafness was due to genetic, rather than other causes likely to be associated with additional disabilities. Alternatively, or perhaps in addition, it may well be that Deaf parents are better at establishing the general pre-linguistic skills that are essential for later language development, and it is this that facilitates higher levels of attainment. However, it was established that the early use of sign language with Deaf children acted to enhance intellectual and linguistic development. Certainly, from the introduction of Stokoe's work in the

1960's numerous forms of signed communication were used more often in the classroom; within Britain – British Sign Language.

In 1966 it was Dr Orin Cornett who designed the third method mentioned earlier- Cued Speech a method that is neither sign language nor speech, rather a visual way to represent the phonology of the English language. As a result, not long after, a variety of manual codes for English emerged such as Sign Supported English. Total Communication also emerged around this time. There was a complete change in approach. The term Total communication can be used to describe a variety of approaches, originally it was used to refer to the philosophy where deaf children used the complete spectrum of language modes-child devised gesture, the language of signs, speech reading, finger spelling, reading and writing and the development of residual hearing for the enhancement of Speech and Speech reading skills (Denton 1976). However, it is now most often used to describe an approach using Sign Supported English, where Spoken English is used in collaboration with some British Sign Language signs.

Current views towards the teaching of Deaf children

Current views towards the teaching of Deaf children have changed dramatically. Some professionals in the area of deafness advocate a tool box approach for example, Marschark (2009). There are now professionals in the field of deafness who do feel the ability to utilise signed language is beneficial to the Deaf child, for example, Krammer (2013) and Humphries, Kushalnagar, Mathur, Napoli, Padden, Rathmann and Smith (2017). A growing number of professionals within the UK advocate using a Bilingual Model; Swanwick and Gregory (2007) highlight in their document a number of practitioners who advocate the Sign Bilingual approach as described further below.

The Bilingual Model

Bilingualism in education in general, was in Britain first conceptualised in the 1960's. In Britain in the 1960's there was a rise in immigration of families with a range of different first languages, the initial reaction to this was to assert the need to teach English to the children of these families. Their home language was seen as a disadvantage which could confuse and inhibit development. They were labelled as non- English speakers and research seemed to show poorer attainments in children from other language-using communities. However, this finding was reversed by the work of a number of researchers, including Cummins in Canada. Cummins displayed that, for children using French and English, bilingualism was an advantage. The model explaining this advantage became known as the linguistic interdependence model. Language development was not inhibited and greater cognitive flexibility was achieved in certain tasks (Cummins, 1978). This seemed to change the underlying view of bilingualism as a disadvantage.

Bilingualism and the education of Deaf children

In terms of Bilingualism and the education of deaf children, Dr Susan Gregory (1996) in a paper entitled Bilingualism and the education of Deaf Children defined Bilingual education as:

...an approach to the education of deaf children which uses both the sign language of the deaf community and the written/spoken language of the hearing community.

(Gregory 1996, p1)

In Britain the two languages being British Sign Language (BSL) and English, although, for children from homes using languages other than BSL and English, as Gregory acknowledged, further languages may need to be taken into account.

The goals of Bilingual Education as described by Gregory (1996) are to:

- enable deaf children/young people to achieve linguistic competence.
- ensure deaf children/young people have access to a wide curriculum
- facilitate good literacy skills.

(Gregory, 1996 p3)

Gregory (1996) highlighted that after an initial 'honeymoon' period when Bilingual education was introduced, in terms of literacy development and access to wider curriculum issues it became apparent that Bilingual education raised complex issues of educational practice, staff training and administration. These three issues required addressing. Gregory herself in her (1996) paper outlined twelve issues that occurred to her from both her research and working practice. Gregory (1996) did stress though that her mention of the many issues was not an expression of the failure of the bilingual approach, or of the need for it to be diluted in any way, but a clear recognition of the work required for it to progress further.

Within the UK in 1998 a document entitled 'Sign Bilingualism- a model' was published. The document was published by Miranda Pickersgill and Susan Gregory (1998.) This document has been used widely 'as a policy reference document for sign bilingual education' over the years. (Swanwick and Gregory, 1996 p 2)

Current perspectives on Sign Bilingualism

As described by Swanswick and Gregory (2007) the philosophy of the sign bilingual approach to education is steeped in a linguistic and cultural minority view of deafness and a social model of disability. 'As Swanswick and Gregory (2007) outlined it is based on recognition of the following:

- Equality of opportunity regardless of language, ethnicity, race, gender and disability.
- The value of diversity in society including linguistic and cultural plurality.

- The language and culture of Deaf people.
- The goal of the removal of oppression and the empowerment of deaf people.
- That deaf children have the same potential for language and learning as hearing children and the right to access the knowledge, skills and experiences available to hearing children in an appropriate and relevant curriculum.'

(Swanswick and Gregory, 2007 p 4)

Sign bilingual approaches to education developed due to reasons such as the recognition of sign language as a language, the unacceptable levels of attainment of deaf pupils and an acknowledgement of the educational advantages for pupils who are bilingual in spoken languages.

Bilingualism in subsequent years, a decade on from the nineties has developed. Sign Bilingual education has evolved. Some of the changes that occurred as identified by Swanwick and Gregory (2007) which have affected Sign Bilingual education include:

- The growth into sign language linguistics and the education of deaf studies.
- Tools for the assessment of children's BSL have been developed.
- British Sign Language was officially recognised as a language by the Government in March 2003.
- Many Deaf organisations have become explicit in their support of Sign Bilingualism as an approach within education.
- There is increased acceptance and recognition of the role of BSL in schools.
- There is more deaf awareness in education generally and opportunities for pupils (deaf and hearing) to pursue an increased number of nationally recognised sign language qualifications and vocational CACDP (Council for the Advancement of Communication with Deaf People) qualifications.

- There is evidence that deaf children in Sign Bilingual teaching environments develop positive self-esteem and a strong sense of identity.
- Sign bilingual environments have evidence of improved pupil attainment.
- Deaf students starting college coming from a sign bilingual background are now better equipped and qualified to pursue their studies.
- There are opportunities for teachers to follow the mandatory Teacher of the Deaf qualification with a specific focus on sign bilingual issues.

(Swanwick and Gregory, 2007 p 5)

Changes such as these have prompted Swanwick and Gregory (2007) to revise the original document by Pickersgill and Gregory (1998). Swanwick and Gregory's (2007) new document aims to describe the current situation regarding Sign Bilingual education. It is a working document that considers Sign Bilingual education as it is practiced. The main difference from the previous document is that it considers practice both in the UK and internationally. The document outlines key policy statements. It includes case studies of contexts in which sign bilingual education is developing. It also provides a summary of UK research into sign language, in relation to sign bilingual education and relevant research. Swanwick and Gregory (2007) suggest their intention is that the document will be used as a: 'policy reference document for Sign Bilingual schools and services.' (Swanwick and Gregory 2007, p2)

Perhaps a criticism that could be levelled at Sign Bilingual approaches and their use within education, is often the approach of Bilingualism is explored rather than discussing teaching strategies. In fact in a review paper 'Deaf Children's Bimodal Bilingualism and Education, Swanwick (2016) states:

'Bilingual pedagogies tend to be outlined in very general terms, where principles of the approach are given rather than discussion of teaching

strategies.'

(Swanwick 2016, p 42)

Swanwick (2016) goes on to state that:

'A common approach to practice seems to entail attention to sign languages as the first language and gradual introduction to English as a second language through literacy.

(Swanwick 2016, p 42)

She argues from reviewing research into Bilingual practice, that Bilingual practice has been dominated by a focus on modality issues which has resulted in researchers failing to examine the dynamics of the use of sign language in the classroom. Swanwick (2016) states that it is only now that we are starting to witness attention being focused on what actually takes place in terms of interaction, engaging and learning where two (or more) languages and modalities are involved; reference is made to the work of Molander, Hallden and Lindahl (2010). Swanwick's (2016) hope is that further research in this area will:

'...extrapolate the dynamics of mixed and blended language use in the classroom and how this can scaffold and support learning and inform the development of more nuanced language provisions for bimodal bilingual deaf pupils.

(Swanwick 2016, p42)

Swanwick (2016) proposes a possible future direction; the development of a new theoretical model of Bimodal Bilingualism and deafness, a model:

'that recognises the multilingual and multimodal communicative resources of individuals as flexible and changing language repertoires.

(Swanwick 2016, p43)

It is also suggested by Swanwick (2016) that we look to the research occurring within modern languages and she specifically refers back to the work of Lewis, Jones and Baker (2012) and their use of the term 'translanguaging,' as a useful way of conceptualising mixed and blended language use 'as a natural part of individual repertoires and classroom pedagogy' (Swanwick2016, p43).

Swanwick (2016) suggests that Bimodal Bilingualism actually affords opportunities for translanguaging to extend beyond examples seen to date in language research:

‘... because of the ability to combine and alternate different linguistic structures and systems, including modalities, to make meaning.’
(Swanwick 2016, p43)

An interesting study in the area of Sign Bilingualism is that of Hilary Sutherland (2005) conducted for her Doctoral Research at the University of Manchester. 'Sign Bilingualism through the eyes of the child.' This study focuses on an exploration of Deaf children's perspectives, experiences and attitudes towards their Sign Bilingual education. It was conducted in the children's first language BSL. (For details please refer to the 'Studies accessing pupils' views regarding their learning and what would further support their learning' section of this thesis, explored later in this Chapter).

The advantages of spoken language bilingualism is attributed in part at least to the possibility of transfer between two languages, so that skills acquired in one language could influence skills in the other language positively. However, this idea that the linguistic interdependence theory can support a bilingual-bicultural model of literacy education for deaf students is challenged by Mayer and Wells (1996). They argue that because sign languages and spoken languages rely on different modalities, the argument that there can be transfer between the two languages is more complex. They imply that the notion of transfer may be different and more problematic than for two spoken languages. Mason (1997) challenged this view and to date this area remains an issue for debate and practice.

With the advent, of the Bilingual approach it is easy to see how integration and later inclusion for Deaf Children within mainstream settings was facilitated. The development of these two concepts shall shortly be explored.

Mainstream education

It is the author's position that children with SEND should be included within mainstream provision taking into account of course the parent and pupils wishes. This includes children with significant hearing difficulties, profound hearing loss being at the extreme end of the continuum. Children with profound hearing difficulties may encounter difficulties when included within mainstream schools if their needs are not assessed carefully and addressed. It is essential that when children with profound hearing difficulties are included within mainstream schools that teachers are aware of the pupils strengths but, also possible difficulties and work in collaboration with the pupil to attempt to provide the best possible learning environment. One aim of the study was to provide assistance to teachers regarding this process making them aware of pupils with profound hearing impairments views. As the context of this study was within a mainstream school with a base for children with hearing difficulties, that provides additional resources to enable these pupils to be included within a mainstream setting; it may now be helpful to consider the historical development of inclusion related to this population of children/young people.

What is Inclusion?

Inclusive schooling first and foremost recognises that special learning needs can arise from social, psychological, economic, linguistic, cultural as well as physical factors. It also recognises that any child can experience difficulty in learning, over the short term or long term at any time during their school experience and so schools must continually review themselves to meet the needs of all its learners. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) described inclusive education as being:

a process of strengthening the capacity of the education system to reach out to all learners.

(UNESCO, 2007 p 8)

UNESCO proceeded to suggest that inclusive education can therefore be understood as a key strategy to achieve Education For All (EFA.) UNESCO (2007) argued that as an overall principle, this should guide all education policies and practices, beginning with the fact that education is a basic human right and the foundation for a more just and equitable society. An inclusive approach is often considered to reflect a move away from a deficit model that focuses on aspects of the learner as the difficulty; where the learner is viewed as deficient in some manner. It could be argued that a deficit model also does not pay enough attention to factors such as social expectations, or parts of the education system/learning environment that could be altered to enable diverse learners to participate and learn. An inclusive approach to education as detailed in 'Count Us In' HIME (2002) involves:

- creating an ethos of achievement for all pupils within a climate of high expectation;
 - valuing a broad range of talents, abilities and achievements;
 - promoting success and self-esteem by taking action to remove barriers to learning;
 - countering conscious and unconscious discrimination that may prevent individuals, or pupils from any particular groups, from thriving in the school;
- and
- actively promoting understanding and a positive appreciation of the diversity of Individuals and groups within society.

(Count Us In, HMIE, 2002 p. 4)

It is clear that developing inclusion will involve learners, professionals, partners, parents, carers and the wider community. It is important to acknowledge, as Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2006) state, 'Inclusion' can be construed differently by different groups in different contexts. Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2006) suggest that inclusion involves: '...a commitment to certain broadly defined values.' (Ainscow, Booth and Dyson, 2006 p 27). Then they argue inclusion can be perceived as a process of putting values into practice. However, they also argue that '...inclusion can only be fully understood as its underpinning values are played out *in particular contexts.*' (Ainscow, Booth and Dyson, 2006 p 27).

What is Integration?

Prior to inclusion, the aim was integration. It could be argued over time that Inclusion evolved from integration in the first instance. Integration was defined by Webster and Elwood (1995) as:

the process by which all children whatever their abilities and needs participate together in a community such as the school.

(Webster and Elwood, 1985 p 1)

Within educational settings, as described by Webster and Elwood (1985) there were perceived to be levels of integration that efforts to integrate a deaf pupil would occur at. Those levels of integration related to the institutional, group and individual.

At the institutional level the institution providing the integrated provision was responsible for the implementation of that provision which would include describing the services to be provided, hiring staff and providing support services. Any concerns at this level tended to involve policy development. It was common at this level to ensure involvement by participants both internal to the institution and critical external groups such as parents, considering their perspectives and agenda's. In terms of success of integration at this level instructional commitment to the stability of the provision via policy statements and internal funding priorities were deemed to be crucial.

At the group level, the emphasis was on the interaction between hearing pupils and deaf pupils. Interaction within a classroom, at a club or social event. During times such as these when pupils would be in regular proximity to each other, with shared goals and leadership from a teacher, coach etc. the quality of interactions was dependent on the structure of the activity, the attitude of the participants and the philosophy and skills of the group leader. As Foster (1990) suggested it was necessary for all members of the group to be involved in the implementation of the plan for integration so that there would be commitment to and strategies for equal participation.

At the individual level hearing and deaf pupils interacted informally. The interactions were referred to by Garretson (1977) as 'the unwritten curriculum' and occurred during typical routines such as walking down the corridor and communicating in the dining hall. Concerns at this level are linked to past research that suggests that individual interaction may be especially challenging to deaf pupils in integrated settings because involvement is often voluntary, variable/sporadic and unstructured (Foster 1988 and 1989). Indeed these types of informal interactions were thought to present the most difficult communication challenge, success often linked to the resourcefulness and motivation of participants.

The development of Integration

As described by Jones (1990) in his review of Special Educational Needs the integration movement in Britain has developed in what could be considered 3 stages, not necessarily consecutive stages; which appeared to follow a ten year cycle, perhaps, reflective of other changes within the education system. The first stage, in 1960's Britain was influenced by work going on in Scandinavian countries that was underpinned by a strong parents' movement for improved conditions for children with disabilities. This in turn led to a United Nations Declaration in favour of countries developing better

services for individuals with disabilities within a framework of policies for integration. At the same time the rights issue was slowly emerging but, found expression in American legislation that was based on 'Rights' within the constitution not within British legislation.

The second stage in the integration process occurred in the 1970's when there was increasing debate about the merits of integration within education. That is as both a practical strategy and a philosophical idea. Again, pressure grew from active parent groups, voluntary societies and individuals working in the public sector of education. However, practical change only came about because of initiatives of individuals working in the public and private sectors of educations and teaching institutions. Very few local educational authorities introduced a unified and comprehensive education system of integration although, intentions of integration were scattered through many local education authorities' policy documents. Special schools still existed and special units became common, particularly for pupils experiencing behavioural difficulties. Increasingly, mainstream schools started to include pupils with disabilities. However, difficulties with school organisation was reported so head teachers experimented with total integration placing pupils in special classes in mainstream schools, with systems of additional support via methods of team teaching. Due to this exploration, three kinds of development occurred: as pioneered in America the concept of a flexible resource room; the integration of 'remedial' teachers to work as classroom assistants alongside classroom teachers; and utilising non-professional classroom assistants. There was also exploration by a few special schools around schemes of joint working with neighbourhood mainstream schools.

The whole of this second stage of integration surrounded management strategies: how to re-integrate pupils meaningfully; what changes were needed; and how to ensure that those integrated back into mainstream schools were not merely attached to the mainstream schools.

The early 1980's formed the back drop of the third stage in the integration process. Mainstream schools were moving towards consideration of appropriate curriculum and assessment of pupils with disabilities that was realistic. The idea was that schools would be places for collaboration, individual and group learning, where all individual pupils' needs and capabilities were addressed and extended with individual appraisal and reward. For consideration of this period in relation to Deaf/deaf children refer to Webster and Ellwood (1985).

The development of Inclusion

Integration was the term first introduced in the 1978 Warnock Report. The idea is that the concept of integration should be replaced by a move towards inclusive education. However, the distinction between inclusion and integration needs clarifying. The concept of integration as just described was concerning integrating children with SEN into a common educational system. The concept then developed to the inclusion of all children to reflect the thinking that it is not for children with SEN to be fitted in or integrated into the mainstream but, that education as a whole should be fully inclusive of all children.

During the late 1990's there was much debate about the philosophy of inclusion. However, there seemed a polarisation of views regarding inclusion. From the views of those such as Peter Newell, child advocate and children rights campaigner who regarded inclusion as a human rights issue; a fundamental human right- that all children should be included in mainstream schools to those who see inclusion policy as the cause of all problems in SEN. For example, a reluctance on the part of local authorities previously to issue statements, the closure of special schools-resulting in blanket policies responsible for inclusion or exclusion from specific schools or access to resources. Some opponents of inclusion frequently claim that there is not the money for inclusion.

There are a number of major international statements that have appeared over the years affirming the principle of inclusive education and the importance of working towards 'schools for all'- schools that include all children, celebrate diversity, support learning and are responsive to the individual needs of children. One such statement is The Salamanca Statement (1994) which highlighted the importance of valuing diversity, suggesting human differences are normal. It's guiding principle being that mainstream schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, emotional, social, linguistic or other requirements.

Along with the United Nations convention on the rights of the child (1989) the UN standard rules on the equalisation of opportunities for persons with disabilities (1993) the UNESCO Salamanca statement and framework for action are all effective tools in the fight to abolish separated education. They assert a strong case for inclusion and provide an opportunity for inclusive education to be firmly placed on the agenda of national governments. The British government ratified the UN Convention on the rights of the child in 1991; also, the UK was one of 92 countries which endorsed the Salamanca statement in 1994.

The Salamanca statement

In June 1994 representatives of 92 governments and 25 international organisations formed the world conference on SEN education in Salamanca Spain. Agreement was reached on a dynamic new statement on the education of all children with SEN that called for inclusion to be the norm. The conference also adopted a new framework for action, the guiding principle of this framework for action was that ordinary schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. All educational policies say the framework should stipulate that children with SEND attend the neighbourhood school that would be attended if the child did not have special educational needs or a disability.

The Salamanca statement begins with a commitment to education for all, it recognised the necessity and urgency of providing education for all children, young people and adults within the regular education system (so called mainstream) within the UK. It stated that children with SEN must have access to mainstream schools. It continues by stating that regular (by which mainstream is implied) schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective way of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all. However, also suggesting that further to this they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and therefore, ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the whole education system.

The world conference went further to call upon all governments to:

- give the greatest policy and budgetary priority to improve education services, so that all children could be included irrespective of differences or difficulties.
- adopt as a law or policy the principle of inclusive education and enroll all children in regular schools unless there are compelling reasons for coming to another decision.
- develop demonstration projects and encourage exchanges between countries with inclusive schools.
- ensure that organisations of people with SEN, parents and community bodies are involved in planning decision-making.
- put more effort into pre-school strategies and vocational aspects of inclusive education.
- ensure that initial and in-service teacher training considers the provision of inclusive education.

At a later conference in Salamanca, Spain entitled 'Salamanca Conference Resolution' 2009, there has been a renewed global commitment to Inclusive Education.

Considerations on Inclusion

Addressing the claim of some opponents of inclusion who frequently claim there is not enough money to resource inclusion, a lot of resources are actually invested in large expensive special schools. Children with complex needs will require access to specialist services but, these could be relocated elsewhere than a special school. The London borough of Newham is renowned as an LEA that chose on philosophical and educational grounds to redirect their spending from special schools to more inclusive and diverse settings.

Within truly inclusive schools support for children with hearing difficulties will definitely require support for those children from teachers of the deaf, communication support workers, deaf instructors/adults but, also investment in mainstream teacher training, making sure buildings are acoustically sound and that there is access to technical equipment. It will also be necessary to secure a commitment to the re-deployment of existing resources alongside obtaining additional resources.

The historical developments in the area of inclusion are fascinating. It is perhaps beyond the scope of this study to go into great detail regarding agency/power differentials surrounding inclusion. I explored these issues related to this area of study and ethics in an unpublished paper in 2009. Suffice to say that it does appear to me that some mileage appears to be achieved in resisting inclusion by those who wish to maintain the status quo. It seems to serve a purpose for there to be a continuation of two separate systems of education. It has been argued by many disability groups that disability is socially constructed; it is the barriers society places on particular groups of people that create disability. Sociologists have for a long time and psychologists later, argued that disability notions are not objectively determined but, socially constructed and these constructions serve as powerful ideas which mould educational reform. This social construction can lead to children being excluded from mainstream education.

A recollection of mine from childhood almost seems to illuminate this social construction of disability. I remember as a child attending middle school, wondering why there were not a variety of children within the school with differing needs. There are interesting studies that highlight while inclusion may present challenges it has positive outcomes, children with SEND and their parents also, children without SEND and their parents hold positive attitudes about inclusion. Please refer to Hill (2009).

We really do need to be aware though, as Billington (2006) suggested that certain terms can become things people espouse and in themselves the terms appear to be positive things:

However, sometimes such terms can become opaque to the analysis of complex discourses of meaning and power circulating within them.

(Billington 2006, p 5)

It seems to the author that in future what needs to occur is further consideration of inclusion, in terms of considering the needs of children with SEND in terms of their rights from their perspectives, offering them greater choice and a say in decision making regarding their education.

CIME (Centre for International Multi-disciplinary Education) argue that parents often have all the power in terms of making decisions on behalf of their child and it is usually considered that parents decisions are in the best interest of the child but, this is not always so. Billington (2006) quite rightly highlights children:

'are subject ultimately to the control of adults and are frequently vulnerable to any adult in their family, school or other government agency who seeks unreasonably to impose their will upon them. Children contribute one of the last discrete categories of population to be formally disenfranchised within western democratic processes.'

(Billington, 2006 p 3)

In an Editorial entitled 'Perspectives on Inclusion for the Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education,' Marschark, Young and Lukomski (2002) suggest and state succinctly:

As the articles in this issue reflect, most educators and investigators agree that inclusion is a choice along a continuum of educational options.

(Marschark, Young and Lukomski 2002, p 188)

It is perhaps time children and young people were engaged more in that choice.

Marschark, Young and Lukomski (2002) rather than entering polarised views and getting caught up in discussions regarding whether mainstream or special school is the answer to the education of Deaf children, seem to agree with one of the reviewers within the mentioned journal who argued inclusion is not a place. Marschark, Young and Lukomski (2002) state:

What all the articles make clear is that inclusion can be successful only if it involves real collaboration among teachers, students, and parents. The "bottom line" is that Inclusion is as much a political issue as an educational or legal issue. We have to ask ourselves whether any particular "inclusive" setting truly embraces diversity, different learning styles and needs or simply tries to minimize them (see Detterman and Thompson, 1997). As one reviewer suggested, inclusion is a value system, not a place.

(Marschark, Young and Lukomski, p 188)

As a result of this development of the integration movement in Britain and the inclusion agenda that followed throughout the nineties there has been over the last decade and a half a huge increase in the number of pupils with hearing difficulties placed in mainstream classes. Watson back in 1992 suggested that the movements forward were encouraged by the 1981 Education Act. However, some at the time disagreed, such as Barton and Tomlinson (1981) they felt that the 1981 Education Act by itself did not do much at all, but, 'nod favourably' in the direction of increased integration of pupils with SEN into mainstream schools and argued it would not change underlying attitudes. However, as Webster and Ellwood (1985) so aptly pointed out the 1981 act

was a '...significant milestone,' Webster and Ellwood (1985) suggested this only because it provided the legislative framework for a changing perspective that allowed Inclusion to be debated and enacted upon.

The main challenges d/Deaf pupils may still face today within mainstream schools

Of course, difficulties were encountered with the Inclusion agenda. Though, there appear to be significant improvements to date there are still difficulties that school pupils with hearing difficulties may face being educated within mainstream schools. With reference to secondary aged pupils, because they are the focus of this study, what follows is a brief outline of the main challenges that pupils with hearing difficulties may still face today. Webster and Ellwood (1985) highlight many of the difficulties described below. More recently Stinson and Antia 1999, also Antia 2007 describe some of the outlined issues below that continue to present barriers for Deaf/ deaf pupils.

There are many challenges for pupils with hearing difficulties at secondary school. Secondary schools are often larger and this can present challenges to a young person with hearing difficulties as they come into contact with many more unfamiliar people and situations so the social demands on the child are great. Having different teachers for different subjects can also be challenging. The young person has to learn to adapt to different teaching styles, habits and personalities. This can affect communication skills in particular. For example, being able to lip read different individuals. Also, the language used by subject specific teachers can often include unfamiliar vocabulary-subject specific vocabulary. Often within a secondary environment the young person has to take on greater responsibility for effective classroom participation.

Within secondary classrooms pupils with hearing difficulties may encounter difficulties due to the physical characteristic of the classroom. For example within many secondary classrooms desks are arranged in rows, this can make it impossible for a pupil with a hearing impairment to see all the members of

the class and creates issues when class discussions are taking place. In fact, within secondary schools the style of teaching often involves group discussions, this can be problematic because as mentioned the pupil with a hearing difficulty may not be able to see all the members of the class and so would not be able to detect who is speaking at any given time; this could lead to a reduction in the ability of the young person to keep track of the 'thread' of an argument and so compromise their ability to contribute appropriately.

There can be technical difficulties to overcome for young people with hearing difficulties within secondary settings. Often audio-visual equipment is used however, if not subtitled these may prove problematic to view for a young person who is simultaneously trying to watch a DVD and follow an interpreters signed translation, possibly within a darkened room. In fact, even a subtitled DVD presents challenges perhaps with the language -English word order and the demands on the pupil's concentration levels.

Difficulties may also occur with the style of teaching in secondary schools, some teachers may be didactic in their style, dictating a lot of information this can present difficulties for a young person with a hearing difficulty. Without support, the practicality of listening in the form of lip reading and writing down what is being said can be difficult for a young person. The whole experience would prove extremely tiring as Webster and Ellwood (1985) highlighted:

...a period of unpunctuated listening without visual content, practical exam or concrete experience is very tiring for a hearing Impaired child.

(Webster and Ellwood, 1985, p 134)

It is important to note that for any young person the physical and geographical complexity of some secondary schools can be as overwhelming as the social exposure and increasing complexity of the timetable. The young person becomes responsible for organising their own books and materials, getting to the right lessons at the right time, handing in assignments, being aware of announcements, notices, protocols and sanctions. For a young person with hearing difficulties issues around these factors are compounded.

There is a body of work providing strategies to assist mainstream teachers working with pupils with hearing difficulties but, it is important to remember individual differences. The deaf community as any community is diverse, as suggested earlier perhaps more so than some other communities, therefore beyond the general, strategies that work for one individual or group of individuals may not work for another individual/group of individuals. Watson (1992) pointed out that while:

A variety of books and videos exist that seek to guide the mainstream teacher difficulties still remain and each individual case merits an individual approach'

(Watson, 1992, p 85)

This is as true today, as then. It should be mentioned that the advent of cochlear implantation has also perhaps played a role in increasing the number of pupils with hearing difficulties educated within a mainstream setting. However, as this study is predominately focused on Profoundly Deaf pupils who have not undergone cochlear implantation, these issues and debates are not currently being explored. However, for the interested reader Kumari-Campbell (2009) provides an interesting perspective on the topic of Cochlear implantation in her book 'Contours of Ableism.'

The current achievement levels of Profoundly Deaf children/young People

Why attempt to access the specific views of young people who are Profoundly Deaf? Another compelling factor is that in recent years educators have highlighted statistics to suggest that Profoundly Deaf children are still performing at significantly lower levels than their hearing counterparts. The underachievement of deaf children in general is a key issue. The latest figures provided by the Department for Education (Dfe) January 2015 reveal only 36.3 per cent of deaf children in England left secondary school having gained 5 GCSE's at grades A-C, the national benchmark. This is in comparison to 65.3 per cent of their hearing counterparts.

With this recent decline some may suggest politically, that this slight worsening of the overall results of deaf children compared to last year is due to changes in counting. However, at the same time the most recent Consortium for Research in Deaf Education (CRIDE) report (2014) indicates that the number of qualified teachers of the Deaf is dropping and the level of Sign Language continues at a worryingly low level. Therefore, many others are considering how significant the fall in numbers of qualified Teachers of the Deaf is and are concerned about the future. Currently there is the lowest ever number of qualified Teachers of the Deaf. The National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) is particularly concerned about this erosion of specialist support because the numbers of deaf children in England identified by local authorities has risen this year, up 7 per cent from 2013.

Another concern of the NDCS is that the situation may be exasperated by the fact that over half of all teachers of the Deaf are due to retire in the next 10-15 years. Susan Daniels (2015) CEO with the NDCS in commenting on the 2015 figures released by the Dfe, went so far as to state Deafness is not a learning disability so having a widening gap in GCSE attainment is unacceptable. The reduction of support from local authorities for qualified Teachers of the Deaf is leading to deaf children being set up to fail and trailing behind throughout their education. Susan Daniels (2015) goes on to assert that it is crucial that the

government takes action to clarify how local authorities will be appropriately held accountable for failing deaf children.

The NDCS has been instrumental in trying to raise the achievement of deaf children through various campaigns and by lobbying parliament. For example, the 'Narrowing the gap' work taking place in Scotland; 'Closing the attainment gap in Scottish education' (Sosu and Ellis, 2014) is an evidence review of the educational attainment gap between children from poorer and better off households in Scotland. The report outlines what teachers, schools and local government and other education providers can do to close the attainment gap associated with poverty in Scotland.

What better reason to access the specific views of young people who are Profoundly Deaf, in order to attempt to support their learning by capturing their views. The views of these young people themselves; for so long a neglected area.

Footnote

CRIDE is a consortium that brings together a number of organisations and individuals with a shared interest in improving the educational outcomes achieved by deaf children throughout research. When the 2014 survey was issued representatives of CRIDE included: the British Association of Teachers of the Deaf (BATOD), City University London, The Ear Foundation, The Ewing foundation, Frank Barnes School for Deaf Children, Kent County Council, London borough of Barnet, The National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) National Sensory Impairment partnership (NatSIP), Mary Hare School, Sheffield City Council and University College London (UCL).

Disability studies

Although, I am not espousing a disability perspective throughout this thesis, as explained in the Methodology Chapter, Disability Studies do have much to offer in that as Curran (2013) suggests they resist and change dominant relations and so can: make practices of exclusion more transparent; centre the experiences of disabled children's experiences, make spaces for disabled children's views; conceptualise disabled children's childhoods. In fact, as Curran and Runswick-Cole recognise Disabled Children's Studies have the potential to:

...act as a lens that enables us to think positively and productively about all children's lives.'

(Curran and Runswick-Cole, 2013 p ix)

However, we do need to take a transdisciplinary stance because many of the studies derive from Social Care and Health. The work of Foucault (a French Post-modernist Philosopher) may help us to conceptualise the connections between knowledge, power and subjectivity, how significant these areas are when considering areas such as Disability Studies and the possibilities for change.

In terms of power relations, Foucault's views power as imminent, dispersed and continually productive. Acts of violence and torture Foucault (1974, 1982, 2005) recognises as types of domination but, he analyses acts of power that are not so direct and visible. Foucault uses the term 'Governmentality' to describe the management of the population that arises through the combined effects of knowledge disciplines and systems of administration (Schwan and Shapiro 2011) Governmentality operates via professionals management of the family though, most significantly through self-management by the family (Elden 2006) Professionals are also thought to self-manage exercising 'autonomous' judgements while privy to the usual practices that make up the apparatus of Governmentality. As Rose and Miller (2010) suggest governments act upon professionals and also through the actions of professions. Therefore a critical

view of 'autonomy' is considered the key to this kind of analysis. Rose and Miller (2010) suggest personal autonomy is not the antithesis of political powers but rather a key term in its exercise because individuals are not solely the subjects of power but quite significantly play a part in its operations.

Often deemed one of the most original features of Foucault's analysis is the conception that power operates best when it enables subjects to act with the outcome of constraining them. (Tremain, 2001 in Tremain 2005 p4) There is an argument for all knowledge not to be accepted as a form of liberation but, for knowledge to be-questioned this is deemed particularly important when considering disability, childhood and welfare discourses. Foucault (1997) in Fabion (1998) explains that Resistance is continually part of the exercise of power. This is discussed in terms of an ethics applied to the self in relation to others.

Although, Foucault's work is not without its critics; for example, the linguistic Chomsky who debated with Foucault in the 1970's would perhaps be amongst those who argue that Foucault's concept of power is extremely elusive; detached from agency or structure and so there appears limited scope for practical action. However, as mentioned Foucault has been greatly influential in identifying the ways that norms can be so embedded that they are beyond our perception— resulting in us disciplining ourselves without need for any purposeful coercion from others. Therefore, what Foucault's work does do is to encourage us to be specific and curious and to seek out pointers of the existence of desirable alternatives to dominant discourses. Discourses being the disciplines, practices and techniques we are all subject to and subject ourselves to through self- discipline at the level of the body, local and global. (Danaher, Schirato and Webb 2000). In other words, the communicated thoughts in society that are most prevalent that we have imposed upon us and we impose on ourselves as we function individually, within our local communities and the wider world. Resistance as a reflexive practice with others is crucial in forming alternative relations and ways of being.

Reflexivity and alternative ways of working are the benefits on offer when practitioners engage with research activities involving disabled children and young people. As the following two examples show:

Firstly, Curran and Runswick-Cole (2013) in a chapter in their book 'Disabled Children's Childhood Studies' present 'Stevie's story.' A story about a five year old girl from the North-West of England and her life as a disabled child in England. The story was originally told as part of a research project Katherine Runswick-Cole was conducting between 2011 and 2012 at the Research Institute for Health and Social Change at Manchester Metropolitan University in conjunction with Scope (a UK based charity) entitled 'Resilience in the lives of disabled people across the life-course.' The aims of the study was to examine what Resilience means to disabled people at different phases across the life course; how resilience or lack of it has affected disabled people's ability to obtain and manage challenges and ceased opportunities; to understand what supports in building resilience among different groups of disabled people and to devise a toolkit for use by Scope's policy and services sections that outlines what Scope means by resilience- what does or does not work in helping people to become resilient and what can be done to build resilience in disabled people throughout the life course. These aims were explored via four phases of the research project-a Literature Review, a life story phase, a focus group phase and a community of practice phase (Lave and Wenger 1991) during which disabled people and researchers worked collaboratively to develop a toolkit for use by scope in their service delivery. Further details of the study are documented in Runswick-Cole and Goodley (2013). As Curran and Runswick-Cole (2013) argue Stevie's story reminds us of:

...the importance of listening to disabled children in research, in professional practice and in the home. Stevie's story allows us to reflect on our aim to give ethical voice through the use of a distributed story.

(Curran and Runswick-Cole, 2013 p 8)

It also teaches us a great deal about the life of a disabled child in England, but also, focuses our minds and supports us in considering:

...the wider challenges and opportunities that working with disabled children in research can bring.

(Curran and Runswick-Cole 2013, p 9)

The second example of how reflexivity can lead to alternative ways of working can be appreciated by considering the extremely moving and inspirational story of a mother of a disabled child in England referred to as Hannah and documented in Runswick-Cole's 2013 book. Using the metaphor of a mug and a teacup this mother describes her experiences as a mother of a disabled young person and her battle to ensure high expectations are maintained for her daughter using the previously mentioned metaphor to illustrate how she has insisted that her daughter should always be given a teacup and saucer and not a mug. As professionals this study into this parent's and other parents who have children with disabilities viewpoint offers us a unique opportunity to learn to continue to advocate high expectations for young people who may possess additional needs. What is important is identifying through listening to these young people and their families what support, if any is required. As the parent in this study mentioned, her daughter is educated within a mainstream setting and she hopes that in years to come, her daughter and people like her, can be an inspiration to other young people around them, who themselves may go on to have children of their own with additional needs, or choose to work in an environment with young people with disabilities. She wants young people to realise that there are no boundaries, that with the correct support, encouragement and confidence, their children can aim for the stars because they used to know a girl at school who tried to do exactly that and sometimes succeeded.

Critical disability studies

The previous study, links well with the work of Kumari-Campbell (2009) who takes a Critical disabilities studies approach and calls for, more positive views of disability being presented in the future, more studies such as the study by Beresford, Sloper, Baldwin and Newman (1996) who employed the positive aspects of parents coping by identifying the strategies they used and the sorts of support that worked for them.

Kumari-Campbell (2009) talks about positive studies of success, not studies of how people have overcome disablement but, studies regarding those people who achieve success because of their so called impairment or stories of living with ableism. In her book entitled *Contours of Ableism* Kumari-Campbell (2009) explores Ableism in some depth. Kumari-Campbell (2001) refers to Ableism as:

A network of beliefs, processes and practices that produces a particular kind of self and body (the corporeal standard) that is projected as the perfect species typical and therefore essential and fully human. Disability then is cast as a diminished state of being human.

(Kumari-Campbell, 2001 p 44)

Kumari-Campbell (2009) also explores 'Internalised Ableism,' which she considers in relation to 'Internalised Racism.' Kumari-Campbell describes this Internalised Ableism as 'the tyranny' within and presents a quote from Marks (1999) that encapsulates well, internalised oppression:

Internalised oppression is not the cause of our maltreatment; it is the result of our mistreatment. It would not exist without the real external oppression that forms the social climate in which we exist. Once oppression has been internalized, little force is needed to keep us submissive. We harbour inside ourselves the pain and the memories, the fears and the confusions, the negative self-images and the low expectations, turning them into weapons with which to re-injure ourselves, every day of our lives.

(Marks, 1999 p 25)

Kumari-Campbell (2009) continues to draw parallels between 'Critical Disability Studies' and 'Critical Race Theory' in order to highlight the significance of how society views disability. She goes on to talk about tentative disability which she asserts:

Conjures up the notion of disability in waiting disability standing in reserve for technologies that can restore wholeness.

(Kumari-Campbell, 2009 p 44)

Kumari-Campbell (2009) follows this up by suggesting this view of disablement could potentially shift social planning away from an emphasis on 'care' to an emphasis on 'cure.' However, as a quote by a Deaf adult quoted later by Kamari-Campbell (2009) suggests this would not be an appropriate or welcome shift. As Karen Lloyd (from the Australian Association of the Deaf) States:

To us [Deaf identified people], deafness is a natural part of life, it is something that has always been there and is an integral part of who we are. It is not something we have lost or that needs to be 'cured'. The Deaf community has a rich cultural heritage that revolves around its language, Auslan and Deaf people who belong to this community enjoy a fulfilling and active social and cultural life.

(Lloyd, 2000 quoted in Kumari-Campbell, 2009 p 92)

Kumari-Campbell (2009) also imagines the consequences of a move away from the notion of permanent. Perhaps, leading to government being reluctant to invest in long term services, provision infrastructure and limiting citizenship rights only to those with unalterable disability, which could lead to unimaginable political and civil rights implications. For example, disabled people who wish to do well may feel pressured to resort to accepting attempts to alleviate their so called 'disability,' so as not to face the heavy consequences of being identified as having a voluntary disability. Though Kumari-Campbell (2009) argues that this may seem unimaginable, we should feel compelled to imagine, so that we can respond to such a situation should it ever occur.

I truly believe as Davis (1995) the specific 'problem' is not individuals with so called 'disabilities'; the 'problem' is with the way that normalcy is constructed to create the 'problem' of the disabled individual. Therefore as Cooper (2013) suggests:

To problematize normalcy is thus to reframe ableism as an issue that concerns everyone.

(Cooper 2013, in Curran and Runswick-Cole, 2013 p 136)

Goodley and Lawthom (2013a) argue that what is required is for us (society) to focus on '...the deeply insidious nature of normality and ableism endemic within our culture.' (Goodley and Lawthom 2013a, p 176). Goodley (2014) perceives disablism and ableism as a dual process, suggesting that they are one and the same thing; they need to be viewed together. Goodley and Lawthom (2013a) explore the issues in socio psychoanalytic terms. They explore how '...disability becomes wrapped up in responses of the non-disabled,' (Goodley and Lawthom, 2013a p 164) Goodley (2014) argues the time is right for both the category of disability and the category of ability to be expanded upon in response to the global politics of neoliberal capitalism. By this he is suggesting that Disabled people have been marginalised by blatant neoliberal practices that support markets operating in degradation. In this climate of global austerity politics Goodley (2014) highlights this political situation and also focuses attention on what he refers to as neoliberal ableism.

Goodley (2014) is ultimately proposing, the structures of ableism need to be dismantled and I am inclined to agree.

As Curran (2013) summarises:

continually local dialogue is needed to centre disabled children and young people and their families to make visible practices of exclusion and to make links between the local and global to understand global significant experiences of inequalities, desire and helpfulness.'

(Curran, 2013 p 132)

Within the Disabilities Studies area there seems to be agreement that so called disabled people experience varying degrees of subordination and diminished opportunities as a result of economic, social, legal, religious and cultural discrimination or injustices. These difficulties have been formally recognised by the United Nations via the UN Convention on the rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006). An important point mentioned when 'pupil voice' is explored later in this Literature Review is the lack of consultation of profoundly deaf young people. Fortunately, the historical silence of disabled people has been somewhat countered by the emergence of the Disability Rights Movement and the development of Critical Disability Studies. Disabled children and young people as all children and young people should be routinely involved in consultations but Franklin and Sloper (2007) point out that disabled children have only relatively recently been consulted and are often still excluded from such exercises. When the Every Child Matters (Dept. for Education and Skills -2003) outcomes are considered, although young disabled people consulted were reported to be in general agreement with the outcomes that inform Children and Young People's services in England, it should be noted that they added additional/pre requisite outcomes such as 'being pain free' and having people available who understand their forms of communication (Sloper, Rabiee and Beresford 2007). It is clear young disabled people have a unique and distinct perspective that can be harnessed to provide suggestions regarding positive changes that can occur that will support them.

Perhaps my study can be located within Disabled Children's Childhood Studies if as Curran (2013) argues Disabled Children's Childhood Studies:

are about what disabled children want and the reflexive research processes used illuminate the connections between disabled children's lives and Services.

(Curran, 2013 p 129)

The focus of this study was certainly to access the young people's views about what would support/facilitate their learning, in an attempt to let their views be known, in the hope that ultimately/one day they will possess the power to dictate the services they require. This is ultimately about challenging the 'status quo' and re-dressing imbalances. However, I do strongly assert that the study should transcend a location within Disabled Children's Childhood Studies, so that one day there need be no debate about the location of such Disabled Children's Childhood Studies because they are indeed included and part of so called 'mainstream' studies.

The development of pupil voice

The development of pupil voice occurred mainly in the 20th Century, though it should be noted that this is a perspective mainly found in North America and Europe. Although, 'pupil voice' and 'pupil participation' were perceived to be novel or new in the 20th Century within cultures in these areas, this is not so for many other cultures. Hart (2008) provides some interesting reflections on cultural differences within this area. However, within cultures in North America and Europe children in the 19th Century were, as is often quoted expected to be 'seen and not heard.' They were considered to be passive, silent, compliant and even submissive in matters related to their life. Historical texts highlight how this led many working class children at the time to be open to a variety of forms of exploitation. We only have to consider the exploitation many children faced at the hands of unscrupulous employers in factories and children affected by war.

One major development in the 2nd half of the 20th Century began to advocate the voice of the child. The introduction of the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child (UNCRC) specifically articles 12 and 13. Article 12 stated:

Parties shall assume to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

(UNCRC 1989, Article 12:1)

Article 13 stated:

The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds either orally, in writing or in part, in the form of art or through any other media of the child's choice.

(UNCRC 1989, Article 13:1)

These two articles of the UNCRC provide the initial justification as to why anyone working with children and young people should encourage pupil voice and have regard for what children and young people say.

Within education it was perhaps fair to say that often decisions were made on pupils behalf related to their learning and wider school life. However, by 2002, Section 176 of the Education Act (2002) required Local Education Authorities and school governing bodies to refer to statutory guidance on pupil consultation provided in a document entitled 'Working Together: Giving children and Young People a Say.' However, with the advent of greater personalisation in schools and the Every Child Matters Agenda in 2004 participation was also a key theme. Two years later, the Children Act (2004) legislated for the appointment of a Children's Commissioner whose duty would be to promote the views and interests of children and young people.

Over the decades from the 1980's there seemed to be a shift in thinking and practice, so that now pupil's needs are central in all matters related to a child/young person's education, within educational settings and children's services, so that their views inform provision and service delivery. The sea change continued with recent legislation 'The Children and Family Act' (2014).

Within the Children and Families Act (2014) the emphasis is on person centred approaches, joint planning and decision making with children, young people and their families. There is a requirement to involve children/young people in shaping the provision of services for individuals with SEN. Within part 3- Children and Young People in England with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities, in regard to the guiding principles for local authority functions you only have to look at 3 of the 4 principles to appreciate the significance of pupil voice and pupil participation. Those principles suggest we must:

- Listen to the views, wishes and feelings of children, young people and parents.
- Ensure children, young people and parents participate in decision making.
- Provide the necessary information and support to help children, young people and parents to participate in decision making.

However, in Wales, it is worth noting that the Welsh Government have gone a step further, the Welsh Government have adopted the child's voice as central to all of its legislation, making it statutory in 2010.

How Pupil voice has moved on to pupil participation

Pupil Voice has moved on, so that it is not just a tokenistic process that pupil voice in isolation is occasionally considered to be. It can be seen in society today children's active participation is viewed by many as their right as citizens, crucial for their well-being and to ensure a healthy inclusive society. What better goal/rationale for encouraging pupil voice than to enable children and young people increased participation within society? It appears that over the past 30 years there has been a gradual increase in the interest of Educationalists, Social Workers and Medical Personnel in 'pupil voice' listening to the voice of children and young people. However, what is listening to children and young people. A definition of listening will be provided.

The National Children's Bureau (NCB) (2011) in a publication entitled 'Listening is a way of Life' defines listening as:

- an active process that involves receiving, interpreting and responding to communication, definitely not limited to the spoken word.
- a necessary process for participation in daily life and decision making.
- an on-going part of identifying with other individuals in everyday life.
- sometimes part of a particular consultation about a specific entitlement, choice, event or opportunity.

It is argued that comprehending listening in this way is crucial to encouraging an environment in which all young children will feel confident, secure and powerful, making sure they have the time and space to express themselves in whatever manner they choose.

It is important to acknowledge that different issues can be explored by using pupil voice activities. Different issues such as: whole school issues – devising strategies for positive peer group interactions at break times; year group issues – planning a year group induction for the start of a new academic year; classroom issues (teaching and learning) – contributing to a plan for different grouping arrangements for pupils within lessons. The process of engaging pupil voice at whole school, year group or classroom level can best be conceptualised by referring to models/frameworks.

Frameworks of pupil participation

There are familiar frameworks of levels to pupil participation, three such models being: Roger Hart's Ladder of Pupil Participation, Harry Shier's Pathways to Pupil Participation and the Cycle of Meaningful Pupil Voice Involvement by Adam Fletcher.

Roger Hart's Ladder of Pupil Participation

The ladder of pupil participation is a model developed by Roger Hart (1992); it outlines a continuum of ways pupils are involved in schools, each

rung on the ladder represents increased pupil empowerment and shared adult/pupil responsibility along the way to participation. Hart's ladder of pupil participation was considered to provide a useful tool to those working with young people to encourage and enable their participation. There are eight rungs on the ladder, rung one to rung eight. The three lower rungs of the ladder outline limited pupil involvement that is adult-led for example, if participation is deemed to be: at the first rung of the ladder, this suggests young people are manipulated; at the second rung, then the young people's involvement is thought to be decoration; at the third rung, young people's involvement is tokenized. The top five rungs outline genuine pupil participation that is child-initiated, for example, if participation is deemed to be: at the fourth rung young people's involvement is assigned and informed; at the fifth rung young people are consulted and informed; at rung 6 there are adult-initiated, shared decisions with young people; at rung 7 young people lead and initiate action and finally at rung 8 young people and adults share decision-making. As can be seen the steps on the ladder illustrate and outline the extent to which pupils are in control of the process. It is anticipated that different levels on the ladder are appropriate for different pupil voice activities. However, the notion is that the higher the rung on the ladder, the more meaningful pupil involvement is.

The framework has been utilised to measure and assess the levels of pupil participation that includes pupil voice activities. Cheminais (2008) feels it provides a useful framework to aid school staff to understand the different levels of pupil participation and empowerment.

However, there are those who criticise Hart's ladder of pupil participation for being too linear/ sequential. See criticisms regarding Hart's ladder and Pathways to pupil participation later.

It should be noted however, in his recent book 'Stepping Back from "The ladder": Reflections on a Model of Participatory work with Children.' Hart (2008), Hart reluctantly comments on his model and how it has been interpreted. Hart argues that perhaps because the ladder was first published in

1992, at a time when there was extremely little written at a conceptual level regarding children's participation, instead of the ideas regarding the ladder stimulating dialogue around the children's participation area it was adopted by many as:

...a comprehensive tool for measuring their work with children rather than as a jumping-off point for their own reflections.

(Hart, 2008 p1)

As Hart prompted by his colleagues, the editors of that 2008 book suggest the model has not been interpreted as intended. Hart within that most recent book attempts not only to amend misinterpretations of the Ladder of Children's Participation but, also to address the many debates that the model has stimulated. Hart asserts within the book that the ladder was initially intended to be seen as a metaphor. However, he does within his book discuss some of the more important issues that have been raised by others and addresses a few concerns of his own. He explores what types of participation are and are not addressed by Hart's ladder of children's participation. Hart (2008) by his own admission is calling for greater critical reflection regarding the nature of children's participation and the generation of new models.

Harry Shier's pathways to pupil participation

Harry Shier's model framework of Pathways to Pupil Participation maps slightly to Hart's ladder of participation and can be utilised to inform future pupil voice planning. The pathways to participation diagram is described by Shier himself:

to be a practical planning and evaluation tool that can be applied in almost all situations where adults work with children.

(Shier, 2006 p16)

The aim of the Pathways to Pupil Participation is to assist adults in identifying and enhancing the level of children and young people's participation related to five levels of participation. At Level 1 – 'Children are listened to,' Level 2 – 'Children are supported in expressing their views,' Level 3 – 'Children's views are taken into account,' Level 4 – 'Children are involved in decision-making

processes,' and Level 5 – 'Children share power and responsibility for decision-making.'

Shier (2006) mentions that Owen (2003) pointed out that the diagram was logical in its structure having a flow diagram embedded within a matrix. Those who utilise the pathway to pupil participation for example, teachers' – use the 15 simple questions positioned across the five levels of the matrix, not only to assess 'where are we currently?' but, to reflect on and consider 'where do we want to get to' and 'what do we need to do to get there? Shier asserts that teachers and school staff:

can readily use the levels to enable students to participate more actively in decisions about curricula, learning programmes, school organisation and management, the school environment, equipment, staff and student conduct, codes, uniforms and so on'

(Shier, 2006 p16)

Interestingly, at each level of the matrix teaching staff may have different degrees of commitment to the processes for each level. Therefore, across the top of the matrix three phases of commitment are identified: openings, opportunities and obligations. Openings level of commitment refers to when a teacher or teachers express an interest and are ready to work at the specified level. They may have made a personal commitment or produced a statement of intention to work in a particular way. It is an opening because the opportunity to make it happen may not arise. An opportunity occurs when the teachers needs have been met so they are able to operate at the stated level in practice. Resources could include staff time, professional skills and knowledge, development of a new teaching approach etc. Obligation suggests a consensus has been established -an obligation and this has become the agreed policy within the school working in a particular way and enabling a certain level of pupil participation to become inherent and part of the school culture.

At each level and phase Pathways to Participation asks a simple question to be answered; fifteen in total. The answers provided can be used to identify a teacher's current practice and the next steps that may be required to increase

pupils' level of participation. Shier does acknowledge that in reality it is unlikely that a teacher or teachers would be exactly positioned at any particular point. In fact they may be at different phases and levels. In addition they may be at different positions in regards to various aspects of their teaching and curriculum work. Shier does stress that Pathways to Pupil Participation does not suggest that's pupils are pressurised to participate in ways and at levels they do not want and that are inappropriate for their stage of development. Shier suggests in fact, good practice is to look for areas in the Matrix where assessing all the potential risks and benefits, it is appropriate for children and young people to share power and responsibility for decisions and then to support them through the environment to make decisions. Shier also makes it clear that as with any innovation in practice, the process and outcomes should be monitored to ensure that policy and practice can be reviewed and adjustments made, if required.

Criticism of Hart's ladder of pupil participation and Shier's pathways to participation

It is possibly fair to suggest that Shier's model would be open to criticism on similar grounds as Hart's Ladder of Participation. There are those for example Sinclair (2004) and Madge and Willmott (2004) who argue that the hierarchical nature of Hart's Ladder and Pathways to Participation forces teachers to move relentlessly from lower to higher levels. Some such as Sinclair (2004) and Dorrian, Tisdall and Hamilton (2000) go so far as to suggest that the ladder concept implies that the higher levels are better than the lower ones because a ladder is for climbing and so the ultimate aim is to reach the top. They feel this is inappropriate when considering participation because different levels of participation are appropriate in different situations. Shier (2006) responds to this criticism by suggesting that in fact the way individuals use a ladder provides a useful analogy because:

sometimes we use a ladder to climb to the top and move on, but very often we just want to get to a rung some way up so as to work at the correct height for the job we are doing, for example painting a window frame. This may be only half-way up, but if this is the right height for the job in hand, it would be counterproductive to climb higher.'

(Shier 2006, p5)

Shier also argues that without the ladder it would not be possible to climb to the appropriate height for the job. He suggests that a set of rungs alone despite how well-crafted is of little use without the frame that connects them together.

The Pathways to Participation framework Shier argues like the Ladder makes visible the correlation between different levels of participation and the phases within each and so offers teachers/school staff the logical system they need, so that just as the worker on the ladder they can question 'Are we at the correct height for the specific task?' 'Would it be advantageous to climb higher?' 'What are the possible benefits and risk factors, for anyone progressing to the next rung of the ladder?' In essence, Shier suggests Pathways to Participation provides a tool that helps teachers and school staff to decide what steps to make in order to achieve the best outcomes for the school and the pupils.

This view would be echoed by Cheminais (2008). Cheminais (2008) has pointed out that the ladder does not necessarily have to be followed sequentially or incrementally because school staff could leap from the second rung to the sixth rung depending on the nature of pupil voice activity. The ladder illustrates that pupil participation may take numerous forms and different degrees, depending on the range of contextual factors at the whole school and classroom level. The ladder offers school staff a guide to the current nature of pupil involvement and participation within their environment but, also can be referred to for information regarding how the quality of pupil participation might be improved.

The cycle of meaningful pupil voice involvement by Adam Fletcher

The cycle of meaningful pupil voice involvement was proposed by Adam Fletcher (2004) it was developed from work studying the operation of pupil

voice across the USA. Fletcher (2004) describes meaningful student involvement as:

the process of engaging students as partners in every facet of school change for the purpose of strengthening their commitment to education, community and democracy.'

(Fletcher 2004, p 2)

Fletcher (2004) stresses how preferable this is to allowing adults to tokenise a contrived "pupil voice" by only inviting one pupil to a meeting. He argues that meaningful pupil involvement continuously recognises the diversity of pupils by validating and authorising them so that they are able to represent their own ideas, opinions, knowledge, and experiences throughout education in order to improve schools.

Fletcher suggests that simply involving pupils is not inherently meaningful he goes on to provide guidance highlighting when pupil involvement is meaningful and when it is not meaningful.

Meaningful student involvement is when:

- pupils are allies and partners with adults in improving schools.
- pupils have the training and authority to develop genuine solutions to the challenges that schools face in learning, teaching, and leadership.
- school staff including educators and administrators, are accountable to the direct consumers of schools – pupils themselves.
- pupil-adult partnerships are a crucial component of every sustainable, responsive and systemic approach to changing schools.

It is not perceived to be meaningful pupil involvement when:

- pupils are considered passive recipients in schools, or empty vessels to be filled with teachers' knowledge.
- the contributions of pupils are minimized or tokenised by adults by asking pupils to endorse ideas developed by adults, or by inviting pupils to sit on committees without any real power or responsibility.
- pupil perspectives, experiences or knowledge are filtered with adult interpretations.
- pupils are given difficulties to solve without adult support or adequate training; or pupils are trained in leadership skills without opportunities to take on genuine leadership roles in their school.

Fletcher suggests that meaningful pupil involvement is not something magical or mysterious but, by the same token it doesn't just simply happen. Fletcher encourages that by following the Cycle of Meaningful Pupil Involvement, pupil participation is changed from being passive, disconnected activities into a process promoting pupil achievement and school improvement.

The Cycle of Meaningful Pupil Involvement is a continuous five-step process. It can be used to assess current activities, or to plan future programs. As explained the cycle displays the steps that teachers should follow to encourage pupil voice. The cycle represents the usual pattern of stages that occur in every meaningful pupil voice and involvement activity. Fletcher argues individually, the steps may currently happen in schools but, when they do happen, it is rare that they are linked with school improvement, and even less likely, connected with one another.

It is the link of all the steps in the cycle that make partnerships between pupils and adults in school meaningful, effective and sustainable. It is suggested that by following the Cycle of Meaningful Pupil Involvement, pupil participation is changed into a process of promoting pupil achievement and school

improvement. Teachers and other staff working with pupils in schools are able to use the cycle for assessment of pupil voice activities. As described by Fletcher (2004) the cycle starts by suggesting staff:

- 'Listen to pupil voice,' by providing constructive criticism and feedback.
- Validate pupil voice.
- 'Authorise pupil voice activities' to effect change by providing training and support.
- 'Act' by galvanising pupils to become active participants to transform and create change.
- 'Reflect on pupil voice involvement' by identifying what worked successfully, what did not work successfully.

The listening cycle-National Children's Bureau

Another model for accessing the views of younger children that is also cyclical in nature is the listening cycle. This model is utilised by the National Children's Bureau (NCB). The model suggests first we should listen to the child/young person, and then document what they are saying, then reflect on what they are saying, take action and finally provide feedback.

Many of the frameworks mentioned so far are related to accessing Children's views via spoken language. However, Clark and Moss outline a framework for listening to the views of young children referred to as 'the Mosaic Approach,' a way of accessing children's perspectives on their daily lives. The approach is a form of listening that recognises children and adults as co-constructors of meaning. It is an integrated approach which combines the visual with the verbal. The interesting aspect of this approach is that its creators describe how an important influence in developing the approach has been methods used in participatory appraisal (PA). The methods also referred to as 'participatory rural appraisal' or 'participatory learning in action' is all about empowering disadvantaged communities to have a 'voice' regarding changes within their

communities and so a variety of imaginative methodologies are used which do not rely on the written word. In essence the approach developed by Clark and Moss 'the mosaic approach':

...enables young children and adults to be involved in meaning making together.

(Clark, A and Moss, P, 2011 p 3)

It is a multi-method approach in which children's own photographs, tours and maps can be added to talking and observing to develop a deeper understanding of children's lives. The authors acknowledge the potential for the approach to be used as a tool to use with older children, especially those with communication difficulties or English as an additional language. Therefore, in summary their framework for listening to young children is: a multi-method approach that acknowledges the various languages children use; participatory- considers children as experts and agents in their own lives; reflexive-involves children, those working with the children and their parents in reflecting on meanings, so addresses the question of interpretation; adaptable- can be utilised in a range of early childhood settings; focused on children's lived experiences, so can be utilised for different purposes such as considering lives lived not just knowledge or care obtained; embedded into practice- so has the possibility of being used with an evaluative focus and to become established into early years practice.

The benefits of pupil voice

There are many benefits of pupil voice for pupils and teachers. The following reflect Cheminais (2008) views about what the main benefits include- Pupil Voice: provides the teacher and other supporting adults with additional information and an insight into what pupils think; helps to build stronger partnerships between pupils and teachers; supports adults in working out what is for the best for pupils; ensures teachers are able to obtain a better understanding of matters that are really important to pupils; lets adults see things from the pupils perspective; encourages a listening organisation; helps pupils to feel valued, respected and treated in a mature manner; helps to encourage reflective teaching in teachers and pupils; leads to pupil recognition

that they are taken seriously by adults, resulting in increased confidence, self-esteem and aspirations; allows pupils to become more motivated to get involved in the school and wider community; supports pupils to develop new skills for example debating, negotiating, group decision making and how to influence others; develops a more inclusive approach to school self-evaluation; increases the feeling of belonging to the school community displaying to pupils they can definitely make a difference to (how things are done in school); increases pupils understanding and ownership of their own learning and emotional wellbeing; encourages pupils to clarify their own wants and needs to communicate these to adults in a meaningful way; supports in facilitating the personal development of pupils to enable them to take on new responsibilities and make a positive contribution; promotes increased respect for democratic ways of working between staff and pupils; promotes increased creative thinking.

The benefits of Pupil participation

Considering pupil participation many of the above benefits appear still to apply as arising from genuine pupil voice but here are some specific possible benefits of pupil participation as described by Cheminais (2008): services/schools are improved by listening and responding to children as current and future customers; citizenship and social inclusion are promoted; children and young people's personal development is enhanced.

As Shier (2006) notes Kirby et al (2003) and Treseder (1997) have discussed at length the main reasons why it is felt encouraging pupil participation at the highest level is beneficial and have provided evidence to support this view. Those reasons include the ones listed above but, they also highlight how pupil participation encourages democracy: it allows access to better quality educational provision, curriculum and teaching; children and young people develop greater levels of ownership and belonging and so they are more

committed; children, young people and teachers self-esteem increases; the experience aids in providing the foundations for citizenship and democratic participation and this so helps to ensure democracy.

The Challenges to pupil voice

Although, it is clear to see that pupil voice has many benefits some staff in schools may perceive challenges in pupils having increased voice and choice within school. Cheminais (2008) summarises those challenges as staff: feeling anxious or threatened by pupil criticism of their work; experiencing difficulties regarding the unpredictability of pupils views; not being sure about pupils having a voice and choice; being concerned about the increasing work load caused by engaging more proactively with pupil voice; being concerned about issues regarding authority and the possible change in the balance of power by giving pupils increased voice in the classroom; feeling that some pupils are too young and immature to have the ability to express a reasonable view or opinion; lacking the confidence, knowledge and skills required in engaging pupil voice; expressing anxiety about dealing effectively with discrepancies between Senior Management views for pupil voice and the reality of pupil voice in practice.

The Challenges to pupil participation

Considering pupil participation many of the challenges are similar to the above challenges because pupil participation often/can arise from genuine pupil voice but here are some specific challenges of pupil participation. Shier (2006) points out: some teacher's mind-set and getting staff on board can be a challenge because some teachers feel that empowerment and pro- active participation of their pupils is a potentially dangerous challenge to traditional teacher authority. However, also some educators believe that giving pupils more say in decision-making at school will lead to negative outcomes. Another more practical challenge is ensuring careful planning and preparation.

Insufficient planning and poor preparation can lead to dissatisfaction with the level of participation of young people.

Why the interest in pupil voice; why should we listen to children and young people?

It can be seen that Children's rights legislation and the personalisation agenda have been strong drivers for engaging pupil voice. However, active citizenship and the school improvement agenda have also played a significant role in moving things forward in this arena.

It is beyond the scope of this study to explore school improvement and active citizenship in any depth. Suffice to say there are studies that suggest pupil voice has had a positive impact on these processes. For example, in the area of school improvement, the studies by Fasko, Grubb, Jesse and McCombs (1997), Levin (1999), Wilder (2000), Smith, Butler, Shields, Sparkes, Vibert (2001), Fletcher (2003a), Fletcher (2003b), Pedder and McIntyre (2004), Ruddock and McIntyre (2007). In the area of active citizenship the studies of Morgan and Streb (2001) and Inman and Burke (2002).

A lot of work is currently occurring in Scotland around the Global Citizenship agenda. Within the key principles of developing global citizens an important element as deemed by the Scottish Government is to enable pupils to demonstrate principles through pupil voice and participation in all aspects of classroom practice. Then pupils will develop an awareness and understanding of engagement in democratic processes and are able to participate in critical thinking and decision making in schools and communities at the local, national and international level.

Many working in the area of School Improvement understand that consultation with pupils may lead to better school performance in relation to pupil's behaviour, engagement or attainment. Also pupil voice can contribute to preparation for citizenship by improving pupil's knowledge and social skills and this can then lead to the quality of democracy being enhanced.

There are many arguments to support the gradual increase in the interest of 'pupil voice' perhaps; at least for the author first and foremost are moral/ethical factors. Of course there are legal factors resulting from the legislative frameworks/legislation mentioned earlier and pragmatic principles too.

Legally the United Nations convention of the child (1989) and The Children's Act (1989) enshrine in law the requirement of seeking the views of the child/young person on matters that concern them, since the UK ratified the United Nations convention on the rights of the child in 1991. Current legislation on the Children and Family Act (2014) also reflects this view. In addition the SEN code of practice (Dfes 2001a) highlights how important children/ young people's views are and most recently the Department for Education and Home Office (2014) provided statutory guidance to head teachers, school leaders and local authorities on listening to and involving children and young people.

Pragmatically, if change is being sought in the life of a child/young person for any change to be effective that child and young person should be fully informed and as directly involved as possible in discussing/planning and instigating the change.

Although, as mentioned the author feels strongly that the moral/ethical factors should be paramount in our efforts to support/ encourage the pupil voice agenda, the author does acknowledge there are of course other significant reasons to engage with this agenda as mentioned by others. Grieg, Hobbs and Roffey (2014) suggest:

There are significant reasons beyond the moral imperative to ascertain student voice and facilitate their active participation in decision-making, policy and practice.

(Grieg, Hobbs and Roffey, 2014 p 6)

They go on to outline how young people have a unique perspective and to highlight the research that suggests that where this perspective is taken seriously it can have a major impact on school reform (Ruddock 2007) also an impact on the emotional wellbeing of a young person. Wilms (2000) argues school engagement is critical to positive learning for individuals. Hobbs (2014) argues that although engagement is a two-way process disaffection may occur when a young person does not perceive themselves as achieving a sense of belonging, she also feels participation increases motivation in both the social and academic areas of school.

Grieg, Hobbs and Roffey (2014) argue that to have a sense of connectedness, also an aspect of mental health and resilience (Bernard 2004), young people require structured, continuous opportunities that genuinely attempt to facilitate their confident empowerment in the creation of a supportive school environment, the processes of their learning and their personal development.

As Grieg, Hobbs and Roffey (2014) highlight putting this right into practice in education, however may be fraught with difficulties where educational practices are focused on 'telling' and 'controlling' pupils rather than promoting their agency. They suggest that:

Adults often with the best will in the world, want to do what is in the best interests of the child but may do so without appropriate, timely or effective consultation with the young person themselves.'

(Grieg, Hobbs and Roffey 2014 p 6)

They argue that this makes the professional work of the educational psychologist vital in advocating for the empowerment of young people and encouraging practices that enhance both the confidence to articulate opinion as well as proposing different ways to communicate effectively. Grieg, Hobbs and Roffey (2014) stress that 'Pupil voice' is relevant at both the individual and systems levels of education.

Mercieca and Mercieca (2014) suggest that we can do better but, for that to happen there needs to be a shift in adults thinking and modes of working, so

that listening to young children in particular can occur. In describing the shift that needs to occur Mercierca and Mercierca (2014) look to the work of Ranciere; who suggests we prioritise the assumption that adults and even very young children are equal. The author would argue that this shift also needs to occur when adults are working with other groups of children/young people whose views are marginalised or not heard because others perceive that these children are not easily able to express their views. Mercieca and Mercieca (2014) argue that listening is a crucial part of the EP role. The dilemma being that EP work forms part of a 'runaway world' and if any progress in the area is to be seen then practitioners will need to 'become doubly aware of the need to resist pressures of speed and work load.' (Mercieca and Mercieca, 2014 p 23)

It appears clear to the author with careful consideration and much thought and reflection not only can we do better but, we should do better.

In accessing the views of young children Mercierca and Mercierca (2014) argue that more needs to be done in order for children's views to be accessed '...if more is given, then more will be accessed,' (Mercierca and Mercierca, 2014 p. 23) and this is possibly the case with children with specific special educational needs and they point to the work of Soar et al 2005 and Todd 2003a, 2003b. However, this does appear to lead to a second dilemma, if such a process of listening involves more 'doing' by adults, the process would still be owned by adults. Adults are perceived as the ones who need to provide space for children's views to be accessed otherwise their views would not be accessed. Mercierca and Mercierca (2014) argue this could be a 'double bind' because active 'doing' in order to listen, will lead to a specific kind of listening and so can in essence silence young children. Mercierca and Mercierca (2014)

At this point, perhaps, it should be acknowledged that I profess to have an aversion to the terminology 'Pupil Voice'. Why? The terminology could be seen as excluding groups of the child population. Though, this is clearly not intentional, just the very use of the term 'voice' may serve to exclude. What about those young people who do not have a 'voice' or choose not to use

'voice' and make their views known by other means? Many may argue it is merely a matter of semantics and when the term 'Pupil Voice' is utilised it is surely referred to with the intent of encapsulating all young people's views. However, sometimes semantics are important and so throughout the rest of this thesis the term 'Pupil Views' will be utilised to refer to 'Pupil Voice.'

How best can we acknowledge the views of young people and empower young people? Since the emergence of legislation on the voice of the child and the empowerment of young people mentioned earlier (UNICEF, 1989, Dfes, 2001, 2004) helpful publications on how to participate and consult with also, empower young people more effectively have been and continue to be produced by Educational Psychologists. (For example, Hobbs, Todd and Taylor 2000, Wolfson et al 2006, 2008, Gersch et al 2008, Grieg 2013).

Grieg, Hobbs and Roffey (2014) argue that:

It is incumbent on adults to support and encourage the young to enquire into options in their lives, to ask questions about what is or might happen and give their opinion on this. This is not just about gaining views but, also about developing their participatory skills within a democratic society. This means that as EPs we need to reflect on our expertise in enabling young people to feel confident and capable in giving their views whatever their difficulties and recognising that if we are less successful with some, then we need to find different and better ways of hearing their narratives.

(Grieg, Hobbs and Roffey, 2014 p.10)

Mercierca and Mercierca (2014) argue that although particular measures may need to be taken to necessitate the change required so that children's voices can be accessed, the real change is:

within the gift of the adults.' It is almost a silencing of the adults' agenda, which has not been recognised as being adapted to the "runaway world" (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002)

(Mercierca and Mercierca 2014, p 24)

Mercierca and Mercierca (2014) are suggesting that by undergoing this

change space is provided for children's views to be accessed and this way of accessing views acknowledges equality and is therefore empowering.

It is acknowledged of course, that it can be difficult encouraging and supporting young people in expressing their views; it can be a complicated matter due to social, cultural and practical issues. At times, it can be difficult to ensure participation of young people with varying needs, for example children/ young people with specific communication needs, younger children as focused on by Mercierca and Mercierca, or in the case of this thesis, children with a different preferred mode of communication, who may not be considered within the 'mainstream.' As Grieg, Hobbs and Roffey (2014) argue all young people need time to develop and share their ideas, some may require more time and some have made attempts and been left feeling ignored or overruled. They go on to suggest that sometimes it is not possible to ask young people's views when they have limited experience of how to express what they may want, are not aware of what might occur and do not know what the context is.

However, this should not be used as an excuse and increasingly, it is not, because current Educational Psychologist work in this area of accessing the views of young people is demonstrating new insights, knowledge and resources/tools to apply to a key area of EP practice. Moving beyond merely accessing views to empowering young people. However, as Grieg, Hobbs and Roffey (2014) suggest:

before we can get on with the business and empowering them, perhaps we need to empower ourselves by re-philosophising our own restricted, entrenched assumptions and practices.

(Grieg, Hobbs and Roffey, 2014, p 9)

As Joseph (1999) in Clark and Moss (2011) suggested:

If we are constantly astonished at the child's perceptiveness, it means that we do not take them seriously.

Janusz Korczak (Joseph, 1999 in Clark, A and Moss, P 2011, p xi)

Let us keep taking them seriously on a more consistent basis feeding into established practices and processes.

However, the author is inclined to agree with Gersch, Lipscomb, Stoyles and Caputi (2014) when they argue that:

listening to the child's view is vital on moral grounds in that if one is pursuing a change to another person's life, it is surely necessary to seek their views, if not their consent, as far as is possible and practicable. Obviously, this position does not detract from the fact that adults are responsible for any final decision made for minors, and for whom they have parental responsibility.

(Gersch, Lipscomb, Stoyles and Caputi, 2014, p 33)

This position holds true for possible considerations about what may/may not be supportive in improving the learning of children/young people. I feel children/young people should have the option to comment on what is appropriate for them and express their own views/ideas about their learning. This line of thinking is of course commensurate with work around assessment for learning.

The assessment for learning agenda

Assessment for Learning is sometimes referred to as formative assessment. Assessment for Learning is defined by the Assessment Reform Group (UK 2002) as:

The process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there.

(Assessment Reform Group UK 2002, p2)

Therefore Assessment for Learning very much draws on what the pupil knows, understands and is able to achieve to inform the teacher and pupil to decide where she/he is in their learning and how to achieve subsequent learning goals. The pupil's input is crucial. There are a number of strategies associated with Assessment for Learning for example: the use of questioning, peer

feedback, pupil self-assessment and formative use of summative assessment (summative assessment being assessment 'of' learning, so formal assessments of a pupil's learning that results in an evaluation of a pupil's achievement; often an assigned level or grade).

In 2004 in the UK Assessment for Learning was adopted by the Governments National Strategies as one of its policies for whole school improvement and considerable funding and professional development was aimed at implementing Assessment for Learning in schools in England. Despite, this investment reports from school inspectors, Ofsted (1998), (2004), (2007) and government agencies DCSF (2007a) showed implementation was sporadic and underdeveloped. Therefore, in 2008 the government invested £150 million over 3 years for CPD for teachers in Assessment for Learning with the aim of making Assessment for Learning more widespread, systematic and consistent. As the Minister of State for Schools and 14-19 learners at the time Jim Knight argued, Assessment for Learning should be part of a manageable and school-wide system of assessment and not viewed as an isolated activity. It should feed into the school's cumulative understanding of pupils' achievements.

Assessment for Learning is hailed as an effective tool for raising pupil achievement and is based on the premise that pupils will improve most if they understand the aim of their learning; where they are in relation to that aim, how they can achieve that aim /or focus on plugging the gaps in their knowledge to achieve. It is now widely believed to be fundamental to effective teaching and learning. It is obvious that within this process listening to pupils talk about their

learning is the key. It should make learning and assessment truly collaborative processes.

It has also been highlighted by C. Harrison (2005) (Senior Lecturer in Science at Kings College London) that Assessment for Learning can develop pupils with SEND/ learning difficulties identities as capable learners, so they consider assessment to be something that can help them to learn as oppose to a process that illuminates their difficulties in a negative way.

However, James and Pedder (2006), Keppell and Carless (2006) research showed the complex nature of the practical implementation of Assessment for Learning as a pedagogical practice due to the fact that the way a teacher approaches assessment will reflect the teacher's beliefs and assumptions about what it means to know or understand and this then moulds the pupil's own beliefs about learning.

In fact, James and Pedder (2006) went as far as to suggest that at times assessment practices within schools are out of step with teaching and learning approaches and this can limit the realisation of Assessment for Learning.

This raises serious questions if this is the case when utilising Assessment for Learning and consulting with pupils, in certain cases- whose views regarding learning are we really accessing?

Perhaps criticism could therefore be levelled at the emphasis by government at the time and the current emphasis driven by the Dfes for assessing and reporting National Curriculum levels. This could be blamed for producing mixed messages, this practice of constant, formal assessment at the expense of other strategies could ultimately serve to undermine efforts to utilise Assessment for Learning and for children and young people to truly reap its

benefits.

However, previous to the Assessment for Learning perspective, a review of the literature suggested that research within the UK has mainly been sought regarding teacher and parental views about learning and what might support children/young people's learning; hence, why it is now important to start focusing on pupils' views regarding their learning.

Studies accessing pupils' views regarding their learning and what would further support their learning.

With respect to children/young people with special educational needs and disabilities/SEND within the UK, over the years there does appear to be an under representation within the literature of studies accessing pupils' views regarding their learning and what would further support their learning, or what impacts on their social emotional needs. Now more studies exist Wilms (2000), Ruddock (2007), Lyle et al (2010), Fordyce, Riddell, O'Neil, Weedon (2013) to name a few. However, when specific groups are considered such as pupils who are Profoundly Deaf there are few published studies that have consulted pupils regarding their views on what may improve their learning. This is astonishing when one considers the plethora of historical literature regarding the different professional views often relatively controversial regarding what supports these pupils' learning (as seen earlier in this Literature Review).

Two examples of published studies that do consult Deaf young people regarding their views are mentioned below. Firstly, an interesting study mentioned earlier within this chapter, in the area of Sign Bilingualism by Hilary Sutherland (2005) conducted for her Doctoral Research at the University of Manchester. 'Sign Bilingualism through the eyes of the child.' This study focuses on an exploration of Deaf children's perspectives, experiences and

attitudes towards their Sign Bilingual education. It was conducted in the pupils' first language (BSL). Eight children took part in the study; firstly at the age of 9-10 years and again at aged 10-11 years. The researcher explored the following main question (using a child-centred and deaf friendly approach) 'From the deaf child's perspective, what are the experiences, advantages and disadvantages of sign bilingual education?' In order to elicit the children's views, careful planning occurred in the three part study, involving a series of six workshop sessions related to their home and school experiences, one to one interviews and a self-evaluation questionnaire programme especially developed for the research. Data was captured on tape including children's video diaries, which were all transcribed and analysed using a qualitative approach. The children were asked to consider the following four issues:

- Their understanding of the sign bilingual approach within education.
- Their preference in using language with individuals in their lives.
- The importance of access to deaf peers in their developing self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Whether they perceive Sign Bilingualism to be the right option for them?

The researcher assumed a Grounded Theory approach, she did not start with any specific theory or hypothesis, but remained receptive to the children, encouraging their ownership of the study, so that they could present their Sign Bilingual journey.

The other example of a study that does consult Deaf young people regarding their views is by Young, Squires, Oram and Sutherland (2012) but, the focus within the study was older pupils than my study. Also, the study related more to further education, though placed some emphasis on exploring how schools can improve the experience and success of deaf young people in further education. Young, Squires, Oram and Sutherland (2012) engaged Deaf young people aged 16-19 years old in further education in England in interviews and group based workshops. The research project's aims were to discover:

- What is most helpful to deaf young people who are in further education from their perspective?

- Whether further education is effective in meeting deaf young people's needs?
- How schools can improve the experience also, success of deaf young people in further education?

The research was part of research commissioned by the National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS).

As a proponent of the importance of listening to children and young people's views it seems difficult to comprehend any arguments against accessing the views of children and young people or supporting participation however, a key argument exists suggesting that children/young people are not always able to express themselves adequately and or appropriately for varying reasons, either due to age, a lack of maturity to take on board such responsibility, or due to their current ability. Of course, with the legal aspects in mind, the level of a child/ young person's involvement should be linked to their age, maturity and ability. However, this does not mean no involvement is appropriate or even acceptable.

In this study, as will be described later, I in my role as an Educational Psychologist attempt just this, to access the views of a specific group of young people – young people who are Profoundly Deaf with BSL as their preferred language and involve them in the study.

The role of the Educational Psychologist in representing and advocating children and young people's views

Educational Psychologists have been instrumental in representing and advocating children's views. Many have argued that it is a profession where there is specific expertise in obtaining children's views (Gersch, Holgate and Sigston 1993). The process of children/young people being able to give their

views is also deemed to be therapeutic in its own right (Billington, 2006c; Gersch1996; Hobbs, Todd & Taylor, 2000; Roller 1998; Todd, 2000) though, may lead to the identification of appropriate interventions. These perspectives all largely take a view that the rationale for gathering children's views is emancipatory and for enlightenment/insightfulness; the insight that those views can bring to problem solving.

There are other Educational Psychologists that take a different perspective for example Cameron and Monson (2005) examine children's views-being their beliefs, attitudes, perceptions of self and social identity in order to analyse the role these views may serve in creating or maintaining the pupils' reality. It is suggested that the view of the child incorporates the entire child's thinking about a situation. What is volunteered by the child and aspects that the child is unaware of that the educational psychologist may infer via assessment for example, analysing drawings, consultations with other adults etc. This highlights how there are contrasting approaches when considering children's views. Children's views can be interpreted in different ways. This latter approach could be in danger of psycho-pathologising a child with an Educational Psychologist or other adult providing their descriptions, a particular construct of a child that varies from that which the child may possibly construct. Therefore, a key consideration in any gathering of children's views should be as advocated by Billington (2006) to consider five critical questions, how do we communicate about children; how do we communicate with children; how do we write about children; how do we access the views of children; how do we access our own views (when working with children)?

Using focus groups to gather the views of children and young people.

There are many ways to attempt to gather the views of children and young people, however, in an unpublished paper I wrote in 2006 entitled 'Do focus groups provide an appropriate methodology to collect children's views?', it is argued that under certain conditions focus groups do provide an appropriate method to access the views of children and young people. Focus groups are

a type of qualitative research. Qualitative methodology has increased over the years. Focus groups are one of the data gathering methods used in qualitative methodologies. Krueger and Casey (2000) define focus groups:

...as a carefully planned series of discussions designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive non-threatening environment.

(Krueger and Casey, 2000 p 5)

They are a useful method for obtaining several perspectives about the same topic. It is a group consisting of approximately six to ten individuals usually a homogeneous group with whom discussion can take place around a particular identified issue or topic. The focus group is more than merely a group interview as it produces a situation where the interaction among individuals within the group has the potential to add considerable insights because the discussion creates and enhances the existing understanding of participants.

Focus groups are frequently utilised within programme planning and community development. Focus groups can be used to collect information as part of a needs assessment (prior to the start of the programme) or to evaluate an existing programme (further/subsequent to its commencement) within this area they appear to be popular. Over the last 30 years though their use has been predominately in the private sector for market research; increasingly, they are being used in other qualitative research. Although originally arising from the social science work of Rice (1931) they are being used more in research in education.

A further unpublished paper I wrote in 2009 entitled 'Under what conditions is it possible to use focus group methodology to access the views of pupils who are Profoundly Deaf,' re-examined the criteria set forward in the earlier 2006 paper mentioned to determine whether the criteria would be satisfied if focus group methodology were to be used to access the views of Profoundly Deaf pupils.

An example of a study using focus group methodology to access the views of Deaf young people

A study by Bisol, Sperb, Moreno-Black (2008) that has utilised a focus group approach to access the views of young people who are deaf has been identified but, this study was within the Health arena and the focus group conducted did not solely relate to deaf young people; the study utilised a focus group approach to describe the analysis of focus group discussions with deaf and hearing adolescents. The focus groups were conducted in order to improve a questionnaire that was to be computerised to assess knowledge about HIV, sexual behaviour and attitudes of deaf and hearing young people in the south region of Brazil. The participants within this study aged 18-20 years were much older than in my study. The focus group was not conducted solely in Sign Language but, involved translation into Libras (Lingua de Sinais Brasileira- Brazilian Sign Language) for the deaf adolescents involved.

Unlike this study, my study was conducted solely in the young people's preferred language of BSL and so consideration of the acquisition of particular communicative strategies is required.

The acquisition of communicative strategies

Within my study, I was keen to go beyond a thematic analysis and to consider some of the additional analyses described by Wibeck (2001). Wibeck (2001) highlights within a focus group discussion participants use several communicative devices as resources. Wibeck illustrates these communicative devices by drawing examples from a focus group study she undertook linked to her doctoral work regarding understandings of genetically modified food (the GMF project). Wibeck states her intention to go beyond an analysis based on content to provide an analysis that captures the interactive elements of the focus group. Within her study Wibeck (2001) performs analyses focusing not only on the content of the focus group in terms of emerging themes, but, also the communication elements, the use of strategies such as: analogies and distinctions; quotes; discursive construction of actors and agency; topical

trajectories and the interaction between group members.

Wibeck (2001) states that analogies relates to referencing and emphasising the similarity of the issue under discussion to other issues. While the use of distinctions is to emphasise difference, she suggests it can be important to look at analogies and distinctions to explore participants view on and understanding of an issue under discussion at a rhetorical or discursive level. She also suggests analysing analogies and distinctions can serve to address representations of phenomenon at an underlying level, such as focusing on implicit assumptions.

Quotes refer to how, as Adelsward (2000) argues, in a group there are real participants and 'virtual participants' – those whose voices are heard throughout the discussion, through quotes used by participants within the group. Wibeck argues that it may be useful to analyse the blending of voices within a focus group because as stated by Myers (1999b):

‘...people develop their own opinions only in relation to and in response to, those of others.

(Myers, 1999b p 588)

Discursive construction of actors and agency refers to how the participants of the focus group discursively construct actors and agency, i.e. focusing on questions such as 'Which agents do participants construct as being important and influential as oppose to not being influential?' 'How are power relations perceived and so discussed?' 'How do the group members think about their own space for action – what is their sense of agency.' O'Conner (1995) highlighted how agency is a concept that describes the relationships of action, the freedom to act and also the power to take action. It is also linked to moral aspects of responsibility and so our ability to reflect upon our actions. Analysing the discursive construction of actors and agency is deemed important by Wibeck (2001) because it allows the different agents mentioned by participants to be identified and to consider how agents are presented.

Topical trajectories are the subtopics that participants introduce into the discussion. An analysis of Topical trajectories involves consideration of those subtopics that participants introduce into the discussion and often return to and in what ways this is done. This can be interesting because it can highlight 'what is important and relevant to participants and what their associations are when given a particular topic to discuss.' (Wibeck 2001, p 10)

Wibeck (2001) comments, that within a focus group discussion, the participants use a number of communicative devices as resources. She mentions that partly depending on the issue in focus, the communicative devices may be different. Therefore, there is a suggestion that certain communicative devices may be used during one focus group discussing a particular topic, but not in another.

In terms of the interactive features that may be of particular interest to an analyst Wibeck (2001) suggests these may be pauses, overlapping speech and laughter. She draws attention to Carey and Smith (1994) who state that researchers who utilise focus groups and do not direct any attention to the impact of the group setting will either incompletely or inappropriately analyse their data. Fontana and Frey (2005) argue that whenever possible researchers using a focus group approach should attempt to collect as much non-verbal communication data as possible, so that this information can also be analysed alongside the verbal data.

Wibeck (2001) shows how focus groups can '...typically generate rich data' (Wibeck 2001 p19). While she considers issues related to organisation of a focus group study, Wibeck also provides examples of feasible ways to analyse the interactive features of data gathered from a focus group. Whether the examples mentioned by Wibeck (2001) constitute a complete range of possible analyses could be disputed. However, there is still little methodological literature on how to analyse the interactive features of data from a focus group; therefore her work provides a useful starting point. What then may be ensured is that more researchers utilise the method, so that it does not as Wibeck

(2001) suggests '...remain a challenge to its users.' (Wibeck 2001 p19)

Within this study an attempt will be made to go beyond an initial analysis: a thematic analysis, to consider some of the additional analyses of a focus group as described by Wibeck (2001). Aspects of Wibeck's (2001) analysis involve analysing communicative strategies perhaps, using a form of conversational analysis. However, the mode of language used within this study is visual as oppose to the verbal conversations within Wibeck's (2001) study, which is why it is important to spend some time within this Literature Review mentioning the acquisition of communicative strategies in relation to non-verbal language. It seems clear that if I am to attempt to go beyond emerging themes and consider some of the additional analyses described by Wibeck (2001) it is important to remain mindful that elements may differ in a focus group conducted via a visual medium. Non manual features of BSL need to be considered; how meaning is displayed from movements of the hands and also from movements of the head, shoulders, eyebrows, mouth, cheeks, in addition, changes in eye gaze, body shift and so on. Displaying how all of these features have a use in BSL grammar. For example, they can show differences in language and can be used to add description. Facial expressions and body posture are significant in that they can highlight emotion, add description etc. Tapping into these meanings may be meaningful in the study, as in Wibeck's (2001) study in order to attempt to go beyond a typical analysis of focus groups. In order to explore genuine meaning it therefore seems necessary to highlight additional aspects to those considered in a focus group not conducted via a visual mode of communication.

The acquisition of communicative strategies is an aspect of language acquisition that is often neglected in research, but which is a prerequisite to successful communication and of course this will be true within a signed focus group too. Although, sign language is similar to spoken language in certain regards, for example, people taking it in turns to communicate with one another, it's medium means that there are different ways of attracting and holding attention and of signalling when a person wishes to sign.

Carter (1981) pays some attention to the acquisition of communicative strategies in her study of BSL. The person in her study-Jessica displays knowledge of the necessity of establishing eye contact with the addressee and making reference by pointing to people, things or locations in the environment. Though making reference by pointing to people is more common within Makaton, pointing in general is an acceptable part of BSL. In fact, within Deaf Culture, pointing is important in BSL to identify people or objects and place them in space and time. This is very different to certain spoken languages specifically English. In English culture hearing people are taught that pointing is rude. Communicative strategies are different within spoken and signed languages. Within signed languages it is important to pay attention to the pointing movements of signers, including the signer's use of eye gaze to indicate how the pointing is being used. Pointing and eye gaze are aspects of non- manual features of BSL, otherwise known as Multi-Channel Signs.

Other non-manual features of BSL

BSL as oppose to Makaton is as a language, so much more complex and there are other communicative strategies beyond making eye contact and pointing. When learning to communicate via BSL, it is important to pay attention to the non-manual behaviour of others/ individuals that are Deaf with whom you are communicating, looking for meaning from the movement of their hands and also from the movements of their head, shoulders, eyebrows, mouth, cheeks, changes in eye gaze, body shift and so on. All of these features have a use in BSL grammar. For example, they can show differences in the types of sentences or questions and can be used to describe manner (how an action is done whether with ease, effort, concentration or whatever). Facial expressions and body posture are also used to add emotional tone to statements, descriptions and stories. Learning how to read these meanings and use your own face and body to express similar meanings is considered to be part of the challenge of mastering BSL. What follows is a grid produced to detail some non-manual features of BSL and common interpretation as described by Sutton-Spence and Woll (1999):

Non manual feature of BSL	Common interpretation
Eyebrows raised, head and shoulders Pushed forward.	Combine to express the linguistic function of questioning.
Puffed cheeks-pushing out cheeks.	Very/really-can display the intensity of the whole word being signed.
Tongue protrusion	Can signify boredom or unpleasantness, weariness.
Lips pressed together (as in production of a silent-sh)	Used to express the meaning of existence or added to signs to express emphasis.
Head nod	Affirmation, agreement, but also, can be an assertion marker.
Pushing lips forward and chewing motion.	Can signify embarrassment.
Body shift	Reflects when someone else is speaking, person is reporting someone else's conversation.

Why should we attempt to access the views of young people who are Profoundly Deaf?

Why attempt to access the specific views of young people who are Profoundly Deaf? Over the years there has been much debate about what is the best approach to support the learning of children who are Profoundly Deaf sometimes with much controversy. As mentioned earlier though, there is an underrepresentation of this group of pupils' views. I believe morally – what better reason could there be for attempting to access the views of young people who are Profoundly Deaf (?)

The research question

I aimed to allow access to the views of a group of young people who are Profoundly Deaf with British Sign Language (BSL) as their preferred language. The term Profoundly Deaf used throughout this thesis is used to refer to Profoundly Deaf pupils whose preferred language is BSL. However, in addition to enabling their views to be accessed, I also wanted to ensure the empowerment and development of the young people involved, offering them the opportunity to truly participate in this study.

The research question for this study was to ascertain: What are the views regarding learning of young people who are Profoundly Deaf whose preferred language is BSL?

Chapter 3: Methodology

Within this chapter, there will be a brief discussion of the relevancy of qualitative methodology. Pertinent issues linked to this discussion will be explored in order to attempt to provide a logical backdrop to the stance I have taken regarding methodology and hence foster an understanding from my perspective of the analysis of data that was undertaken. It appeared clear from the very beginning to me that given this research study's aims a focus group would be an appropriate methodology to employ. In fact, a previous unpublished paper I wrote in 2006 entitled 'Do focus groups provide an appropriate methodology to collect children's views,' suggested this appropriateness. The paper outlined the qualitative/quantitative debate and explored the various, very different ways of collecting children's views; a critique of focus group methodology, specifically when applied to research and development based on collecting children's views was then provided. Throughout some of this chapter parts of that module will be re-visited incorporating more up to date references/information in the area of methodology, so that I can articulate clearly to the reader, the rationale regarding why a focus group methodology was employed. In fact, a later unpublished paper I wrote in 2009: 'Under what conditions is it possible to use focus group methodology to access the views of pupil's who are Profoundly Deaf,' attempted to outline the conditions under which it may be possible to use focus group methodology to access the views of pupil's who are Profoundly Deaf. Aspects from this paper will also be re-visited. There will then be an exploration of participatory action research as a method, to clearly explain why this method formed a part of the study. It will then be acknowledged that the design of the study is a case study approach and as such no attempts are being made to generalise the findings to any other individuals within other settings or within the same setting at a different period in time.

The relevance of qualitative methodology

The quantitative/qualitative debate has continued for years. Many argue that there are ideological differences between quantitative and qualitative approaches and as a consequence they should be viewed as separate and distinct entities. There are significant differences in viewpoint of the timing and importance of the formulation of theories, also the order and interaction of tasks. However, there are those Gavin (2008) who suggest that qualitative approaches cannot only be used where quantitative measures cannot be used to describe or interpret phenomena but, alternatively, qualitative approaches can be used to identify variables that might in future research be examined quantitatively.

Quantitative research uses experimental methods and quantitative measures to test out hypothetical generalisations whereas qualitative research utilises a more naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context-specific environments.

Consideration of criticisms of the quantitative approach led me to adopt a qualitative approach. For example, the nature of the quantitative approach as briefly described above suggests that the study of human behaviour as oppose to the physical sciences would be less successful with such an approach because not only is human nature more complex, but, social phenomena do not have the same order and regularity of the natural world. The quantitative approach is often viewed as mechanistic with its involvement of specific relationships between clearly defined variables, which can be applied generally in different situations and as such ignores certain aspects-choice, freedom, individuality, ethical considerations and the variability in behaviour produced when these factors emerge.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that qualitative research allows us to consider the effects of social settings, accepting that the complex and dynamic quality of the social world will fundamentally influence the findings of research conducted involving people. Lincoln and Guba (1985) also assert that within qualitative research it is important that the researcher is able to provide a rich

description of psychological events from both the perspective of the reader as well as the researcher, so the reader becomes an integral aspect of the interpretation of the research.

A quantitative approach really does not provide the freedom for us as humans to interpret our experiences and represent them to ourselves. We all construct theories about ourselves and our world and tend to act on these theories. By not taking account of this, positivistic social scientists are not appreciating the difference between the natural sciences and the social sciences. Social science deals with a subject-subject relationship, not subject-object.

When taking a quantitative approach a number of concepts become difficult to apply to the study of human behaviour within settings. For example, 'variables,' how are these identified; which are relevant to the issue being studied. If it is possible to identify variables, then what follows is a difficulty regarding how will each variable be measured and controlled. There is also, the concept of generality to be explored. Extreme caution has to be taken on the part of the researcher about generalising their research findings to particular populations. Under certain circumstances these generalisations can be made, but sampling techniques become crucial.

Quantitative approaches insistence on 'objective reality' is heavily criticised by those purporting a qualitative approach. Kiergaard (1974) argues that reality exists only as an illusion from which individuals need to be released. The perception should not be portrayed that there are rules of behaviour and rules of thought that can be imposed on individuals, so that humans are able to act as observers, able to identify general laws to explain human behaviour. Wanting an individual to decide their own relationship to whatever is the focus of a study would guide a researcher towards a qualitative approach.

When considering a qualitative approach it is important to be mindful of both Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Yardley (2000/2011) guidelines for assessing rigour in qualitative research. Within experimental research and surveys where quantitative data is generated, attention is focused on the concepts of 'internal validity', 'external validity/ generalisations,' 'reliability' and 'objectivity'. However,

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that these traditional criteria are inappropriate when data is derived from qualitative case studies. Lincoln and Guba (1965) put forward alternative concepts they feel are more appropriate. Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose four criteria for determining trustworthiness in qualitative research: credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability.

Yardley (2000, 2011) propose the following core principles for evaluating the validity of qualitative research: Sensitivity to context (prolonged engagement in data, reflexivity, and balance of power); Commitment and rigour; Coherence and transparency; Impact and importance (practical importance and theoretical utility). Therefore, when adopting a qualitative approach specific strategies for ensuring rigour using this framework are required. These mentioned criteria will be returned to in the Discussion Chapter of this Thesis, when I discuss their importance for assessing rigour in qualitative research, specifically in relation to this study. I will also address the resultant impact considering these criteria had on the study.

Epistemology and ontology

Critical realism

A bit of me wants to hold onto that naïve realist position, however, Hollway and Jefferson (2000) argue that social researchers:

...need to revise their assumptions about the nature of that person-the research subject and that this revision should change their research practices.

(Hollway and Jefferson, 2000 p 1)

Hollway and Jefferson (2000) suggest we should question what we are told by participants in our studies as previously, ethnographers, participant observers and interviewers assumed that participants knew exactly who they are and what makes them function which Hollway and Jefferson (2000) refer to as the 'transparent self-problem' (Hollway and Jefferson 2000 p 2) and were willing and able to articulate this to a stranger interviewer that Hollway and Jefferson (2000) refer to as the 'transparent account problem' (Hollway and Jefferson 2000 p 2). However, they go on to assert that neither selves nor accounts are transparent and that:

...treating people's own accounts as unproblematic flies in the face of what is known about people's less clear cut, more confused and contradictory relationship to knowing and telling about themselves. In everyday informal dealings with each other, we do not take each other's accounts at face value, unless totally naïve, we question, disagree, bring in counter examples, interpret, and notice hidden agendas. Research is only a more formalised and systematic way of knowing about people, but in the process it seems to have lost much of the subtly and complexity that we use, often as a matter of course in everyday knowing.

(Hollway and Jefferson, 2000 p1)

What is being called for is a need for this 'everyday subtly' to be brought into the research process.

Within this study I should admit maybe a little naively to taking the young people's views at face value, that what they had discussed/shared were their views and what they genuinely thought. However, as Hollway and Jefferson suggest-how do we truly know these are the genuine views of the young

people? However, while taking the young people views at face value I would always acknowledge that the young people may have elicited views they felt others wanted to hear – me as the researcher or the teacher of the deaf, as discussed later. A focus group approach being a form of interviewing, it is open to these criticisms. However, true to my democratic principles I would argue that who better to know and express views about their lives/experiences than the people involved in the research. It almost seems disrespectful of their views to suggest otherwise. Although, well documented the difficulties inherent in questioning children and young people does suggest that genuine views may not always be given by these participants, for a range of reasons, for example, power differentials and issues of agency can come into play and so the young person's views can be affected. I would argue that these difficulties can attempt to be overcome and sometimes due to the design of the study may not arise. Take this study the moderator asking the questions was another young person and so perhaps some of the classic difficulties associated with power differentials was avoided.

Hollway and Jefferson however, would still perhaps, argue by the very nature of how we access people's views/voice through for example text, talk (I would add sign language), interaction and interpretation we cannot truly give voice. They quote Riessman (1993) who strongly believes we cannot give voice because we receive the 'ambiguous representations of it' -text, 'talk, interaction and interpretation' (Reissman 1993, p8). Hollway and Jefferson's essential point is that if we want to do justice to the complexity of participants in a study then an interpretative approach is essential, though their caveat appears to be that the researcher should not be immune from that interpretation albeit from a different perspective.

Hollway and Jefferson go on to examine how the recognition of the need to interpret accounts has created the difficulty of how to avoid the hermeneutical cycle (Denzin 1989 p 141), the realisation that there is no end to the interpretative process. They question if experiences can only ever be ambiguously represented then is interpreting the different representations, rather than the experience the sole possible activity left for researchers. They argue not, and assert that although not transparent, they believe 'there is

a relationship between people's ambiguous representations and their experiences' (Hollway and Jefferson 2000, p 2). In essence they are embracing a position of critical realism (Bunge 1993, Watkins, 1994-5, Bhaskar, 2016). Hollway and Jefferson (2000) argue however, that following this relationship is dependent on a particular view of the research subject. They argue the subject's inner world should not just be a mirror image of neither the outer world nor a rational accommodation to it influenced by cognitive forces. No they argue for the importance of thinking of research subjects whose inner worlds can't be understood without knowledge of the subjects' experiences in the world, and whose experience of the world can't be understood without knowledge of the manner in which their inner worlds permit them to experience the outer world. They argue the research subject can't be known apart from through another subject-the researcher. Hollway and Jefferson (2000) refer to such subjects they describe, as psychosocial.

Although, there are aspects of Hollway and Jefferson's views that I would acknowledge for example, the idea that tensions often exist between individuals inner world and external and that this is often overlooked in terms of understanding the relationship between subjectivity and the social world. Also, the existence of unconscious dynamics and processes within an interview and the idea that the production of data within an interview comes from the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee and each come to that situation with their own anxieties, defences and histories which can affect how the data is created. In addition, I acknowledge that everyone has an unconscious which contains motivations, instincts, and impulses etc. that are constrained by the social world in which they live. Hence a 'defended subject' as a term Hollway and Jefferson use may not tell a complete and transparent story, whether that is something they are conscious or unconscious of. However, the prescribed specific interview techniques and ways of analysing information gathered that they describe I am not so enamoured with. I am inclined to agree with some of the criticisms levelled at Hollway and Jefferson's methods.

Hollway and Jefferson's methods have been criticised by Frosh and Baraitser (2008), the criticism being the 'top-down-ness' in nature of the method and that it is based on epistemological strategies that imply expert knowledge and perhaps, for me the most pertinent criticism, though perhaps most damaging is the suggestion that the practice the method involves is:

an interpretative practice that seems always to know best, or at least to know subjects better than they know themselves.

(Frosh and Braitser, 2008 p 347)

Also, although an intentional choice by Hollway and Jefferson I find the very use of the term 'subjects' to describe participants within research makes me uncomfortable.

A Feminist approach

There appear some parallels between the views of those purporting a critical realism paradigm and a feminist perspective. The primacy within research of addressing issues related to power i.e. in whose interests is the research and the requirement to attend to the emancipatory aspect of educational research, i.e. it should be empowering to all participants. I, as a researcher would espouse to a feminist approach because its substantive agenda is one of empowerment, voice, emancipation, equality and representation for oppressed people. Within Feminist Research there is often an important focus on issues of power, voice, critiquing ideology and questioning the legitimacy of research that does not serve to emancipate disenfranchised groups. Oakley (2000) a feminist researcher puts forward her views about why Women's everyday experiences should be listened to and how accounts should be represented.

Phenomenology

A phenomenological position argues that the study of direct experience be taken at face value. It also espouses that behaviour is influenced by the phenomena of experience rather than by external, objective or physically

explained reality. I strongly believe that we are all a creation of our different social experiences: historical, cultural, spiritual, gender, ethnicity and social class however, we should attempt to try not to place our beliefs and values on others. I would acknowledge though that as a researcher this may be easier said than done and of course, there needs to be recognition of this.

There are differing branches of a phenomenological position each holding distinct views on particular issues, but in 1978 Curtis identified 3 points where there were agreement amongst those espousing a phenomenological viewpoint:

- a belief in the crucialness of subjective consciousness.
- an understanding of consciousness as active and providing meaning.
- a claim that there are certain critical structures to consciousness of which we are able to gain direct knowledge by particular reflection.

What Husserl, who is often referred to as the founder of phenomenology did was to analyse consciousness in a different way. Trying to find out how things appear directly to us rather than through the media of cultural and symbolic structures, to attempt to look beyond the details of everyday life to underlying meanings. Husserl writing in the 30's urged others to liberate themselves from their usual ways of perceiving the world and ultimately free ourselves from all our preconceptions about the world.

In the 1960's Schultz developed the ideas of Husserl's to the issue of sociology and the scientific study of social behaviour. A central concern was to understand the meaning structure of the world of everyday life. The origins of meaning he sought in the 'stream of consciousness' in other words a stream of lived experiences which have no meaning by themselves but meaning can be attributed to them retrospectively, by the process of reflecting on what has been going on. For Schultz this attribution of meaning reflexively relies on people identifying the purpose or goal they seek.

Schultz argues that the way we understand the behaviour of others is reliant on a process of typification i.e. – the observer makes use of concepts resembling 'ideal types' to make sense of what people do. These concepts are deemed to derive from our experience of everyday life and it is through these Schultz suggests that we classify and organise our everyday world. Burrell and Morgan (1979) suggest that the bank of everyday knowledge through which we are able to typify other people's behaviour and understand social reality varies from situation to situation. Therefore we live in a world of multiple realities.

Symbolic interactionism

Another approach that I subscribe to similar to a phenomenological perspective is symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionism derived from the work of GH Mead (1934). Though, this approach does not represent a unified perspective, so does not comprise of a set of assumptions and concepts that all who commit to this approach accept; there are 3 basic assumptions which were described by Woods (1979):

- Humans act towards things according to the meanings they have for them.
- The attribution of meaning to objects via symbols is a continuous process.
- This process of attributing meaning to objects via symbols takes place in a social context. Individuals align their actions to other individuals by 'taking the role of the other' regarded as a dynamic concept involving the construction of how others might behave in a certain circumstance and how individuals themselves might behave.

Therefore, rather than directing attention towards the individual and his/her personality characteristics or on how social structures or situations cause individual behaviour symbolic interactionists concentrate their focus on the nature of interaction, the dynamic activities occurring between people. By

concentrating on the interaction itself as an area of study, the symbolic interactionist is therefore able to devise a more active perception of humans, rejecting the view of passive determined organisms. Interaction implies humans' behaviour being the result of them relating to each other, taking each other into account, acting, perceiving, interpreting and acting again.

For me the appeal as a researcher of a phenomenological approach and social interactionist's viewpoints are as Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2005) suggest due to the shared characteristics of these approaches being:

...able to preserve the integrity of the situation where they are employed. This is to say that the influence of the researcher in structuring, analysing and interpreting the situation is present to a much smaller degree than would be the case with a more traditionally orientated research approach.

(Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2005 p 26)

The researcher's positionality

Although, as mentioned earlier within the Introduction Chapter, I learned sign language at the age of 19 years old, some 27 years ago, and have experience of working with profoundly Deaf Pupils in a Senior Practitioner Educational Psychologist role, I was conscious from the start of the study not to position myself as an expert in the experience of Deafness, but instead, I actively wanted to position the Profoundly Deaf Young People who took part in the study as experts in Deafness. I wanted/aimed to collaborate with and provide an opportunity for views to be expressed by the Profoundly Deaf Young People, a typically marginalised group.

An important message that needs to be re-articulated is that I have throughout this study purposefully avoided adopting a disability framework because I am well aware of the often difficult historical relationship between hearing researchers and deaf people, and the dynamic nature of deafness, particularly

deaf identity. Also, from a personal perspective, I do not view Profound Deafness as a disability but, importantly consider Profound Deafness to epitomise a strong cultural identity. My view on other so called 'disabilities' reflects my view that 'disability' is a label placed on individuals. Who is anyone to suggest: who is 'normal' and who is 'able?' My views could be considered to be in line with current thinking regarding critical disability and also, perhaps display an adherence to a humanistic viewpoint. First and foremost we are all humans.

As mentioned within the Literature Review chapter Goodley and Lawthom (2013a) argue that what is required is for us (society) to focus on the deep rooted insidious nature of normality and ableism that is widespread within our culture. I would certainly agree with this. However, perhaps my position differs slightly, in that I would argue that maybe we need to be instrumental or proactive by redefining 'normal.' Not only questioning more why the term 'normal' is used only to refer to people who are 'non-Disabled,' a term used by Goodley and Lawthom (2013a) but, defying that position. As mentioned in the Literature Review chapter Goodley (2014) explores this issue in social psychoanalytic terms. However we explain the phenomena, I do believe our efforts should go into uniting all people. 'In an e-mail request in Oct/Nov 2011 to the Disability Research distribution list (DISABILITY-research@JISCMail.AC.UK) hosted by the Centre for Disability Studies at the University of Leeds, Goodley called for requests to send an e-mail about responses towards Disabled people from non-Disabled people. In some of these responses Goodley and Lawthom highlighted how quite amusingly the tables were turned to: "pathologize 'the normals' among us:" (Goodley and Lawthom 2013a, p 176). While I perceive the humour intended in this, I would argue our role is not to pathologise anyone. We are all 'the normals.'

What I am suggesting is that the term 'normal' embraces a range of differences whether that is linked to social class, ability, gender, cultural backgrounds, sexuality or age. Education is certainly the key to reframe the term 'normal.' There should be no 'preferential ontological state,' (Goodley and Lawthom 2013a, p 165). However, I do sadly acknowledge that unfortunately,

we are perhaps, a long way away from this viewpoint being appreciated by many. Though, truly, we are who we are. We all need to find the means to accept and embrace who we are, as it is only then that we can accept and embrace others. My mind is drawn to the great, late Nelson Mandela who espoused a philosophy of acceptance, forgiveness and unity.

Disabled people seeing themselves as, so called 'normal' as many should and some do, could be construed as challenging perceptions of 'normal,' to ensure negative preconceptions of others are transcended. As Hughes (1999) points out resistance is the refusal to be perceived as you are supposed to be perceived by those in power.

As a hearing person within the current social context, existing in a world where some unfortunately tend to value hearing over deafness, with my existing knowledge and experience, but also, due to wider reading on social constructivism, ableism and deafness I am all too aware that there could be a danger of certain research approaches reproducing power relations that continue to marginalise the Deaf population. I definitely wanted to avoid this and hence the choice of particular methods e.g. participatory action research.

Why a focus group methodology?

My main aim of the research study seemed to suggest a focus group methodology would be appropriate. I wanted to explore the views of young people regarding their learning. As mentioned this is one of the main concerns of a qualitative approach; to understand the subjective world of human experience.

As Cohen and Manion (1994) explained:

...the principal concern is with an understanding of the way in which the individual creates, modifies and interprets the world in which he or she finds him/herself.

(Cohen and Manion, 1994 p8)

The specific rationale for this subjectivity is that:

‘.. the world and reality are not objective and exterior but, that they are socially constructed and given meaning by people.’

(Eastenby-Smith et al, 1994 p.78)

A crucial concept in qualitative research is the integrity of the phenomena being investigated. The researcher should attempt to see inside the individual and understand her/ him from within. The viewpoint taken is not external, otherwise this would represent the view of the observer/researcher and not the individual involved. Within this study, this was very much the case, I wanted to provide a very specific group of young people with the opportunity to express their views, what they think and believe from their perspective.

In terms of another important concept – ‘theory,’ I would like to believe as suggested by Glaser and Strauss (1967) that any theory should be emergent and derived through the process of the research, ‘grounded’ on data arising from the research. However, I am inclined to feel this is ‘real-world’ research and although I would whole heartedly subscribe to such an approach, in the world we inhabit it would seem inconceivable not to have some pre-conceived views on reality. As reminded by Smith (1990) we do not research in a cultural vacuum. However, if the existence of pre-conceptions is acknowledged adopting this approach, the premise is that as Gavin (2008) succinctly states:

‘...we are looking at drawing theory from data, rather than testing theory by data.’

(Gavin, 2008 p 2)

As mentioned already, I was keen to utilise a focus group methodology to collect the views of the young people. As the research question for this study was to ascertain what the views are regarding learning of young people who are Profoundly Deaf whose preferred language is BSL, the features of a focus group methodology were deemed to be an effective way of providing answers to this research question. However, I was mindful of the variety of other ways of collecting children's views. The other reasons focus groups emerged as a

preferred method were varied. Firstly and foremost its very description, describes a method that seems to encapsulate what I was hoping to achieve, to obtain the views on a specific area of interest in a relaxed environment. As can be seen from the description provided by Kruegar and Cassey (2000) focus groups being described as:

...a carefully planned series of discussions designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment.

(Kruegar and Cassey, 2000 p.5)

The cost effectiveness in terms of time was also a critical determining factor. For example, focus groups are considered a highly efficient way of generating relatively large amounts of data. For example, running one – 1 hour focus group can reveal the views of eight-ten participants within 1 hour, while it may take 8 – 10 hours to explore the same questions with each individual in turn. Efficiencies related to time also involve time travelling to the data gathering site.

Another important element in deciding upon a focus group method was the fact that it can allow the interactive nature of the discussion to be tapped into, possibly enabling the researcher to access interaction among individuals that can provide them with greater insight because the discussion develops the existing understanding of the participants, as mentioned by Krueger and Casey (2000).

An important benefit is that focus group data can be expressed as complex interview transcripts; the full range of interpretative methodologies available for interpretation of interview data can be used to build theoretical frameworks.

Additionally, the group discussion format is one that the participants are relatively familiar with from other contexts and is an extremely suitable form of methodology for groups of participants who are from marginalised groups, such as school pupils, or participants with Special Educational Needs as I explored in previous unpublished papers. However, focus groups can also be used with members of established groups.

The consideration of other methods

Group interviews

Utilising group interviews would also have been an efficient and perhaps appropriate means to access the views of the young people within this study, but they do not have the advantage just mentioned of focus groups in capturing the interactive elements. Adopting a group interview type approach has been documented by Simon (1982) and Lewis (1992) can present some difficulties for the interviewer interviewing children/young people in groups such as children and young people: being easily distracted or too negative about others views; not being able to understand the language used within a discussion; dominating the conversation or feeling intimidated by the whole situation. These issues have to be addressed and carefully considered prior to embarking on research utilising group approaches, but of course this is true of a focus group method being a form of group interview.

Another issue that has to be addressed and carefully considered when embarking on utilising a group interview approach, is linked to sampling. The choice the researcher makes about whom to interview. Key questions for consideration are who will be most able to provide answers to the question/s, shed light on the issue/s the researcher wants to investigate. Therefore, as suggested by Cohen, Manion and Morrison in (2000) in terms of the sample, prior decisions have to be made in respect of 4 key factors:

- Sample size
- How representative the sample is
- Access to the sample
- The sampling method to be used

In respect of this study, utilising a form of group interview (focus group) this issue had to be and was considered. Please refer to 'Consideration of sample issues' detailed later in this Methodology Section.

Individual interviews

During early consideration, a less complicated idea may have been for me to utilise individual interviews to elicit the young people's views. I could have chosen a variety of different options such as standardised, structured, and semi-structured, in-depth, ethnographic, elite and exploratory. Again returning to the quantitative/ qualitative issue, the choice of individual interview would have lead me to explore the purpose of the interview, whether the interest was in the number of respondents who feel a certain way about a topic, or whether the interest was more about uncovering, untypical, diverse feelings about a particular issue. As the latter was the case within this study, a more unstructured, qualitative in nature interview would have been more appropriate. Perhaps, a semi-structured or open ended interview which would allow the respondents to put across their views not constrained by a particular order of questioning or issues presented solely by the interviewer. However, this approach though considered, was eventually not adopted because some of the disadvantages of such an approach, would present too great a challenge. An obvious example, being the time required to conduct separate individual interviews; this seemed to preclude this approach for a researcher working in full time employment in an authority which was not where the interviewees attended school or lived.

In addition, such an approach is open to subjectivity; perhaps certain individuals may unknowingly be given greater attention than other interviewees. There are also issues of reliability surrounding the preparation, conduct and analysis of interviews. Of course, some of these criticisms could be levelled at group interview approaches too. However, another clear issue may have been the difficulty individual interviews can pose when working with children. For example, Simons (1982) McCormick and James (1988) the difficulties of establishing trust, over-coming reticence, pitching the questions at the right level and overcoming the instructional response of children. Then, there is the issue of the young person telling the interviewer what she or he wants to hear.

Lewis, Kellett, Robinson, Fraser, and Ding (2004) also raise a number of issues linked to attempting to elicit the views of children, including acquiescence, recency effects, trust in the adult, vocabulary and the constructs of the person doing the listening. However, Garbarino et al (2001) illuminate how to overcome some of these difficulties by careful consideration of issues such as sentence length, elicitation, ways to check understanding, re-phrasing and how to encourage expansion on a previous answer.

At least with group interviews, children may feel more at ease with other young people present and develop their understanding of a question from the cues/ responses provided by their peers. Of course, as a counter criticism, it could be argued that this may equally lead to issues regarding reliability. The young people's responses – those they actually wanted to give – could be influenced by their peers.

Q-Sort method

Another approach to accessing the views of children/ young people that was considered was perhaps using a Q-Sort method. As Coogan and Herrington (2011) suggest, this method:

...combines qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate the subjective views of those directly involved in a particular topic.

(Coogan and Herrington, 2011 p1)

This approach can be used to investigate the structure of subjective views on a topic area. It involves individuals from a representative population sample, sorting statements according to given instructions. A factor analysis is then performed on the data and interpretation provided. However, this method appeared to me more about the patterns of opinion and not the unique voices of those often perceived to be within the minority. On consideration, this method did not seem to be a viable option for this study. I was particularly concerned that as Hymans, Hardy and Bradley (2000) outline:-

Fundamentally, q methodology asks participants to decide what is "meaningful," what does and what does not have value and significance *from their perspective*.

(Hymans, Hardy and Bradley, 2000 p 11)

though from given statements and as such I felt that the young people would be compelled to fit their experiences and feelings into statements provided by the researcher from relevant literature and this could be construed as being impersonal and irrelevant, as the data gathering would have been limited to choices between statements constructed elsewhere. This did not appear to me to be an appropriate method for accessing a very specific group of young people's personal views.

However, Q-sort can include requests for statements from those involved in the study. This can be achieved by either interviewing individuals that will also be involved in the study or asking them for written statements on the topic, these statements could even be accessed via a focus group session. An important aim in this study was to allow the young people the opportunity to express their views via their preferred language, so resorting to written comments would not have achieved this freedom of expression.

Attempting to overcome issues inherent in the use of a focus group methodology

Therefore, after consideration of the methods mentioned above, the decision was made to utilise a focus group method. The issues inherent in the use of such an approach are well documented, linked to the sample, practical implementation and issues surrounding data analysis. However, these difficulties did not dissuade me from adopting such an approach, instead it lead to a realisation that what would be required was careful scrutiny of these issues and meticulous planning prior to embarking on the research, so that an attempt could be made to prevent such issues presenting difficulties, or at least to limit any difficulties arising from the various issues. Wellington (1996) suggests a checklist is useful, if not essential when you have decided to use a focus group methodology.

However, before this it is essential to assess whether a focus group methodology is appropriate. With this in mind I produced a gauge in the form of a list of criteria, to determine whether the use of a focus group would be appropriate within this study. What follows is a summary account of how an attempt was made to avoid a range of issues, through careful thought, and planning before carrying out the study, also through giving due consideration to the moderation of the focus group.

Many of the complex issues involved in attempting to use a focus group approach with Profoundly Deaf pupils such as sample issues; participation of pupils; conceptual understanding and ethical issues were considered. In advance, drawing on my previous experience working with Profoundly Deaf individuals, published research and documented literature I explored all these issues. It was through the exploration of the issues that ways to adapt/modify the use of focus group methodology to make it applicable to gather the views of Profoundly Deaf pupils emerged. Final suggestions for modifications included ethical and theoretical considerations but, also practical adaptations. The ultimate hope was that if the ethical issues could be addressed an attempt would be made in future research, this doctoral thesis to use focus group methodology with Profoundly Deaf pupils.

An unpublished paper I wrote in 2006 as briefly mentioned, provided a critique of focus group methodology when applied to research and development work based on collecting children's views, it concluded that in general terms focus groups can provide an appropriate methodology to collect children's views if:

- The research aims involve a critique of some process which the children concerned have knowledge of, where discussion among the children might significantly extend their understanding of the process to the benefit of the research.
- All children forming the group can be encouraged to actually participate in the discussion.

- Clear links can be made between the sample of children participating and the population from which they come.
- Adequate time is available for preparation, data collection, analysis and interpretation of the data.
- The ethical criteria for the research can be met.

It was then suggested that individual researchers can expand and exemplify the criteria, in terms relevant to their own research through the construction of their own list of criteria. Another unpublished paper I wrote in 2009 went on to do this.

Something I was conscious of from the start was to try to ensure that if a focus group methodology was employed within my Doctoral Thesis that I would avoid the scenario that Grudens-Schuck (2003) describes where:

Too often people do focus groups without adequate preparation, training or thought and consequently the results can be flawed. They then blame focus groups but, it is really because it hasn't been done well,

(Grudens-Schuck, 2003 p 2)

I embarked on my thesis by exploring the criteria mentioned earlier and concluded that focus group methodology could be utilised to access the views of Profoundly Deaf pupils within the study, but I was able to identify some of the possible issues that were highlighted through previous work, with using this approach, so ensuring these issues could be prevented and addressed, but, at the very least acknowledged. Below is a summary of some of the collective issues that were identified:

- **Consideration be given to the term pupil voice**

This is explored within the Literature Search Chapter of this thesis but, suffice to say the term 'pupil views' was adopted to prevent exclusion of those who choose not to or are unable to use 'voice.'

- **Consideration of specific modifications to ensure the Profoundly Deaf pupils could participate utilising their preferred language of BSL**

The modifications employed are described in the method chapter of this thesis (See later).

- **Consideration of young people as moderators to facilitate the focus group process**

It was thought this may help avoid issues regarding the researcher leading respondents; it may serve to ensure validity/rigour is maintained by decreasing the effects of the researcher. It may make the Profoundly Deaf individuals taking part in the study feel more comfortable and ensure that their understanding is enhanced. A Deaf BSL moderator was deemed to be preferential to a hearing individual with BSL knowledge, experience and skills but, whose first language is English. The possibility of pupils moderating the focus group was also deemed to be the best option because of the potential to increase ownership of the research by the young people, but, also to address specific issues linked to power and agency (O'Conner 1995), please refer to section on participatory action research.

- **Consideration of training needs linked to young people moderating the focus group**

I met on three occasions with two young people possibly interested in moderating the focus group, to discuss focus groups. The young people produced a booklet regarding focus groups to share with their peers and others in their community, if they wished.

- **Ensure careful consideration regarding planning, setting time aside for preparation, data collection, analysis and interpretation of the data. (Please refer to forth coming data analysis section; Data Analysis: thematic analysis)**

However, in terms of planning time, as I work as a full time Senior Practitioner, Educational Psychologist, though time issues were not completely eradicated, there was some time available and utilised from work time. This was possible because as part of my work role I was a member of a Research and Development Team where some of the work time was allocated to DAHIT (Deaf and Impaired Team) issues and the achievement of deaf children in general.

- **Careful consideration of the ethical criteria by the researcher**

Within the area of research involving Deaf individuals many ethical issues apply. I completed an ethical review as part of my submission to the University of Sheffield prior to conducting my study. Additionally, I was mindful of those issues highlighted by the University of Bristol Deaf Studies Teaching Department (2005): the use of sign language; the use of Interpreters; confidentiality; the use of video; dissemination; effects on Deaf communities and individuals; minority groups and Deaf people in other countries and suspending confidentiality.

- **Consideration of sample issues**

Within the study the sample size needed to be relatively small. A focus group usually comprises of six to ten individuals and due to the specific nature of this focus group, in that it was to be conducted utilising a visual modality and the practical adaptations that this would require, it was decided to focus on the views of six individuals.

Access to the sample of young people was facilitated via my current and previous links with professionals working within two local authorities. The authorities were neighbouring authorities which eased travel issues and allowed efficient use of time.

The type of sampling method utilised was a non-probability (a purposive sample). This was deemed the more appropriate sampling method to attempt to ensure a representative sample for the focus group. All the final pupils participating in the focus group's preferred language was

*BSL and they were educated within a mainstream school with a resource base attached to support pupils with hearing difficulties, so they formed a homogenous group to take part in the focus group.

The small sample size was deemed by me, to be fine because the intention at the end of the research was not to be in a position to calculate any statistics or generalise findings across other groups, the interest lay in accessing the views of this particular group of young people; exploring their views in the context of the study and at that moment in time.

[*It is important to note that issues of proficiency of BSL, pupil's home background, in terms of culture and language use were also taken into account with the support of staff within the resource base who knew the pupils well]

- **Use of sign language**

Practical Issues – regarding the use of sign language are explored further in the method section of the report and ethical issues as mentioned below:

- **Integrity of data**

Careful consideration had to be given to who will collect the data because if the person conducting this – a Communication Support Worker or researcher only had beginner levels of sign language proficiency then it would be unlikely that the information received would be of a quality to be representative of viewpoints considered valid within the Deaf community. Therefore, for the study – I, as the researcher and a Teacher of the Deaf, Deaf adult and Communication Support Worker were all present during the focus group. The interview was taped and notes taken by me and a Communication Support Worker, then shared with the Teacher of the Deaf and Deaf adult to be cross referenced before being transcribed.

Related to the position of the Deaf participants

When introduced to a researcher (deaf or hearing) Deaf participants may make a judgement about the cultural compatibility and language proficiency of the researcher which could affect whether the researcher is seen as negative or positive and how much Deaf individuals may disclose. However, many of the young people knew me for some years from my work within the previous authority as an EP responsible for working with pupils with hearing difficulties. I had been involved with some of the families since the children were very young, in fact, I had written advice for statements for some of the children when they were as young as 3 years old. I felt I had a good rapport with the young people and staff alike within the resource base of the school. Also, the inclusion of the Deaf young person (the other young people knew well) as moderator was deemed likely to have a positive impact here too.

- **Ethical issues surrounding confidentiality**

Informed consent in research is important and has to be gained (please refer to method section). Also, information in the results section needed to be and was anonymised.

- **Ethical issues regarding the use of video**

A video recording of the focus group exists- this aided the method and results part of the research for example, with transcribing information that was missed, analysing of the data etc. It was explained to the young people that this would be the predominant use for the recording. It was made clear that the video recording would not be made public or widely available and that the EP would have possession of it while she wrote up her study.

- **Ethical issues regarding dissemination**

The young people were made aware that a copy of the completed study would be sent to the Resource Base within the young people's school, in written format. This would allow options for it to be disseminated to

the wider community in an accessible format, Deaf adults, Teachers of the Deaf being part of the school community.

Hollway and Todres (2003) highlight some fascinatingly different approaches to disseminating research. For example, they look to 'Performative Social Science' and mention the innovative ways in which Kip Jones (2005) disseminates his research. Although, it would be exciting to consider attempts to disseminate research via less conventional methods, as a relative novice to undertaking qualitative research, this is perhaps something to consider for the future. In terms utilised by Hollway and Todres (2003) I still consider myself to be learning the craft.

- **Ethical issues regarding the effect on Deaf communities and individuals**

A number of considerations can occur here, but, I wanted to focus on that of acting as an agent of change. In essence, this is about not setting up unrealistic expectations at the start of the study, being mindful of issues of control/ power differentials and making the extent of personnel commitment on the part of the researcher explicit. I made it clear to the young people that I wanted to access their views about what helps them with their learning and then, this may in turn help the staff within the resource base to reflect on their views. Race et al (1994) describes how focus groups can become a forum for change. This links into the section on participatory action research. Suffice to say in this section, I wanted to remain true to my aims and values. I genuinely, wanted to identify the young people's viewpoints and gain their engagement with me as the researcher. I wanted to stay true to my values and not impose any hierarchy, so control through the focus group would not be static, but perhaps, control could ebb and flow between me as the researcher and the young people.

- **Individuals from other cultural groups**

Consideration was given to those who use additional languages to allow access, but, all pupils in this group preferred language was BSL – please refer to section regarding the sample issues and homogeneity of the group. However, I was mindful of any cultural issues regarding implicit rules involving interacting with others, this was important, in fact, in this study, right at the start the young people identified their own rules in terms of interaction during the focus group, please refer to the method section for further details.

Alongside these many ethical considerations, it is possible to see how before, during and after this study, during the write up stage, I also considered and adhered to the requirements of professional bodies, such as the Health Professionals Council (HCPC) and the British Psychological Society (BPS).

The HCPC requires all professionals regulated by the HCPC, as Educational Psychologists are currently, to adhere to ethical standards at a high level. These ethical standards state in broad terms the HCPC behavioural expectations for professionals. Within the HCPC standards for conduct, performance and ethics, it is suggested that registrants must:

- Promote and protect the interests of service users and Carers.
- Communicate appropriately and effectively.
- Work within the limits of their knowledge and skills.
- Delegate appropriately.
- Respect confidentiality.
- Manage risk.
- Report concerns about safety.
- Be open when things go wrong.
- Be open and trustworthy.
- Keep records of their work.

(HCPC Standards of conduct, performance and ethics 2016)

Although the standards refer to generic work of practitioner psychologists, it is possible to see how certain elements are relevant to Psychologists in their conduct, while carrying out research and this specific study. For example, in terms of promoting and protecting the interests of Service Users and Carers, the young people who took part in this study were treated with respect; consent was sought regarding participation and their privacy and confidentiality was respected and protected as previously described. I also worked in partnership with the young people and endeavoured to include them in decisions. While attempting to reduce power differentials between myself and the young people, I was mindful of the need to maintain a professional relationship with the young people by engaging with them solely in a professional capacity focused on the research.

In terms of communicating with Service Users and Carers, I was receptive to the young people's views and utilised their preferred language to carry out the focus group. One of the young people was involved in moderating the focus group and with this young person I worked collaboratively and we shared skills and knowledge.

As regards to working within the limits of your knowledge and skills, I have focused on an area of study where I have appropriate knowledge, skills and experience.

As discussed earlier, and within the ethical review I was required by the University to complete, prior to embarking on the research in terms of managing risk, it was ensured that any risk of harm was carefully considered, identified if present and minimised.

In terms of being honest and trustworthy, I have carried out this study in an honest and trustworthy manner, providing detailed information about what I have done within this study. I have also provided knowledge about my experience, qualifications and skills.

The British Psychological Society (BPS) Code of Human Research Ethics outlines a set of principles:

- Respect for the autonomy, privacy and dignity of individuals and communities.
- Scientific value
- Social responsibility
- Maximising benefit and minimising harm'

(BPS 2014, p7)

As discussed previously, within this study in terms of respect for the autonomy and dignity of persons, I developed and followed procedures for valid consent, confidentiality, anonymity and treated the individuals involved with the research fairly and with respect.

With regard to scientific value I have conducted this study in such a way that care and time has been taken in designing the study to ensure quality and integrity were not compromised, so I would be able to make a valuable contribution to the development of knowledge and understanding in the area of Deaf education. Few studies in Britain have been carried out that actually provide the opportunity for young people with British Sign Language as their preferred language to express their views using their preferred language.

As regards to social responsibility, this was something I was particularly mindful of, specifically in relation to the Deaf community and the implications of this research. I reflected on this sensitively, as can be seen earlier within this study when I considered some of the ethical considerations identified by the University of Bristol Deaf Studies Teaching Department (2005).

Maximising benefit and minimising harm was at the forefront of my mind throughout this study. I attempted to consider the study from the position of the young people taking part. In addition, although I sought to minimise any power differentials between the young people and myself as the researcher, I

acknowledge that inevitably there may still have been differences (perceived or otherwise) in power and being mindful of this increased my sensitivity of this issue.

As I explored the considerations mentioned both ethical and otherwise, as can be seen suggestions became apparent as to how to avoid difficulties prior to conducting the research. Within the next chapter, part of the method explains how these suggestions were put in place and I planned and conducted the focus group to attempt to avoid pitfalls.

However, these issues considered, I was also conscious that not only does the rigor of how a focus group was planned and conducted influence its quality and the value of its findings, but also how the data was analysed. It is important that the process that occurred to collect and analyse the data is critically evaluated. Beyea and Nicoll (2000) suggest that two important questions are: - were the data analysis methods fully described; and were they appropriate for the situation. I was very aware that there are different ways that the data obtained from a qualitative method such as focus groups can be used; in a descriptive capacity, in a descriptive capacity with interpretation using the usual range of theories or in a descriptive capacity with analysis to identify new theoretical constructs. Many probably would aspire to the latter and as Wilkinson (1998b) highlights because data from focus groups can often be very rich it may be productive to go beyond the typical types of qualitative analysis.

Wilkinson (1998b) went on to imply that issues of analysis do urgently require attention and development if focus groups are to be able to earn their place amongst other methods in Social Sciences. Wibeck's (2001) work is interesting in that she attempts to counter criticism of focus group methodology by providing specific suggestions about how to approach focus group data, proposing the use of: 'dynamic content analysis,' that not only explores aspects of content, but also attempts to capture the interactive elements within the focus group. I was within my study keen to attempt to go beyond a thematic analysis and consider some of the additional analyses described by Wibeck (2001).

Participatory action research

Nieuwenhuys (2008) suggests:

PAR is more an inspiring and challenging philosophy of research than a clear method.

(Nieuwenhuys 2008, p 262)

However it was Lewin (1946) who first utilised the term 'action research' to describe a means of learning about organisations and attempting to modify them. Action research is a method widely used within education. In fact, its proponents argue that practitioners are far more likely to:

...make better decisions and engage in more effective practices if they are active participants in educational research.

(Robson 2002, p 216)

However, the approach has been criticised by some Adelman (1989) as being inward looking, not taking account of historical development and lacking quality.

Lewin (1946) would continue to support Action Research for the democratic principles it embeds within research. He argued it is a tool for bringing about democracy. It allows oppression and social injustice to be fought. The political agenda within this methodology is clear. As such this seemed an appropriate methodology for this study, when the issues are considered-Deaf individuals being amongst the most marginalised individuals in the world and the continual underachievement for decades of Deaf children.

As Peters (2009) suggests:

'...marginalisation connotes a vision of being side lined from participating in an activity or in other words, being able to participate but at the margins.' (Peters 2009 p 4).

To appreciate how marginalised Deaf individuals are within society, you only have to consider the work of Higgins (1980); in his book 'Outsiders in a Hearing World: A Sociology of Deafness' he describes how deaf people are outsiders in a hearing world. More recently, Ladd (2003), Bauman (2008) and Horejes (2012) have echoed Higgins (1980) findings and supplemented detail to Higgins descriptions.

Drawing on the work of the Sociologist Becker (1963) Higgins adopted the term 'outsider.' Becker (1963) used the term to describe a marginalised group that is somehow different from and stigmatised by the larger society in which it exists. Higgins (1980) made several observations of why deaf individuals were considered outsiders by drawing on his personal experiences of Deafness: he was a child of Deaf adults, a teacher in a school for the Deaf and a spouse of a teacher of the deaf and had experience carrying out interviews with Deaf individuals. Two of Higgins (1980) observations explored further by Mc Caskill and O'Brien (2016) in their review of Higgins 1980 book included: firstly, how D/deaf individuals live in a world dominated by sounds (traffic, spoken language etc.) and individuals who can hear, rely on sounds to participate in that world. He argued that because deaf people cannot hear, they live in a world of silence, so they are excluded from the world. They are 'outsiders'. The second observation described how society's perceptions of deaf individuals appear to be developed and promoted by those who can hear, even though hearing individuals are often unaware of the experiences, culture and language of Deaf individuals. The continued ignorance and a sense of empathy allows hearing individuals to treat deaf individuals as outsiders. Higgins (1980) considered the parallels between the situation of other marginalised groups (the poor, the disabled, black people, Jewish people and homosexual individuals). He then portrayed how Deaf people have, as Mc Caskill and O'Brien (2016) describe is still the current situation, '...been relegated to an inferior position within the hearing society.' (Mc Caskill and O'Brien 2016 p 510)

Mc Caskill and O'Brien (2016) give an example of this inferior positioning within society today, by explaining how for some Deaf individuals in America being included in the Americans with Disabilities act of 1990 (ADA) continued this inferior positioning because it accepted the disability model of deafness instead of the cultural model. Fleischer and Zames (2011) explore how this disability identification denied Deaf people the cultural perspective. Disappointed Deaf individuals resigned themselves to the situation that if they wanted access to resources such as sign language interpreters, subtitling etc. they would have no option but to accept the ADA framework (Baynton, Gannon and Bergey 2007). The unfairness in this situation is only too apparent, when you consider that individuals have to reluctantly accept an adverse situation from their perspective or lose access to resources which should be a fundamental human right.

Billington and Pomerantz (2004) outline well the ways in which certain children are marginalised through social constructions that label young people as deficient in some manner.

As noted by the United Nations educational, scientific and cultural organisation in their 'Education for all' global monitoring report of 2010, indicators of marginalisation for people with disabilities include poverty and disability; education and disability; minority status and disability; cultural norms and disability; gender and disability.

More specifically, within education, underachievement could be perceived as a form of marginalisation. Within England, consideration of the figures published by the Department of Education in January 2015, as mentioned within the Literature Chapter of this thesis, highlights the underachievement of Deaf children. Contained within the Appendices of this thesis, Table 1 which was produced in a report by Wilson and Hoong Sin (2016) (Source NDCS) outlines the educational attainment of deaf children in England and their continuing underachievement, it could be argued the table provides evidence of Deaf children's marginalisation.

Underachievement can be perceived as a social injustice, and this can be perpetuated by the education system. By its very nature therefore, Action Research requires a flexible, qualitative design rather than a fixed quantitative design.

Action Research from a feminist perspective.

Feminist researchers such as Reinharz (1992) have commented on the nature of action research, emphasising the importance of research being about change. Taylor (2006) describes how Reinharz (1992) further extends the concept by talking about 'action-in-research,' Taylor (2006) p 110. Reinharz identifies five types of particular action in research: action research per se; participatory/collaborative research; prevalence and needs assessment; evaluation research and demystification. Reinharz purports that each type of action in research has validity in its own right.

'Action research' Reinharz (1992) argues must be research in which action and evaluation are carried out separately, but, simultaneously so for example, a research study that attempts to directly change individual's behaviour.

'Participatory or collaborative research,' in which, as described earlier the key feature is that the individuals involved in the study are involved in decision making. The research is designed to develop social and individual change by altering the roles of individuals involved in the study. In fact, this aspect is extremely transparent in feminist participatory research, where the distinction between the researcher and the individuals taking part in the study disappears, Lather (1988). This aspect links strongly with Lewin (1946) views on power relations because within participatory research attempts are made to ensure equal relationships, the researcher abandons 'control' instead opting for an approach that engenders openness, reciprocity and shared risk. This abandoning control and engendering of openness was an important aspect within the study.

'Prevalence and needs assessment', is where the researcher aims to identify the absolute or relative number of individuals with a particular experience or need. Often through the research the size of the issue can become evident and the requirement for necessary action apparent, without preconception or suggestion by the researcher.

'Evaluation Research' involves evaluating the effectiveness of different types of action in meeting needs or solving problems. Evaluation research can be utilised to evaluate individuals and organisations, also to evaluate the actual evaluation research. Within this study, an aspect of the study's aim was for the young people involved in discussing what supports their learning to evaluate what supports and enhances their learning. Perhaps, an aspiration of the study in terms of change at the organisational level is that, the study may influence the views of what may support pupils with Profoundly Deaf pupils within school. This also maybe links into the final type of action research described by Reinharz (1992) -demystification.

An important element within 'Demystification' is the belief that the act of obtaining knowledge provides the potential for change. It is suggested that there is a lack of research about particular groups that actually heightens and perpetuates their powerlessness. As mentioned within the Literature Review Chapter of this study, there are few academic studies that focus on the needs of Profoundly Deaf young people's views about their learning. A critical point therefore which applies well to this study is, because the needs and views of particular groups (Profoundly Deaf young people in this situation) are not known, their views have less influence on their situation. A sincere hope of this study is that increasing numbers of Profoundly Deaf individuals will become interested in being involved in research. Certainly the young person who acted as a moderator within the study suggested the involvement in the study had been helpful in terms of him considering models, tools, and approaches to use in the future.

The scope for an empowering impact of action research is great, increasing knowledge through interaction with others, encouraging individuals to take more control, so that as a group – specific groups for example, Profoundly Deaf

individuals can be less frequently subjected to the power of hearing researchers. Hearing researchers who in past research as argued by Bauman and Murray (2016) focused on research topics that may not have reflected Deaf individuals views of what is important and failed to acknowledge the value of Deaf individuals contributions to human diversity. It should be noted that the number of d/Deaf researchers within the UK is increasing. Hopefully, over time this increase in the number of d/Deaf researchers will continue. Currently, Sutherland and Rogers (2016) two Deaf researchers are advocating the development of visually reliant tools to be utilised to elicit responses from Deaf children and adults during research. They also add to their research an extremely valuable positive perspective on Deafness and what is important from a Deaf individual's perspective.

In summary, as Burman (1994) suggests with Action Research:

'There is a Marxist point being made..., ...we should not just understand the world but, change it.'

(Burman 1994 p113)

A view in keeping with a feminist perspective.

Although utilising a flexible qualitative design when engaged in Action Research may mean that the researcher loses some power of decision making, this may be entirely necessary. As is often suggested the researcher would be the instrument, collaborator and facilitator within the process. The research often has wider ownership than the researcher. This is what I was hoping of this study; for the young people to play an important part in the process. As Titterton and Smart (2008) state in participatory action research participants are co-researchers rather than subjects in the research process, and as such, discussions are directed and knowledge is constructed by all participants in the research process. Therefore, with this approach every viewpoint is considered, so providing an avenue for participants to be empowered.

Wellington (2000) argues that some descriptions of action research processes are too complicated to be of any genuine value. This is perhaps acknowledged in the work of Kemmis and Wilkinson (1998) where they describe a 'self-reflective spiral' in action research involving in the process: planning change, acting and observing the process also, the consequences of the change. Further reflecting on the process and consequences and next re-planning and so on. It is because the process is repeated, that it is represented as a spiral. Though, Kemmis and Wilkinson (1998) acknowledge that in reality the process may not be a clearly defined spiral, but that the stages may overlap and initial plans may not be required in view of learning from experience.

It was my intention to attempt to influence the learning experience of the young people through their own views, if this was required and, so participatory action research appeared the most helpful vehicle to achieve this aim, and it incorporated democratic principles that I hold dear, principles that could underlie the research: empowerment, identifying and addressing social injustice where it occurs.

The case study design

A case study can be defined as:

...a detailed examination of one setting, or one single subject, or one single depository of documents, or one particular event.

(Bogdan and Biklen, 1982 p 58)

This approach has an inherent strength in that it can allow detailed exploration of a single case. However, with this strength comes an insurmountable weakness, that of being unable to generalise from a single case. As such information collected using this method is not representative. However, it should be noted though that multiple case studies can be used cumulatively to provide generalisations. Mitchel (1983) argues that case study research can also be used to explore generalisations.

Stake (1995) describes the intrinsic case study and the instrumental case study where the former's intention is to gain a better understanding of a specific case, and the latter is to gain insight into a specific issue or to clarify a research question with the intention of further developing our understanding and knowledge.

Stake's (1995) description of the instrumental case study perhaps best describes this study. The aim was to explore the young people's views around learning with the intention of further developing understanding and knowledge.

A case study can involve a variety of methods ranging from observations, discussions, and interviews through to researching recorded documentation. Again, a case study methodology is a flexible design approach, considering detailed knowledge of a single case or small numbers of cases; details of the design emerge during data collection and analysis. Rigorous case studies focus attention on issues of design, data collection, analysis, interpretation and reporting.

One of the crucial features of a case study is not only the focus on a specific case studied in its own right, but, also an emphasis on the context. Miles and Huberman (1994) mention the case study 'site' because case studies always occur in a particular social or physical setting.

Case studies can be exploratory or confirmatory, which influences the degree of structure or flexibility in the design. Pre-structuring is sometimes required with a case study approach but, the design should be flexible enough for crucial features to emerge.

The nature of this study was exploratory; within the case study design. As mentioned a focus group method was conducted with the young people. The focus group was deemed important in exploring the views about learning of the young people. Although, again as mentioned, focus groups are considered an efficient method for gathering many and diverse viewpoints, the focus group was also important in terms of its process, in that behaviours and views would emerge as part of the discussion and group dynamic. The interactions within the group potentially added a context that would otherwise not be tapped into. The case study design also, incorporated the Action Research element of this study well.

Wellington(2000) argues that case studies have the potential to be illuminating, insightful, accessible and engaging which can lead to subsequent research that can be disseminated widely, be vivid and of value in teaching.

Data analysis: thematic analysis

I thought long and hard about how the data obtained should be analysed. Not being from a qualitative psychology tradition as such or rather having had less experience with such an approach, a major learning curve was definitely on the agenda.

Having read extensively around the method of focus groups I was all too aware of criticisms of focus group research in terms of such research often suffering from an absence of analytic reasoning. As Wibeck (2001) suggested:

...the reader is informed of how the study was designed and what the results were, but very little is said about the actual procedure of analysis,

(Wibeck, 2001 p 7)

However, Wibeck (2001) does acknowledge that this situation is beginning to change, she references articles where analytic issues are addressed in the area of Discourse Analysis – Frith and Kissinger (1998), Myers (1998, 1999a, 1999b, 2000). However, Wibeck (2001) also points out that this can be one of the reasons why focus groups are considered to be an exciting method.

...as an analyst one is rather free to find one's own entries into the data. The analytic process is so an explorative process in which the analyst can allow him/herself to be rather eclectic in the choice of methods.

(Wibeck, 2001 p 7)

Wibeck proposes what she argues could form part of what may be labelled a 'dynamic content analysis' (Wibeck 2001, p7) focused mainly on exploring aspects of content but, also aiming to capture the: 'interactivity in the sense making practices.' (Linell 2001 quoted in Wibeck 2001 p7)

In the first instance, I with this study wanted to get an overview of the data and therefore after much reading about Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and Grounded Theory I began to feel that the data lent itself more to a thematic analysis and so this method was explored in greater detail.

The method also seemed the most straight-forward and a sensible way to proceed. Thematic analysis offered me a more accessible form of analysis as Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest:

As thematic analysis does not require the detailed theoretical and technological knowledge of approaches such as grounded theory and DA, it offers a more accessible form of analysis, particularly for those early in a qualitative research career.

(Braun and Clarke, 2006 p 81)

Also, as Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest a named and claimed thematic analysis means that researchers need not subscribe to the implicit theoretical commitments of grounded theory.

The work of Braun and Clarke (2006) has been invaluable in helping me conceptualise what was required and how to actually go about the analysis. Braun and Clarke's (2006) paper does as it aimed to do:

adequately outlines the theory, application and evaluation of thematic analysis... '...in a way accessible to students and those not particularly familiar with qualitative research.

(Braun and Clarke, 2006 p 77)

And so Braun and Clarke (2006) paper was extremely helpful to me during the process of analysing the study.

However, Braun and Clarke while trying to offer clear concise guidelines around thematic analysis, also set themselves up to create a balance so that flexibility in relation to how the method is used still remains. In selecting this method and applying it to my data though, I was all too aware that there would be an expectation upon me, as all researchers, to make my

assumptions (Hollway and Todres 2003), epistemological and otherwise explicit and this is being attempted within this methodological section of the study. This amounts to being explicitly clear about what I have done, how and why. Attride-Stirling (2001) suggests that within the process of qualitative research conducted by psychologists, including in the 'how' is important. Unless others know how a researcher goes about analysing their data or what assumptions inform their analysis, it can prove impossible to evaluate the research and to make comparisons between it and other studies on the same topic; this could affect other researchers carrying out similar studies in the future (Attride-Stirling 2001)

Not all perceive thematic analysis as a method. For example Boyatzis (1998) described thematic analysis not as a particular method, but rather as a tool to utilise across a variety of methods. Also, Ryan and Bernard (2000) position thematic coding as a process conducted within well-known analytic traditions like grounded theory rather than as a particular approach in its own right. However, Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that 'thematic analysis should be considered a method in its own right' (Braun and Clarke, 2006 p78). One of the benefits of thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) is its flexibility. Having read about other possible methods, within this study I felt that thematic analysis would offer the flexibility that arises from the fact that it does not appear to be tied to any particular theoretical position.

It is interesting to note that qualitative analytic methods can be separated into two groups. Those that are tied or arise from a particular theoretical or epistemological position for example, IPA Smith and Osbourn (2003) with such approaches there is a set way that the method is applied within the framework. Also, for example, grounded theory (Glasser 1992, Strauss and Corbin 1998) Discourse Analysis (DA) Burman and Parker (1993) Willig (2003) where there appear to be different forms of the methods from within a wider theoretical framework. However, then there are those methods that are essentially- independent of theory and epistemology and can be applied across a variety of theoretical and epistemological approaches. As Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest though thematic analysis is sometimes positioned as being a realist/experiential method (Roulston 2001), it really belongs within

this second group of methods being compatible with both essentialist and constructionist paradigms within psychology.

So what exactly is thematic analysis, it:

...is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting themes within data. It minimally organises and describes your data set in (rich) detail.

(Braun and Clarke, 2006 p 79)

Within this study the data set was identified by a particular analytic interest in the topic of 'what supports learning' in the data and so circumstances in the corpus (all data collected for this particular study) where that topic was referred to, was the focus of the analysis. A thematic analysis was used to code and categorise the data obtained in this study. However, I wanted to refrain from forcing the data into categories that had been pre-formulated based on existing theory. Therefore, it was important to me that the themes within the data be identified in an inductive manner as Frith and Gleeson (2004). It was important to me that the themes identified were strongly linked to the data. In certain respects this type of thematic analysis is often regarded to bear some similarity to grounded theory. Also, of importance was that my theoretical interest in the area or topic did not dictate the themes, or the themes just be related to the specific questions asked during the focus group.

Having in mind the great importance of not just describing the analysis as finding themes that emerged from the data due to the passive nature of such statements, I followed a process outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) and described this in the analysis of the data chapter of my study. Hopefully, then the active role (as suggested is important by Taylor and Ussher 2001) I played in identifying themes and selecting which were of interest and reporting them to the readers of this study is explicit. My position as researcher was that themes do not lie in wait to be discovered. Of course, my background, gender, ethnicity, social class, professional background etc. may dictate what themes emerged. It is important to acknowledge that the themes exist only in our minds. It is only from considering the data and creating links

from our own experience do we understand them à la Ely et al (1997).

On embarking on this research perhaps, I did subscribe to a '...naive realist view of qualitative research' (Braun and Clarke 2006, p80) , where I felt I would be 'giving voice' as described by Fine (2002), (Braun and Clarke 2006, p80) to the young people or rather 'allowing them to express their views.' However, throughout the analysis it became clear that although it was hoped the young people's views had been accurately represented, it needs to be acknowledged that this occurred in the very process of the researcher as a psychologist analysing the data and as argued by Fine (2002) the process involves selecting pieces of narrative evidence that we choose, maybe edit and then utilise to support our arguments. Therefore attempts had to be made to alleviate this difficulty.

I wanted to present a rich thematic description of the entire data set to enable the reader to get a sense of the important themes. With a small data set this seemed the best approach. To attempt to ensure the themes identified, coded and analysed were an accurate reflection of the content of the whole data set I co-opted the support of another individual to look at that data set. Had circumstances allowed, that individual could potentially have been the young person who moderated during the focus group. This was important because I wanted the young people who were Profoundly Deaf with BSL as their preferred language views on the topic to be known because this is a group of young people whose views have in the past not frequently been accessed. I did not then want to reduce the analysis of the data to solely my perspective as the researcher.

The thematic analysis was data-driven; however, I do acknowledge that perhaps, I cannot truly escape adding my pre-conceptions to the analysis. Theoretical and epistemological aspects are bound to arise as mentioned though, perhaps what is more important is acknowledging that certain difficulties can and do occur and then attempts should be made to prevent or alleviate these.

Conducting thematic analysis as suggested by Braun and Clark (2006) also allowed me a way of representing prevalence in the analysis that did not rely on quantified measures. This was deemed important because just because there may be a greater mention of a particular aspect does not equate with that aspect being significant. To suggest so, it seemed to me would link better within a study where the researcher was choosing a quantitative method.

I also had to make a decision about the level at which themes would be identified- a semantic or latent level. The semantic level was decided upon initially, because I was not searching for anything beyond what the young people were conveying but, I did also want to tap into interactive elements of the situation which would perhaps suggest identification of themes at the latent level would be appropriate. Clearly, the identification of themes at the semantic level is more consistent with a realist perspective and identification of themes at the latent level more consistent with a constructionist perspective. In fact, Braun and Clarke (2008) suggest that in this form- a thematic analysis at the latent level shares similarities with Discourse Analysis (DA) and are sometimes referred to as 'Thematic DA.' Wider assumptions, structures and meanings are theorised as underpinning what is articulated within the data. Latent thematic analysis is also deemed to be compatible with Psycho-analytic modes of interpretation.

However, having read the work of Wibeck (2001) who argues:

a thematic analysis in which the discussions are divided into segments and coded runs the risk of becoming too static, not paying enough attention to the richness and the dynamics distinctive to the focus group data.

(Wibeck, 2001 p 9)

the thematic analysis within this study was complimented by a further analysis following the work of Wibeck, in this way I would of course have to admit to being influenced by what I had read and placing this analytic structure on the data.

It is perhaps correct to say that issues regarding epistemology arose during the analysis, at the point when the research focus shifted to an interest in different aspects of the data. However, I discovered as Mitchell (1983) suggests can occur, there was the opportunity to explore generalisations in this instance – linked to aspects of non-verbal communication – Non manual features of BSL.

Data analysis: a form of Conversational Analysis

Within this research I attempted to examine communicative strategies such as explored by Wibeck (2001). Those communicative strategies included analogies and distinctions, quotes, the discursive construction of actors and agency, topical trajectories and the interaction between group members, pauses, overlapping signing and smiles/laughter. However, it should be noted that as mentioned in the Literature Review chapter, the mode of language used within this study was visual as oppose to verbal conversations as within Wibeck's (2001) study, so some other communicative strategies associated with British Sign Language such as use of eye contact, body language, non-manual features of BSL – the non-manual behaviour of pupils: movements of hands, head, shoulders, eyebrows, mouth, cheeks, changes in eye gaze, body shift also, facial expressions and body posture were also examined.

Having access to a video recording of the focus group assisted with the analysis in terms of tapping into the interactive elements of the focus group. The procedure I followed for video analysis took a Conversational Analysis type of approach applied to focus group research. The exact procedure is detailed later in Chapter 5: Analysis of data and results. Conversational analysis as described by Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech and Zoran (2009) '...is a sub field of linguistics with its roots in Social Phenomenology' (Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech and Zoran 2009, p13) Social Phenomenology is more commonly referred to as Ethnomethodology (Roger and Bull 1989). Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech and Zoran (2009) agree that

'a key aspect of Conversational Analysis is examining all cues participants exhibit including the relevance of tone, pauses, even facial expressions.' Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech and Zoran (2009). They draw attention to a computer assisted qualitative data analysis software program called Transana (Fassnacht and Wood 1995-2003). This software program provides researchers with a tool for analysing video and audio data, also transcripts of data. The software program is useful because it allows for segments of a transcript to be linked with frames within a video, (not knowing of such a program that would manage British Sign Language data, I had to manually as required, refer attention from the video to the written transcript of the focus group). In addition, as is typical with Conversational Analysis protocol, pauses and overlaps can be measured with the use of the Transana software program.

It should be noted though that Conversational Analysis is typically used in analysing naturally occurring conversations. However, as Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech and Zoran (2009) suggest, used within a focus group Conversational Analysis allows researchers to analysis an array of actions and emotions such as joking, frowning, agreeing, debating, criticising and using sarcasm.

'Researchers are also able to examine how participants attempt to portray themselves within focus groups to persuade, dissuade, impress...'

(Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech and Zoran 2009 p 15)

As Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech and Zoran (2009) state:

'Conversation analysis focuses more on participants understanding of interaction than on the researcher/moderators own understanding.'

(Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech and Zoran 2009 p 15)

In fact, Wilkinson (2004) has suggested that it appears '...extraordinary that focus group researchers looking for a way to analyse the key features of their data re interaction between participants, have not more extensively utilised this approach.' (Wilkinson 2004, p188)

Summary

Hopefully, my position transcends this methodology chapter, however, to summarise, just in case it is not completely explicit by now what my position is – it is perhaps – fair to say, I possess a somewhat eclectic perspective, while wanting to grasp onto the naïve realist approach, in the current world that we inhabit it is more realistic to acknowledge that I do subscribe to certain aspects purported by supporters of a Critical Realist paradigm, though I am sympathetic to Phenomenological and Symbolic Interactionist theoretical frameworks. However, I also adopt a feminist perspective.

Essentially, I acknowledge and truly believe that we are all a creation of our different social experiences; historical, cultural, gender, ethnicity, social class and the theories we espouse to, which can shape our view of reality, though I strongly believe that we should all aim to attempt to suspend any pre-conceptions we hold and placing them on others. Of course, this is not easy, but, as long as we acknowledge our perspective/s, this truly is the beauty of the particular qualitative approach, form of analysis chosen within this study – thematic analysis, (from my perspective), not having to adhere to one theoretical paradigm or method even. What is essentially important is:

...that the theoretical framework and methods match what the researcher wants to know and that they acknowledge these decisions and recognise them as decisions.'

(Braun and Clarke, 2006 p 80)

I hope this is what I have achieved, matched any underpinning theoretical frameworks and chosen methods to what I wanted to know, acknowledging and recognising these decisions as I have gone along and importantly articulated this explicitly to the reader of this thesis, so that as a

relative, qualitative psychology novice I hope that I, as a researcher have conducted the analysis of my study in such a way that is theoretically and methodologically sound.

Perhaps, my view point is more akin to a post-modernist philosophy as Burden (1998) and his 'illuminative evaluation.' This rejects the idea of one single reality. He argues perceptions are construed and multi-faceted. This methodological approach focusses on placing a 'searchlight' over an issue and in so doing as Opie (2004) would suggest, it is possible for this epistemological approach to shed light on what is happening, then hopefully generate results that can be related to. As Sikes suggests:

'...absolute truth is (presently) unattainable... and... knowledge at any time is provisional.

(Sikes in Opie et al, 2004 p 14)

Chapter 4: Research Table

Date:	Action:
13.12. 2010	Due to change of employer revised previously devised parental Information sheet and permission letters for pupil involvement in the focus group.
Between 13.12.2010 and 15.11.2011	There was a delay in progressing the study due to family and work commitments and a specific illness (Anaemia related to a medical issue) I was having to manage over the Summer of 2011.
15.11.2011	Conversation with Line Manager and Specialist Teacher with Sensory, Physical, Medical team regarding the project to aid in possible identification of pupils to be involved in the focus group.
March 2012	Sent out parental Information sheet and permission letters for pupil involvement in the focus group.
18.04.2012	Conversation with Teachers of the Deaf and CSW's regarding the study, what is required, room setup etc. Also, discussed inclusion of pupils-sample issues.

18.04.2012	First meeting with two young people who were interested in moderating the focus group. Discussed focus groups: what they are and entail.
02.05.2012	Ascertained that pupils given parental consent, were interested in and willing themselves to take part in the focus group. Familiarisation session with pupils within resource base in the school, to increase the awareness of what focus group would entail and familiarise pupils to being videotaped.
02.05.2012	Second meeting with two young people- further discussions regarding focus groups and devising/negotiating questions to present to pupils participating in the focus group.
01.06.2012	Third meeting with 1 young person- further discussions regarding focus groups and prep. /re-cap of previous discussions/ any questions prior to running focus group.
Between 18.04.2012 and 01.06.2012	Young people devised a booklet regarding how to run a focus group.

01.06.2012	Set up room prior to the focus group session in conjunction with staff. Facilitated a short game to familiarise the young people with the camera and create a relaxed environment then ran the focus group within the resource base in the school.
01.06.2012	De-brief with the pupils regarding the rationale for the focus group then called for any questions/comments and explained how pupils would be able to access the write up of the thesis.
Between 01.06.2012 and -24.12.2015	Write up period of the study had to be extended due to a combination of family and full time work commitments, also because of the impact of my unresolved medical difficulties (resulting in recurring Anaemia).

Chapter 4: Method

The practical arrangements

Organising the focus group interview required careful planning more so than other interview methods, due to the nature of the method/focus group, but also due to the very specific group its use was applied to. In order to examine issues regarding learning and because of the additional training elements required to skill up a young person to adopt a co-researcher role within the research, aspects considered prior to commencement of the focus group included:

- Acoustics of the room where the focus group was to be run.
- Additional time to carefully consider and address all possible ethical issues.
- Opportunity to access a focus group session discussing more general aspects of education.
- Concepts such as confidentiality and the divulging of specific information should be explicitly mentioned to pupils in order to gauge their understanding should further work around these concepts be required prior to the focus group sessions.
- Use of recording equipment and acquiring the equipment. Consideration of using two cameras. (However, for reasons cited later only one camera was eventually utilised).
- Use of visual tools to support the session.
- Expectations for the session may need to be discussed and displayed visually in the room.
- Aims of the session being displayed visually on the board
- Each question posed, also presented visually on the board and remaining in view until the next question is presented.

- A brief familiarisation to being videotaped.
- The typical size of the focus group being reduced, kept to a maximum of 6 pupils.
- Considered the possibility that a number of focus group sessions may be required or beneficial.
- The need for a discussion with the co-researchers regarding focus group methodology was planned.
- Production of a leaflet/ booklet explaining what focus group methodology is/entails was envisaged. (Please refer to Appendix. B)
- Consideration of involvement of an interested Profoundly Deaf pupil with access to training to moderate the focus group.
- A specific package being devised to train the pupil but, Profoundly Deaf pupils being included in this process to determine what aspects should be included in the training.
- Assessment of language proficiency of the involved pupils was an important element considered. A Teacher of the Deaf and Deaf Instructor working within the school advised.

These items formed the basis of my own checklist (Wellington 1996, Kruegar and Casey, 2008, 2105).

Participants

Initially, through consultation with Teachers of the Deaf who had considered language proficiency levels, a group of Profoundly Deaf young people were identified to take part in the focus group; three individuals were identified from within my employing authority and four from a neighbouring authority with the support of Teachers of the Deaf. Unfortunately, two of the three individuals from my employing authority were not able to be included within this focus group because neither pupil's preferred language was BSL. One of the pupils

preferred mode of communication was oral, the other pupils' was a signed language but, not BSL. The pupil was of Eastern European heritage, had recently moved to England, and so the pupils' BSL skills were not at a level in terms of proficiency that would allow the pupil with ease to take part in the focus group. It should be noted that because of the reasons just explained these pupils were not approached regarding volunteering. They had not volunteered and then been excluded from taking part. Two other pupils from within the neighbouring authority were identified to take part in the study. The third pupil identified from my employing authority it was hoped would join the other pupils from the neighbouring authority for the focus group session. However, on the day this pupil was unable to make the focus group meeting. Therefore the focus group interview comprised solely of six pupils from the neighbouring authority.

The type of sampling method utilised was a non-probability (purposive sample). The homogenous nature of the focus group was important to ensure the pupils would be comfortable discussing with each other. (Morgan 1998, Williams and Katz 2001, Stewart and Shamdasani 2015) The pupils identified were all in year 10, three were female and three were male. The pupils preferred language was BSL, they all had hearing parents and they were educated within a mainstream school with a resource base attached to support pupils with hearing difficulties and, so they formed a homogenous group to take part in the focus group.

In line with the ethical requirements set forward by the HCPC (2016) and the BPS (2014) as mentioned earlier within the Methodology Chapter, also, as stipulated by The University of Sheffield's regulations, prior to commencement of the focus group a consent letter devised by me was sent out to the young people and their parents by the Resource Base staff; pupils were asked if they wanted to take part though consents for the young people to take part were also sought from parents. However, two pupils volunteered to be more involved in the research, learning more about focus group methodology prior to the focus group. Then one of these two pupils volunteered in advance to act as a moderator for the focus group on the day of the focus group interview.

Hence the research was in two parts, utilising a mixed methods approach- focus groups and participatory action research. The final focus group then comprised of five pupils; three females and two males. The size of the group was in line with views on the optimum size of a focus group (Kruegar 1994, Morgan 1997, Kitzinger 2005, Kruegar and Casey 2015) though, due to the specific nature of the focus group, inclusion of the number of participants at the lower end of the range specified to form a focus group was deemed appropriate.

Apparatus and materials

The apparatus and materials utilised during the study included a printed list of questions (please refer to Appendix C), flip chart and paper, board and a video/DVD recorder (SONY) The camera was positioned right of the semi-circle as this was deemed the best position to enable a clear focus on the co-researcher asking the questions and the respondents- five participants (please refer to Figure 1) The camera was positioned behind one pupil for clear reasons! Although this pupil was willing to take part in the focus group and did, she did not wish to be identifiable on camera. This was in line with parental wishes that had been expressed to school staff at the start of that particular pupil's entry to the school and after consultation with parents regarding permission to take part in the focus group.

Work involving two of the pupils (participatory action research)

During the participatory action research part of the study, the two participants negotiated questions to present to the focus group participants. The questions were arranged in an order suggested by Kruegar (1994), Kruegar and Casey (2015), moving through a questioning route from the general to the specific. The final agreed questions were recorded in written form on a piece of paper and later typed up by me in English word order for recording purposes because when the questions were presented to the group they were in BSL. After discussion with the two volunteer participants on two separate occasions about focus group methodology and running focus groups, the volunteers

decided to devise a booklet about focus group methodology, describing how to conduct a focus group (as mentioned earlier, please refer to Appendix B.) The booklet was intended for their use and the subsequent use of their peers, should they be interested in utilising a focus group methodology themselves in the future.

The focus group interviews

The pupils were placed into one focus group interview and their views about learning/what could improve their learning was explored using their preferred language of BSL (as mentioned, please refer to Appendix C for the focus group questions). The pupils were arranged into a semi-circle, this was deemed to be the best configuration for the pupils viewing of each other's signing and capturing their views on DVD. (As mentioned, please refer to Figure 1 which displays the position of the camera in relation to the young people and moderators).

Each pupil was given a sticky label to wear with an assigned letter on to help ensure anonymity during/after the write-up. (Refer to Adams and Sasse 1999, Adams and Cox (2008) regarding issues regarding Confidentiality).

Prior to commencement of the focus group interview, me as researcher, the co-researcher and other young people explored issues related to the efficient running of the focus group and confidentiality. The group was encouraged to generate their own rules/expectations and discuss these within this introductory section of the focus group (Kruegar and Casey 2000). The groups' expectations were then displayed in visual format using the language/phraseology provided by the young people.

The young person co-researcher presented the questions in BSL, in turn one by one to the group. I supported the co-researcher in trying to encourage participation and eliciting responses where appropriate and focused on capturing in written format the views expressed by the young people within the focus group. A Communication Support Worker present during the focus group also took notes from the session.

On the day of the focus group prior to its commencement the young people were engaged in a short game to relax them and familiarise them to the camera. Jowett and O'Toole 2006 suggest that making participants feel relaxed on the day of the focus group can lead to the interactions being more akin to natural social interaction among participants – so the environment may be more comfortable and enjoyable for participants. (Jowett and O'Toole 2006, Liamputtong 2011) Also, prior to this focus group session on a previous occasion the group were exposed to a focus group session with exactly the same set up but, I supported by a Teacher of the Deaf posed some general questions about school and learning. The aim of this session was in way of modification to the focus group as mentioned previously. This was a consideration as mentioned in an unpublished paper I wrote in 2006 entitled 'Is it possible to use focus group methodology to access the views of pupils who are Profoundly Deaf?' It was suggested that this focus group may be required prior to commencement of the focus group to allow the pupils practical familiarisation of a focus group interview.

At the end of the focus group, the participants and co-researchers were debriefed regarding the rationale for the focus group (Kruegar and Casey 2015) and asked if they had any questions or comments. The majority of participants commented that they had enjoyed the session, learning the views of their peers had stimulated their own ideas. It was made clear that anyone wishing to access the write-up of the focus group work would be able to do so because a copy of the completed thesis would be sent to the teachers within the Resource Base of the school.

Chapter 5: Analysis of the Data and Results

Analysis of the data

In this study an attempt is being made not only to inform the reader how the study was designed (described within the method section), but also what the results were, and to explain the actual procedure of analysis (described within this section. In doing this it is hoped not to erode any of the creativity of others using focus group methodology; I am merely explaining the process I used in an attempt to enhance the trustworthiness of qualitative analysis, others are free to discover their own way into their data and as Wibeck (2001) suggests ensure the analytic process becomes:

...an explorative process which the analyst can allow him/ herself to be rather electric in their choice of methods....

(Wibeck, 2001 p 7)

Initially, in order to analyse the qualitative data in this study a thematic analysis was performed on the transcripts. There are many different techniques of thematic analysis as Braun and Clarke (2006) have suggested and because of this researchers have debated the validity of this sort of analysis. In an effort to reduce validity issues of interpretation and theory and to ensure a rigorous analysis, certain stages as outlined by Vaugh, Jeanne Shay Schumm and Sinagub (1996) and referred to as steps, on how to analyse focus group interviews were followed. The steps were:-

- Coding the data. (For worked examples of coding of the data, please refer to Tables 2 & 3).
- Deciding on the categories and inclusion criteria for these categories, placing quotes into envelopes.
- Reviewing the categories in an iterative process.
- Developing themes from the categories.
- An Educational Psychologist colleague completing these steps and comparing the themes.
- The final themes were developed.

However, as Wilkinson (1998) I was keen:

...to go beyond what Wilkinson calls "the usual types of qualitative analysis"

(Wibeck, 2001 p 3)

and so an attempt was made not only to analyse the data using a thematic analysis and the process described above but, to attempt to explore the interactive elements and possibilities of focus groups. Similar to Linell (2001) who attempted a more dynamic type of analysis which would not only focus on exploring aspects of content but, also attempting to capture, '...the interactivity in the sense making practices.' (Linell, 2001, quoted in Wibeck, 2001 p 7).

Much is made of the interactive element of focus groups. It has frequently been argued that the focus group context enables the researcher to observe 'the construction of meaning in action' (Wilkinson 1998, p 338). Frequently people may not only have opinions but, as evidenced by Billig (1996) they try them out and modify them in discussions with others. This is something I wanted to capture. I wanted to analyse if the focus group interview had created a situation where interaction among individuals within the group added greater insights because the discussion developed the existing understanding or viewpoint of participants.

As mentioned within the Methodology Chapter having access to the video recording of the focus group assisted with the analysis in terms of tapping into the interactive elements of the focus group. Below is a description of the procedure followed for analysing the video.

The stages of analysing the video were:-

- Examining the whole data set using an analysis based on qualitative research criteria. The aim of the analysis was not to quantify the data.
- Viewing all the video data repeatedly and in increasing depth.

- Identifying major events, themes or key moments of significance in relation to communicative strategies being used, interactions being displayed (notes made while viewing).
- Attempting to describe in written form, the findings/events related to communicative strategies being used, interactions being displayed, so these findings could be included within the results section of the study.

This procedure is similar to the procedure outlined by Markee (2000). The stages outlined also appear to fit with Goldman, Erickson, Lemke and Derry (2007) description of an inductive approach to exploring video data, this approach is considered to be particularly appropriate '...when working with "raw" video data sets that have been collected with broad questions in mind but, without a strong orienting theory.' (Hewitt 2012, p19).

Results

The thematic analysis described previously highlighted three main factors that the pupils within this study suggested influenced their learning. These factors were: motivational factors, access to additional support and the importance of community. Figure 2 overleaf provides an illustrative thematic map for these factors.

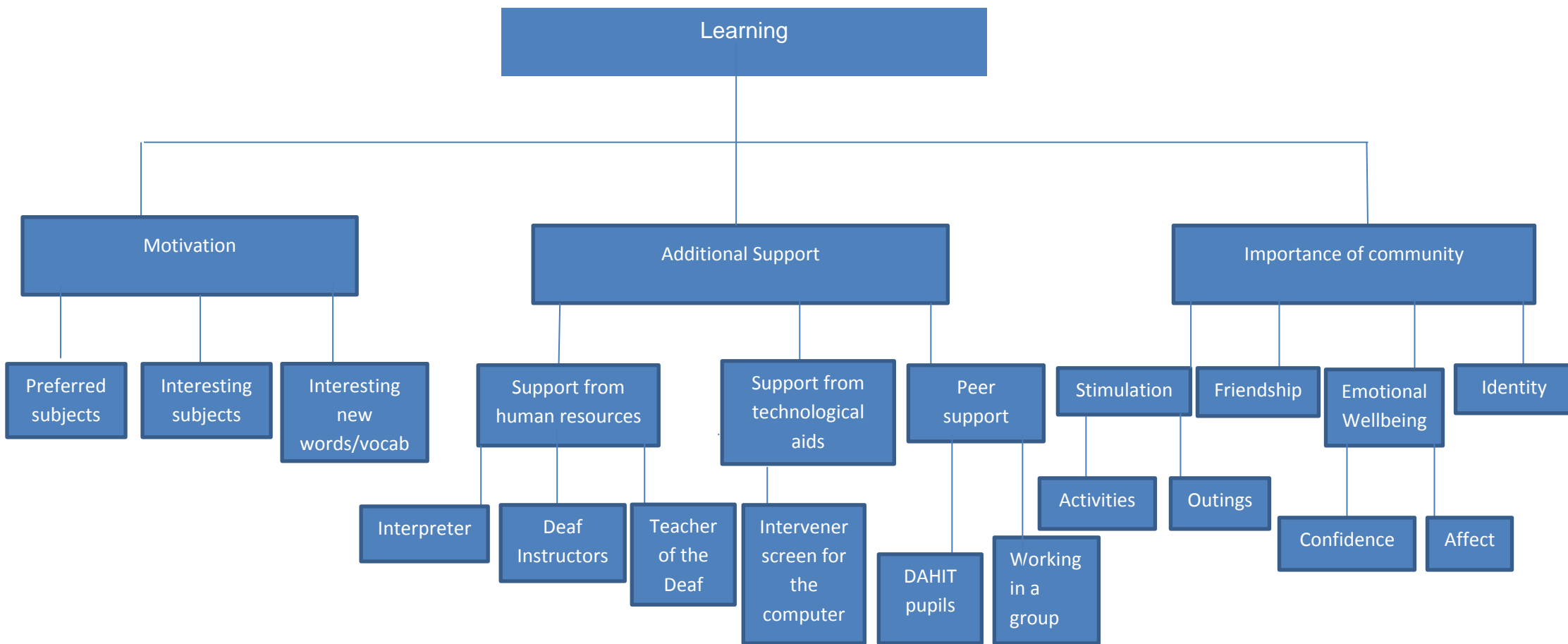


Figure .2 : Thematic map for factors influencing the learning of pupils who are Profoundly Deaf with BSL as their preferred language.

Each of the three main factors will be taken in turn and further information provided below:

Motivation (Quotes in Envelope 1)

As related to motivation when questioned: 'Are you doing your best work in school?' All the pupils seemed to agree that they were. They appeared motivated to work hard. Pupil C answered, 'Every day I work hard.' However, this seemed to stimulate another pupil being conscious of times when it is not possible to work hard every day and so making others aware of this. The pupil, Pupil D said, 'When I am tired or ill I don't do my best.' It is interesting to note that the rationale for not doing his best work was not linked to external factors but, more internalised factors.

When questioned: 'What helps you to learn?' The following responses were among those given:

Pupil E: 'Numbers'

Pupil D: 'Interesting new words (vocabulary)'

In response to the question 'What makes you feel involved in your learning?' The pupils mentioned practical subjects. For example:

Pupil C: Hairdressing

Pupil B: Mechanics

Additional Support (Quotes in envelope 2)

As related to additional support- again, in response to question 3: 'What helps you to learn?' Two pupils responded by referring to additional support they are given in school from:

Pupil B: 'an Interpreter',

Pupil D: 'Deaf Instructor'

In response to a separate question 'Who helps you most with your work, what do they do to help you?'

Other pupils mentioned Teacher of the Deaf support was helpful.

Pupil C: 'When I am reading and don't understand the teacher helps me to understand the language.'

Pupil D: 'I like the teacher to help me write down what I am learning.'

Pupil E: 'The teacher discussing with me to make sure I understand.'

Another thing deemed to help were peers:

Pupil C: 'DAHIT pupils'

Pupil B: 'Other students'

Pupil D: 'Work in a group for better understanding.'

The type of support the pupils appeared to value was with their understanding of English in particular. A few of the pupils suggested this when questioned: 'What makes learning difficult?'

Pupil C: 'English'

Pupil A: 'Written English'

In figure 3 overleaf, I have detailed in a diagram the type of support that the pupils appeared to value with English.



Figure 3 -To illustrate the type of English support valued by the pupils who are Profoundly Deaf with British Sign Language as their preferred language that took part in the focus group.

Additional support could be broken down into sub themes:-

- Support from human resources
- Support from technological aids
- Peer support

The importance of community (Quotes in envelope 3)

The importance of community emerged as an important theme for the pupils.

In helping devise the focus group questions the two pupils assisting in this process were keen to include the question 'The X Deaf Centre is closing; how do you feel about this?' The young people's answers revealed a number of important sub-themes that reinforced why the Deaf community is important to them and instrumental in their learning. Please refer to figure 2 displaying the sub – themes: stimulation, friendship, emotional wellbeing and identity. The responses within these sub themes were:

Stimulation:

Pupil E: 'If it closes we lose confidence because we're stuck at home bored, unable to meet people.'

Pupil C: 'With the Deaf club we went out and about to London, McDonalds and other places.'

Pupil A: 'X Students went to the Deaf Christmas Party.'

Friendship:

Pupil D: 'No community, no friends, we will be sad.'

Pupil E: 'Not able to meet'

Emotional Wellbeing and Identity:

Pupil C: 'Losing confidence'

Pupil D: 'No community, no friends, we will be sad.'

Pupil B: 'Upset because Deaf people in the future no signing.'

One of the pupils' responses, which was in fact, a question, highlighted the future uncertainty for the young people:

Pupil A: 'What will happen?'

Next an attempt was made to explore the interactive elements and possibilities of focus groups as Linell (2001). Linell (2001) attempted a more dynamic type of analysis which would not only focus on exploring aspects of content but, would also attempt to capture '...the interactivity in the sense making practices'. (Linell 2001, quoted in Wibeck 2001 p7) In fact, the focus group methodology seemed to allow the young people involved to develop their thoughts around what helps them with their learning. For example, during the focus group when one pupil responded:

(Pupil C): 'When I am reading and don't understand, the teacher helps me to understand the language.'

Another responded more specifically:

(Pupil D): 'I like the teacher to help me write down what I am learning.'

Then another pupil responded:

(Pupil E): 'The teacher discussing with me to make sure I understand.'

The young people seemed to help each other expressing their views, if one person provided an idea; another pupil would agree with it but, then build on the idea or would express a little more.

Another example, was when a pupil (pupil C) mentioned they liked working in a group this made them feel involved in their learning, seconds later another pupil (pupil D) suggested working in a group was better because it aided understanding:

Pupil D: 'work in a group for better understanding' appearing to imply that they learned from their peers.

Also, in response to the question 'The X Deaf Centre is closing; how do you feel about this?' When one pupil (pupil B) responded with 'I am losing confidence.' Another respondent (pupil E) elaborated on the response by signing 'If it closes we lose confidence because we're stuck at home, bored, and unable to meet people.' A different pupil (Pupil D) continues with more specifics 'no community, no friends, we will be sad.'

However, not as much building on the idea of others in the group occurred as I had hoped would. The reasons for this will be explored in the discussion section of the thesis.

In addition, as mentioned within my analysis I wanted to try and tap into some of the additional analysis as suggested by Wibeck (2001) - analysis of communicative strategies: such as analogies and distinctions, quotes; analysis of the discursive construction of actors and agency; topical trajectories, and finally analysis of the interaction between group members. From this perspective, below are my findings relating to some of these areas:

Communicative strategies

As mentioned within the Literature Review Chapter communicative strategies refer to the use of communicative devices as a resource. Wibeck (2001) comments, that 'In a focus group discussion, the participants use several communicative devices as resources.' She mentions that partly depending on the issue in focus the communicative devices may be different.

Analogies and distinctions:

Wibeck (2001) found in her focus groups regarding 'Genetically Modified Foods' that by the use of analogies, similarities between the issue under discussion and other issues are emphasised. The use of distinctions on the contrary, seems to be used to emphasise difference. Perhaps, due to the issue/topic of discussion, analogies and distinctions were not used in this focus group. The possible rationale for this will be returned to in the discussion section of the study.

Quotes or reported speech:

Adelsward (2000) has argued that in a group there are real participants and 'virtual participants' – those whose voices are heard throughout the discussion through quotes used by participants within the group. Wibeck argues that it may be useful to analyse the blending of voices within a focus group because as stated by Myers (1999b):

...people develop their own opinions only in relation to and in response to, those of others.

(Myers, 1999b p 588)

Within this focus group as was the case with analogies and similarities, quotes were not utilised as a communicative strategy either. Possible reasons for this will be explored within the discussion section of this study.

However, next I will point out some communicative strategies that were present in my data and in fact, I would argue that the communicative devices/ strategies used as a resource within a focus group conducted in spoken language may differ to those strategies used within a focus group using a visual language as discussed in the Literature Review section of this study, or may be utilised less or more within a focus group conducted via a visual language. The rationale for this will be explained further within the discussion section of the study. I will comment on each of the communicative strategies observed within the focus group however, it is important to acknowledge that although the BSL aspects will be described the analysis may not provide as detailed an analysis as an individual with BSL as

their preferred language would be able to provide.

This is perhaps for future work, I would greatly welcome the opportunity to work jointly with Deaf individuals on other studies involving focus groups utilising BSL as the means of communication. As my first language is English, I am of course not an expert myself in BSL as a language, therefore it is probably beyond the scope of this work to provide a detailed analysis of the pupils' use of BSL. Ethically, I feel that it would only be correct and proper for a Deaf individual whose preferred language is BSL and is so more familiar with the linguistics of BSL and the way the language is used within the Deaf community to provide any in depth analysis. Further/ in depth analysis by such a Deaf individual of other non-manual features that may be in operation and how during sign language the hands can convey separate bits of meaning could highlight just how powerful and complex sign language is.

Within this study, I witnessed the following communicative strategies being used:- use of eye contact; use of body language, non-manual features of BSL- the non-manual behaviour of the pupils: movements of the hands, head, shoulders, eyebrows, mouth, cheeks, changes in eye gaze, body shift etc.; facial expressions and body posture.

Eye contact:

Throughout the focus group the pupils displayed very good eye contact with the moderator and each other. Eye contact was utilised extremely effectively to attract, hold attention and indicate that a pupil wanted to offer their views during the session.

Body language:

It was apparent that use of body language was a clear communicative strategy employed. During question 9, 'What makes learning difficult?' It seemed quite clear from the pupil's body language that they were feeling uncomfortable regarding the question and wanted to move on. One pupil (pupil B) visibly folded his arms and legs and most of the other pupil's posture appeared relatively closed. One pupil (pupil A) was lightly pulling on the sleeve of her

jumper after signing her response to the question.

Non-manual features of BSL

Changes in eye gaze:

The respondents displayed constant changes in eye gaze. Eye contact as mentioned was a vital communicative strategy but, also eye gaze. All the respondents started looking intently at the moderator as he asked the questions, and then quickly changed their gaze to scan the semi-circle to check if someone was indicating that they wanted to answer, or had begun responding to the question.

When they wanted to respond to a question, respondents would catch the eye of the moderator. Respondents would also change their eye gaze from one another and look towards the support staff within the room when there was a pause in responding, or if no one responded to a question.

Respondents would also change their eye gaze from one another to look towards the board for extra visual clues if they were unsure about the question or needed a reminder about the question.

The moderator utilised a lot of eye contact and was acutely aware if respondents had missed part of a question; he would capture the groups' attention, and then repeat the question.

The moderator also would occasionally change his gaze, looking out of the corner of his eye to check if the other moderator-me had finished recording responses.

Changes in body shift:

There did not appear to be any instances of changes in body shift among the respondents. The moderator displayed some role shift in his presenting of the questions.

Pointing:

The respondents did not use pointing during the focus group, but the moderator did (to encourage quieter members of the group to give their views).

Facial expressions:

Some of the respondents utilised more facial expression than others, but facial expression appeared to be another crucial communicative strategy. There were instances of the respondents raising their eyebrows - one respondent (pupil C) raised her eyebrows when another respondent (pupil A) was responding to the question about what makes learning difficult, question 9. When the respondent responded 'Maths' the other respondent raised her eyebrows.

Another example of raised eyebrows was when question 3 and 4 were presented- 'What type of lessons do you like best?' and 'What helps you to learn?' Pupil C raised her eyebrows just before question 3 was presented and during a pupil's (pupil B's) response to question 4-'I like Science, Maths and English.'

There were instances at the very start of the focus group just before it was about to begin, of a respondent (pupil B) blowing out his cheeks.

There were three instances of respondents sticking out their tongues, this was when the closure of the Deaf Centre was being discussed in response to the question- 'The X Deaf Centre is closing; how do you feel about this?' One respondent (pupil C) stuck out her tongue while she responded 'losing confidence.' Another respondent (pupil B) stuck out his tongue-while experiencing another respondent's (pupil D) response 'no community, no friends, we will be sad.' Pupil C stuck out her tongue again during another response 'With the Deaf Club we went out and about to London, MacDonald's and other places.'

There was an instance of a respondent (pupil C) pressing her tongue on her teeth, when posed the question 'What support helps you?' and while focusing on the other respondents answers.

There were also instances of pushing the lips forward and making a chewing motion displayed by one particular respondent at different times throughout the focus group. One example being when questioned 'What makes lessons interesting?'-question 7; the respondents were provided with further explanation regarding the question and it was here while accessing the responses of other respondents, after further explanation had been provided on the question, that pupil C displayed a chewing motion with her mouth.

Body posture:

At the start of the focus group, most of the respondents appeared relatively relaxed with open posture, shoulders square and displaying good eye contact. Pupil B was leaning back into his chair. However, there was evidence of a change in body posture for most of the respondents. Quite noticeably, at the start of the focus group two respondents appeared to be leaning forward but, during the question about the Deaf Centre all the respondents seemed to be leaning forward. At times some of the respondents displayed closed posture- with arms and legs crossed; this was the posture displayed by pupil B specifically during the question 'What makes learning difficult?' On the final question about the Deaf centre he uncrossed his arms and legs and was leaning forward.

Discursive construction of actors and agency:

An analysis of discursive construction of actors and agency as mentioned within the Literature Review Chapter of this study refers to how the participants of the focus group discursively construct actors and agency i.e.- focusing on questions such as 'Which agents do participants construct as being important and influential as oppose to not being influential?' 'How are power relations perceived and so discussed?' 'How do the group members think about their own space of action- 'what is their sense of agency.' O'Conner (1995) highlighted how agency is a concept that describes the relationships of action, the freedom to act and also the power to take action. It is also linked to moral aspects of responsibility and so our ability to reflect upon our actions.

In this focus group it was useful as discussed in the Introduction section of this study and as Wibeck (2001) pointed out in her study, to identify which different agents are mentioned by the participants and how agents were presented. This area for analysis became relevant when the young people were discussing the Deaf Centre closing, they focused on their feelings and the impact it would have on them, their comments suggested that they did not have any control over this situation and in fact appeared powerless. When one student (pupil A) put forward the question-‘What will happen?’ This appeared rhetorical. None of the pupils answered the question and this indeed signaled the end of the focus group. (Please refer to the section below on pauses). The group appeared to not take on the role of identifying who may be an agent to influence the decision regarding the closure of the Deaf Centre. This apparent lack of exploration of agency will be discussed in the discussion section of this study. *[However, it should be noted that at the end of the focus group the Teacher of the Deaf did explain to the young people what the current situation was regarding the closure of the Deaf Centre within the city. The Teacher of the Deaf made the young people aware that links would be made with a Deaf Centre in a nearby city which the young people should then hopefully be able to access.]*

Topical trajectories:

As mentioned within the Literature Review section of this thesis topical trajectories involve an analysis of the sub topics that participants introduce into the discussion and often return to and in what ways this is done. This can be interesting because it can highlight ‘what is important and relevant to participants and what their associations are when given a particular topic to discuss’ (Wibeck 2001, p 10).

Within this focus group the young people did not display many topical trajectories and because only one focus group was conducted it was not possible to identify sub topics that participants introduced that transcended other groups. (Perhaps, this would be interesting future work). However, the sub topic of support arose on many occasions and in terms of the number of

times raised one could argue that one type of support-Teacher of the Deaf support appeared important to the young people in terms of supporting them with their learning. However, there is a debate to be had about whether prevalence of themes in the data linked to quantifiable measures should be significant. It is perhaps, important to be mindful that particular questions may have lent themselves to particular types of support being more appropriate to mention, more frequently. Also, factors beyond the quantifiable in the real world are obviously important, consider generally the intensiveness of displayed emotions around topics of concern to individuals.

The interaction between group members:

Proponents of focus groups often argue that 'one of the key features of focus groups is the possibility to study the interaction among the group members' (Wibeck 2001, p 18). Wibeck (2001) suggests that interactive features that may be of particular interest to an analyst may be pauses, overlapping speech and laughter. Therefore, in the current focus group which utilised a visual language, the features of pauses, overlapping signing, smiles and/or laughter were analysed.

Pauses:

As mentioned earlier pauses can indicate that the participants are bored of communicating about the topic and want to change the subject or end the communication exchange. It could equally indicate that the topic being discussed is sensitive.

Within this focus group as mentioned above in the section discussing discursive construction of actors and agency, there was a clear and significant pause when the pupils were discussing the closure of the Deaf Centre in X, after a pupil (pupil A) posed the question. 'What will happen?' It did not appear that the pupils were bored of the topic but, rather that the whole area was sensitive and it did indeed mark the end of the discussion.

A number of other pauses were evident during the focus group interview. During question number 3, 'What helps you to learn?' One pupil (pupil D)

responded 'I like the teacher to help me write down what I am learning.' But, this was then followed by a pause. A pause also followed question 5 'Who helps you most with your work? And what do they do to help you?' The pupil moderator followed-up this question swiftly with the next question, 'What support helps you?' It could be interpreted that the pauses could have signified discomfort discussing support perhaps, the pupils perceived this to be a sensitive topic generally, or the context of the focus group made it so, support staff were present within the room. I was supported with note taking by a Communication Support Worker and a Teacher of the Deaf was overseeing the recording equipment.

There was also a pause at question 7- 'What makes lessons interesting?' the pupil moderator responded by repeating the question and elaborating the question further. It appears further clarification was needed to ensure understanding.

A further pause occurred at question 9 'What makes learning difficult?' after responses from two pupils. The question was asked again to gain further responses. It could be interpreted that the pupils may have been bored with the topic of discussion however, alternatively, it could be that the pupils found it hard to discuss difficulties maybe due to their personality or because they were in the company of their peers. Personality factors did appear to play a part in the focus group and response to questions. The pupil moderator having previously had the opportunity to discuss with me the possibility of this issue and possible responses, appeared acutely aware of this and did at times directly focus attention towards a pupil (body language and eye contact) and specifically request that particular young person's view.

Overlapping signing:

Overlapping signing could be interpreted as a sign of intense interest in the topic being discussed; though may also indicate that there is competition among the participants to be in the centre of the conversation. This could present an empirical question about whether there are some participants who succeed more often than others in this attempt to be in the centre of the conversation, whilst others constantly fail.

Within this focus group there were three specific instances of overlapping signing, on the first question 'Are you doing your best work?', on the third question 'What helps you to learn?' and on the last question 'The X Deaf Centre is closing; how do you feel about this? The pupil moderator noticed the overlapping signing and requested the responses again one at a time. The exchanges did not appear particularly competitive, with the pupils involved competing to be the centre of the discussion, throughout the focus group the young people were very respectful of each other's views watching carefully as their peers expressed their views and on the last question when the overlapping signing occurred one pupil (pupil B) gallantly signaled to his peer for that pupil (pupil C) to sign first.

Smiles and/or laughter:

Wibeck (2001) suggests laughter may indicate a tiredness of the topic; but, it may also suggest that the participants are ashamed of something-'...at least on a rhetorical level.'

Smiles are also included in the analysis here as some young deaf people may choose not to use vocalisations such as laughter during the focus group setting merely smiling instead.

Within this focus group on the first question 'Are you doing your best work in school?' one pupil (pupil C) smiled as she responded that she always does her best/works hard every day. The same pupil smiled again when she responded to question 2 about the type of lesson she liked best. Pupil C was also the only pupil to laugh. She did so at the end of a pause after a discussion about 'What support helps you?'-question 6, just before the pupil moderator indicated he was moving on to the next question. It could be interpreted that the pause as mentioned earlier signified discomfort discussing support, perhaps it signified a sensitive topic; this view could be reinforced by pupil C's laughter which may have signified embarrassment at discussing support when some support staff working in the school were present (for technical reasons) during the focus group.

Chapter 6: Discussion

Introduction

Firstly, within this chapter the results of the study will be explored and where possible this will be in relation to the literature and previous studies. However, it should be remembered that there are few academic studies within the UK that have accessed the views about learning of young people who are Profoundly Deaf with British Sign Language as their preferred language. Also, within this chapter consideration of criteria for determining trustworthiness in qualitative research will also be discussed, specifically in relation to this study. This will be followed by a critique of the study focused on the methods utilised, starting with the use of focus groups as a method, next the participatory action research aspect of the research and then the case study approach. A critique of the analysis of data will also be included: the use of thematic analysis and analysis of communicative strategies or Conversation Analysis type approach because as mentioned earlier within the methodology chapter, I am conscious that not only does the rigor of how a focus group was planned and conducted influence its quality and the value of its findings, but also how the data was analysed. It is important that the process that occurred to collect and analyse the data is critically evaluated. Beyea and Nicoll (2000) suggest that two important questions are: - were the data analysis methods fully described; and were they appropriate for the situation.

Deaf children in England continue to experience higher rates of underachievement than their hearing counterparts. However, despite this inequality, research within the so called 'mainstream' surrounding these pupils regarding education and what would support their needs is limited. One of the aims of this study was to extend the research literature on Profoundly Deaf young people with BSL as their preferred language views on their education. Hopefully, this will go some way towards attempts to position pupils with additional needs views firmly within the mainstream.

The data from the study was taken from a small sample of Profoundly Deaf young people educated within the same school with a specialised resource base for pupils with hearing difficulties incorporated within the school;

therefore, no claims are being made that the results of the findings can be generalised to the wider population of Profoundly Deaf young people with BSL as their preferred language. However, the analysis within the study revealed some interesting and insightful perspectives surrounding what helps this particular group of pupils with their learning.

The study also highlighted the validity of engaging young people in research to explore the views of a marginalised group and their ability to create an expression of their views, experience and culture. The use of a focus group approach utilising the young people's preferred language BSL was particularly helpful in enabling this expression.

Critique of the results/ findings of the study.

The thematic analysis performed on the data, highlighted three main factors that the pupils suggested influenced their learning: motivation, additional support and the importance of community. The existence of these themes relate well to studies by Lyle et al (2010) and Ruddock (2007) that suggest that children and young people are insightful and can analyse their experiences of learning within school in a constructive manner, so they are able to make a valuable contribution to developing strategies for improving their learning and raising achievement.

The three main factors that the pupils suggested influenced their learning revealed further sub-themes that could indicate aspects to focus on that may further help the young people with their learning. For example, the theme 'Motivation' was further refined to include the themes preferred subjects, interesting subjects and new words/vocabulary. Therefore, ensuring that the curriculum incorporates interesting subjects and that those subjects are personalised to take account of pupil preferences could further help the young people with their learning. The theme 'additional support' was further refined to include support from human resources, support from technological aids, peer support and further to this the identification of specific types of support: Interpreter, Deaf Instructors, Teacher of the Deaf (human resources), Intervener screen for the computer (technological aids), and DAHIT pupils

working in a group (peer support). These sub-themes again indicate aspects that could be focused on to further support the young people with their learning, ensuring access to Interpreters, Deaf instructors, Teachers of the Deaf, intervener screens for computers and other deaf pupils.

Although, the young people were not explicitly asked about English Language, interestingly, it was found to be a theme. Perhaps, similarly to the study by Sutherland (2005) some of the young Deaf pupils expressed that English was among their least favourite subjects. However, within this study the young people appeared to be clear in the type of support they valued that helped them with this language that is not their preferred language. Please refer to figure 3. Ensuring there is support with the techniques of English appeared to be a factor that supported the young people with their learning. This finding seems to highlight the futility of the earlier either/or debates explored within the Literature Review Chapter of this study surrounding the education of Deaf children where views were extremely polarised in terms of method/language of instruction. This led to much conflict and controversy within the area but, in line with views on Bilingualism as described by Gregory (1996):

an approach to the education of deaf children which uses both the sign language of the deaf community and the written/spoken language of the hearing community.'

(Gregory, 1996 p 1)

and later Swanwick and Gregory (2007) the pupil's views seem to suggest that their preferred language and culture are extremely important to them, although access to English is also required to support their learning. Of course, it may be argued that such views are hardly surprising bearing in mind the context of the study, pupils educated within a bilingual environment perhaps, the views of pupils educated within an oral tradition would differ with the primacy of English advocated. A similar study with pupils educated within such a setting would be interesting, however, I would argue having worked as an Educational Psychologist supporting Deaf pupils placed out of district within a Residential Oral setting, that in the current climate even though these settings operate an oral system, the setting may not be solely oral as the young people whose preferred language is BSL, in their interactions with peers during social

break times often incorporate BSL. It would be interesting to examine what use is made of BSL, whether it is used solely for social purposes or whether learning that has occurred within lessons is discussed utilising BSL within a supportive capacity.

Access to their culture appeared extremely important to the young people as was evident from their responses to the closure of the Deaf centre question. The young people focused on their feelings and how this would make them feel, the negative consequences of the closure and the impact on their learning; social learning, lack of opportunities etc. It was interesting though that the group appeared not to take on the role of identifying who may be an agent to influence the decision regarding the closure of the Deaf Centre. This apparent lack of exploration of agency may have been because the pupils felt powerless to exert any influence and actually they appeared to be resigned to the inevitability of the situation. Contemplating this situation, I am reminded of the work of Foucault in relation to control and resistance. Foucault's view was that control and resistance to power could occur at any time, also in any place, though he suggested that what is crucial is resistance as a reflexive practice with others; an awareness of this perspective may have supported the young people in considering being proactive in exploring alternatives to the closure of the Deaf centre.

Exploring the motivation theme further, the focus group results suggested that motivation was a key theme in supporting the pupils learning. All the pupils appeared motivated to work hard within school and it seemed that having access to preferred subjects motivated them. Practical subjects and interesting subjects were deemed to motivate the young people with their learning. If we consider a well-known theory on motivation by Maslow (1971), Maslow in his revised theory on Motivation describes levels of growth needs that result in self-actualisation-a need for an individual to find self-fulfillment and to realise their potential. However, it is worth being mindful that Maslow's work, though widely popular has been criticised for the lack of evidence to support the hierarchy he proposes (Wahba and Bridgwell 1976; Soper,

Milford and Rosenthal 1995, Ryan and Deci 2000). Considering a Social Learning Theory perspective of motivation there is a suggestion that modelling and vicarious learning are important motivators of behaviour (Huitt 2004) and it is interesting that all the pupils appeared motivated to work hard. Also, of interest though, was that one pupil mentioned times when he was not able to work hard; when he was ill/not feeling well. It is interesting that this is an internal factor, something beyond his control that prevents him from working hard.

If we consider Social Cognition Theories reciprocal determination is deemed to be an important factor in both learning and motivation (Huitt, 2006). Huitt (2006) proposes that the environment and a person's behaviour and characteristics are influenced by each other and impact on motivation. If however, we return to the work of Bandura (1986, 1997) self-efficacy and self-regulation are considered crucial elements in relation to learning and motivation. Self-efficacy is the belief that a specific action is possible and that the individual can accomplish this action. Self-regulation is the establishment of goals, the development of a plan to achieve these goals, the commitment to put in place the plan, implementation of the plan, and later actions of reflection and modification or re-direction. See also the work of Dweck (1986). Of course there are other theories regarding motivation that may inform consideration of the young peoples' views, derived from a range of philosophical perspectives. Most current perspectives are perhaps those affirmed by Positive Psychology Theorists and emanating from the work of Seligman (2011), there are also interesting variations proposed by Huitt and Dawson (2011) reflecting the importance of social connections.

However, it strikes me that from considering this work on motivation it appears individuals can be highly motivated if we are able to identify what their specific human needs are. Perhaps, this would suggest that we do not need to be overly concerned with identifying one clear, correct theory of motivation, but rather a more useful approach may be as suggested by Huitt (2011) that it appears appropriate to ask people what they want and how their needs could be met, then to observe their reactions when these needs

are provided, instead of relying completely on any specific theory (i.e. the use an action research approach in order to identify what motivates specific individuals or groups; Ferance 2000).

I am inclined to agree with Hullit (2011) a more personalised approach is required. I have advocated this kind of an approach within this thesis of consulting with individuals, in this situation with young people about what helps them with their learning. In essence what was shared was what helps them with their learning, which also transpired to include what motivates them in their learning.

While having settled on this perspective, it is perhaps, important to also consider individuals within the young person's environment such as support assistants, deaf adults, teachers etc. Within this study, as mentioned earlier, support, both personal and technological was important to the young people. In terms of motivation theories, documented work suggests teacher-efficacy may be a powerful factor in relation to pupils' motivation because it affects a teacher's motivation to engage pupils in the teaching and learning process. Proctor (1984). In fact, Huitt (2005) puts forward a variety of specific actions that teachers can adopt to increase motivation on classroom tasks. This not only points to the social nature but also the complexity of the learning process and was eluded to within the Literature Review Chapter in terms of work in the area of assessment for learning. Perhaps, in future work also conducting focus groups with deaf adults and teachers within resource bases may provide additional insights.

Considering the findings of the study further in terms of strategies that may support the leaning of the Deaf pupils whose preferred language is BSL, the focus group discussion appeared to highlight the importance of teaching and learning aspects of English. Specific teaching and learning of English was suggested to support the young people with their leaning. Additional sessions of English and also possibly pre and post teaching of English would be beneficial to the pupils. This approach was utilised within the school; English was taught separately within the Resource Base and pupils had access to

pre and post tutoring, which was a strategy used widely' within the school to support the teaching and learning of the Deaf pupils. However, it may be worth considering whether the number of sessions provided that were focused on English teaching and learning were sufficient. Though, of course any increase in this aspect would need to be considered carefully in terms of retaining a balanced curriculum and not impinging on effective inclusion of the Deaf pupils. The pupils suggested the type of support they welcomed with English was help: amending the word order within their English work; writing the language; clarifying, interpreting and understanding the language; also having support personnel modify the level of the language of information presented. When you consider how embedded English is within mainstream schools, to ensure a truly bilingual approach a significant amount of time and attention is required. Without careful thought and preparation, it is not difficult to imagine how challenging providing opportunities for the necessary amount of support may be; ultimately presenting time or timetabling issues.

It was interesting to note practical subjects were among the preferred and interesting subjects that the Deaf young people suggested supported their learning. However, also of interest was that the pupils suggested interesting new words and vocabulary supported their learning. It could be argued that this too links to the consideration of explicit teaching and learning of specific aspects of English. It is fascinating to note that Marschark (1997) pointed out that even beyond the motivational effects of subjects more interesting than language class, a large proportion of worldly vocabularies comes from learning about history, literature and social studies and so to focus less attention on these subjects than 'practical' and 'concrete subjects' will ensure that children not only will possess smaller vocabularies (Griswold and Cummings, 1974) but that the vocabularies they do have will be relatively concrete and specific (Blackwell, Engen, Fischgrund and Zarcadoolas, 1978.) Perhaps, this need not be the case if more explicit teaching of vocabulary occurred though, obviously as part of a varied curriculum.

Learning within a group was expressed by the young people to support their learning; this has implications for teacher approaches to teaching and

learning both within the mainstream and resource base. However, this was a teaching approach that was already utilised within the resource base and classroom.

As mentioned, importantly and understandably, the pupils expressed that their learning linked to their experience, specifically their experience being Deaf was important – their Deaf Culture and Community was important. If we consider this further, it raises serious and important implications for the curriculum. Studies such as those by Gailliot and Baumeister (2007), Lee and Robin (1998) related to 'Belonging,' show how individuals deprived from the need to belong tend to perform less well than others. These individuals tended to show lower self-esteem and social avoidance behaviours. The findings of studies by Baumeister and Leary (1995) demonstrate that there are common underlying processes involved when an individual is deprived of social inclusion; that individual loses their self-regulation, self-esteem, self-worth and self-concept and these are elements which allow individuals to control and affect their behaviour; therefore resist temptations, suppress socially undesirable responses, comply with rules, pursue enlightened self-interest and make a positive contribution to society. Therefore, it could be argued that the need to belong is vitally important and a lack of opportunities to achieve this sense of belonging could have a detrimental impact on schooling and society, leading to a variety of difficulties within society such as underperformance in pupils, individuals possibly turning to crime and making fewer positive contributions to society.

In fact, if we return to the work of Maslow (1954) we can consider Maslow's belief in belongingness as a need within his hierarchy of human needs. The need for individuals to affiliate with others and be accepted. Ryan and Deci (2000) also identify a need for relatedness in individuals, alongside autonomy and competence, though these needs are not necessarily organised hierarchically. This importance of a sense of belonging brings us back to the work of Goodley (2014) as explored within the literature review chapter of the thesis and his calls for the structures of ableism to be dismantled. Within his current work Goodley (2017) suggests that we need to re-examine what kind

of human is valued and included within society. Goodley argues that the category of human requires expanding. Within such a perspective a strong argument could be made for the inclusion of information on Deaf language and Culture into the so called 'mainstream' curriculum; teaching of BSL (within UK schools), pupils learning about Deaf role models and accessing information regarding influential Deaf individuals. This may be considered a radical approach, but to me it is a 'normal' approach that comes closer to reflecting the diverse society in which we live and would be movement in a positive direction in terms of addressing inequalities and ensuring a healthy society.

It is vitally important for us to remember that pupils leaning can be affected by their emotional wellbeing. The young people within this study were quite clear that not having a leaning link with the Deaf Centre and hence community would make them '...sad'. One pupil mentioned this would result in '...losing confidence.' Although, not ideal, in the sense that the Deaf Centre in the area did close, fortunately for the Deaf young people within this study, there was a possibility for links to be established with a Deaf centre within a neighbouring Authority. However Deaf young people in other areas of the country may not have a similar opportunity when there has been a closure of a Deaf Centre. In fact, for some Deaf young people there may not be a Deaf centre in their local area.

Although, the study involved only a relatively small number of pupils, the results were interesting and as previously argued illuminating. However, returning to the work of Hollway and Jefferson (2000), how can we be certain that these were the genuine views of the young people? As mentioned earlier, many such as Simon (1982), McCormick and James (1988) and Lewis, Kellett, Robinson, Fraser, and Ding (2004) raise issues linked to eliciting the views of children and young people in particular, suggesting eliciting the views of young people can be problematic. However, as Garbarino et al (2001) suggests, careful consideration of the issues that might arise can help to overcome difficulties. When I interviewed the young people I felt that I took the time to consider carefully some of the inherent difficulties involved in eliciting the

young people's views, in an attempt to then access a genuine expression of their views. For example, in terms of issues related to trust between me as the researcher and the young people which may have affected them in expressing their genuine views, it was felt that this issue was minimised because I had known many of the young people taking part in the focus group from my work as an Educational Psychologist previously working within the authority. I felt that I possessed a positive working relationship with the young people prior to the study. Of course, it could be argued that this is just my perspective, although I would sincerely hope not – perhaps, the pupils had a different view. However, maybe because of my signing ability I seemed to be regarded positively by the young people, they appeared to display this through their interest in the study and their behaviour was respectful during meetings and throughout the focus group. In fact, I feel the context of the focus group was one of mutual respect.

In addition to this the inclusion of a profoundly deaf young person as the moderator within the study was deemed to help the young people feel more at ease, surely you would anticipate this leading to an equalising of any power differentials that may be perceived between the adult researcher and the young people scenario. However, it is acknowledged that this could have had the opposite effect on the young people and made them conscious of expressing their views openly towards a same age peer. Though, I would imagine this may be more of an issue if the young people did not like/ respect the young person conducting the focus group but, in this study this did not seem to be the case; the pupil who volunteered to be involved with moderating the focus group was well-liked by peers and staff alike, a popular pupil within the resource base.

Great care was taken prior to the focus group session to ensure factors were put in place that would encourage the young people to express their genuine views; jointly with two of the young people, thought was taken over language-BSL- ensuring the word order, vocabulary and sentence length was accessible to the young people. In fact, I would argue that because eliciting the views of the young people took the form of a focus group the young people may have felt at ease expressing their views. It does need to be acknowledged that this

may not be the case if the young people were not used to working in this way and being part of a group expressing their views. However, the young people when working within the resource base and in the wider mainstream school were used to this way of working. (In fact, in the results there was a suggestion from the pupils that working within a group supported them).

In addition to this however, there was the opportunity for the young people to specifically experience a focus group situation prior to this focus group study. Also, just before the study's focus group the young people were given the opportunity to take part in a game, in an attempt to ease any anxieties leading into the focus group.

Although, I of course acknowledge that sometimes views expressed may not be what are generally believed and may be reproduced as what the young people may think people want to hear, I would argue that by preparing the interview scenarios carefully and considering difficulties beforehand this may be more likely to lead to ascertaining genuine accounts. By genuine accounts I should qualify this by stating genuine accounts of the pupil's views at the time of the study and within the context of the focus group as mentioned within the Methodology Chapter individual's views are not static. Wibeck (2001) warns of the risk of treating data as a:

transparent window through which the analyst can see the reality assumed to lie behind it.

(Frith and Kitzinger, 1998 p 304)

Of course, many aspects of research methods; the interaction between participants or the wording of questions can have an influence on the findings. Also, I do take on board Hollway and Jefferson's argument and can see that as Hollway and Jefferson put it:

...if we wish to do justice to the complexity of our subjects an interpretative approach is unavoidable.

(Hollway and Jefferson, 2000, p 3)

And by using thematic analysis to consider a more dynamic analysis that focuses on exploring themes, but, also attempting to capture interactive elements; perhaps, I have attempted just that. However, I would argue that this

added element of course should be used to add to the picture of the young people's views as consistencies or inconsistencies are revealed. It is vitally important to me, to acknowledge the subjectivity involved in any such interpretation. The young people should be afforded the up most respect, if they have taken the time to express themselves they should be taken seriously as Clark (2011) would suggest. And who else but, the young people themselves should we consider experts on their own lives reflected through their views. If we do not do this we could go on forever interpreting what others say and get caught in what Hollway and Jefferson refer to as the 'hermeneutical cycle.'

I do believe the results of the study reflect the views of the young people at the time of the study and in the context of the study however, due to the world we live in and possibly the limitations of current research methods it is difficult not to question. In fact, it is important to question but, a small part of me feels that we do need to acknowledge that some people are more-straight forward than others in expressing their views, in fact possibly children more so than adults with their level of innocence, appear less likely to deceive or be duplicitous. However, Hollway and Jefferson caution about taking individuals views at 'face value' not only because the individual is not being completely transparent but, because the individual may be unconscious of a particular viewpoint. They argue as mentioned within the Methodology Chapter that tensions often exist between individuals' inner world and external and that this is often overlooked in terms of understanding the relationship between subjectivity and the social world.

While understanding what Hollway and Jefferson (2000) are suggesting when they argue for us in research, to retain the subtly and complexity that we utilise in everyday knowing about people. I would argue that working as an Educational Psychologist -applied Psychologist this subtly and complexity is our 'bread and butter,' what we do in conversations/consultations, we constantly make decisions about the information we gather and other people's reality. However, how we do this does seem to all come back to our experience- social interactions with others, for example, our specific training but, also our personal beliefs. For example, if an individual has a strong belief

system/ moral code or is of religious persuasion perhaps, they may be more likely to take people's views at face value unless presented with information to suggest otherwise. Therefore, it does become about more than what interpretations we make but, how we go about making those interpretations- the process and then describing, articulating and acknowledging this to others.

Although, triangulation of viewpoints was not attempted to determine the genuineness of the pupils' views by interviewing staff from the resource base or conducting a focus group with staff, the staff within the resource base were used to receiving the expressed views of the Profoundly Deaf pupils and did not seem unduly surprised by any of the views expressed. Perhaps, if additional time was available to me and maybe for future work- canvassing of the parents' views would also have been beneficial. However, it could be argued that parents and pupils may have very different perspectives regarding what helps their child's/their learning or even what they believe their child's/their view is of what affects their learning. I would return to my position that our views are subjective, a result of our background and experiences, interaction with our world and so surely we must be cautious in suggesting the young people were not expressing their genuine views.

However, Richardson and Adams St. Pierre (2008) -talk about crystallisation being a more appropriate concept than triangulation. The need for triangulation seems to imply there may be one neat, clear cut view to be discovered. The idea with crystallisation is to instead uncover the complexities of lived experiences, therefore providing a process of viewing the world that is multi-dimensional. This multi-dimensional perspective will be mentioned again later, but for now attention will be turned to discussing criteria for determining trustworthiness in qualitative research, specifically in relation to this study.

Discussion related to the consideration of criteria for determining trustworthiness in qualitative research in relation to this study.

Within the Methodology Chapter of this thesis the relevance of qualitative methodology was discussed and it does appear that the tide seems to be changing within Educational Psychology in regards to the emergence of the use of more qualitative approaches in research. As Williams and Billington (2017) suggest:

'The growth of qualitative research in psychology has been significant, if not exponential, during the last thirty to forty years.

(Williams and Billington 2017, p 1.)

Williams and Billington point to: the rise in the number of text books covering qualitative approaches such as Parker (2015) also, Willig and Stainton-Rogers (2008); the emergence of new journals for example, *Qualitative Research in Psychology* and two initiatives within the British Psychological Society and the American Psychological Association's Society. Also consider the analysis by Carroll (2016) which appears to indicate a rise in the number of EPs utilising qualitative research approaches. Carroll (2016) referred to recent papers authored and co-authored by UK EP's in practitioner journals such as *Educational and Child Psychology*, *Educational Psychology in Practice*, also the *British Journal of Educational Psychology* and he found that less than 30 % of papers report quantitative data.

However, despite this growth it appears individuals moving away from studies based on quantitative data are open to criticism as highlighted by Robson (1993). They are likely to experience criticism that her or his work: 'is unreliable, and invalid.....' (Robson, 1993 p 402). Both Hollway (2007b) and Yardley (2011) suggest the prevalence of the quantitative approach in Psychology since the 20th Century has meant that whether research is deemed valid has often quite wrongly been based on the standards set down for quantitative research. However, as was explored earlier within this chapter of the study, the difficulty with this is, the two approaches are based on completely different theoretical frameworks. Both approaches have different views on how people should be studied and how knowledge is produced and

so their underlying ontological and epistemological assumptions differ. Also, perhaps, misunderstandings still exist regarding the range of research paradigms that can underpin a scientific discipline, Kuhn (1970) provides interesting reading.

Yardley (2011) stresses the importance of not attempting to judge qualitative research according to the principles of quantitative research because this will not only inevitably lead to qualitative research being seen as lesser value if it fails to meet these criteria, but is likely to overlook the importance of characteristics which are of specific importance in a qualitative approach. For example, while neutrality is deemed important within research, within qualitative research it is important to acknowledge the impact a researcher's background may have on the study. Within this study I acknowledged within the Introduction and Methodology Chapters of this thesis the impact my background may have had on the study's findings and earlier within this Discussion chapter I acknowledged what impact a young person adopting a moderating role may have had on the study's findings. It is this reflexive analysis that often gives rise to valuable insights.

As mentioned within the Methodology Chapter of this study, within more experimental research and surveys where quantitative data is generated, attention is focused on the concepts of 'internal validity', 'external validity/generalisations', 'reliability' and 'objectivity'. However, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that these traditional criteria are inappropriate when data is derived from qualitative case studies. Lincoln and Guba (1985) put forward alternative concepts they feel are more appropriate. Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed four criteria for determining trustworthiness in qualitative research: credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability. Specific strategies for ensuring rigour using this framework are required. Next, in turn, each of the four criteria for determining trustworthiness in qualitative research will be considered along with strategies utilised to address the criteria in relation to this study. This should then display clearly, the strategies that were utilised to ensure rigour within this study.

Discussion related to 'Credibility.'

As mentioned within the Methodology Chapter Credibility as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985) relates to the value and believability of the findings. It involves two processes one being – carrying out the research in a believable way and then being able to demonstrate credibility. From a positivist perspective credibility is the parallel construct to 'internal validity', attempts should be made to ensure that the study was carried out in such a way that the individuals who took part in the study were accurately identified. There are a number of techniques that can enhance credibility. Although Triangulation is one such technique already mentioned above, it will be explored in more detail below.

Discussion related to 'Triangulation.'

Triangulation involves using several methods to study one phenomenon. The two main reasons for triangulation are to confirm data and to ensure data is complete. Confirmation is the process of comparing data gathered from different sources to explore the extent to which the findings can be verified. If data gathered via different methods are found to be consistent this can lead to increased confidence regarding the credibility of the findings. Within this study triangulation of this kind was not employed because the focus was deemed very much to be on the views of the young people. However, on reflection and had time allowed, conducting a focus group with parents may have enhanced the credibility of the study.

Although, triangulation in the form of confirmation was not pursued within this study, it could possibly be argued that triangulation in terms of completeness of the data was sought. Completeness of data involves mainly gathering different perspectives, given from different sources to enable as complete a picture as possible of the phenomena being studied. As regards case study research a crucial strength of the design is the opportunity to use different sources of evidence through triangulation.

It could be argued that within this study, by using the focus group approach and analysing the data using a thematic analysis, then going beyond this

attempting a further analysis of the interactive aspects of the study as Wibeck (2001) this provided the study with a form of triangulation, a different perspective of looking at the data. It was illuminating to be able to tap into the interactive elements of the focus group displayed through non-verbal communication and the use of non-manual features of BSL. Eye contact was used effectively to hold attention and indicate when someone wanted to offer their views. It was interesting to observe how when the questions presented were of particular interest to the young people their body language was more open and there were instances of overlapping signing, similar to the instances of overlapping speech in Wibeck (2001) study. For example, during the question 'The Deaf Centre in X is closing, how do you feel about this?' the young peoples' body language was open and there were instances of overlapping signing in response to this question. This appeared indicative of the young people's intense interest in the question and expressing their views. There appeared a similar intense interest in the questions, 'Are you doing your best work in school?' and 'What helps you to learn?' Again, the young people demonstrated overlapping signing during these questions being asked. The young people's use of non-manual features of BSL on occasions, appeared to display findings coherent with what the young people were expressing through their sign language, specifically when discussing the closure of the Deaf Centre, there were instances of protrusion of tongues accompanying signing and this non-verbal feature of BSL is often regarded to signify unpleasantness. So the response was entirely consistent with their expressed views that this situation, as described using the expression of one young person, would make the young people 'sad!' 'No community, no friends, we will be sad.' This could be deemed to demonstrate internal coherency of a composite analysis. Yardley and Bishop (2007).

It is also interesting to consider as noted by Wibeck (2001) in her study, that there were pauses in communication (pauses in signing in this study) which could have been related to questions potentially being deemed sensitive. There were pauses during the question about the closure of the Deaf Centre and 'What support helps you?' as mentioned previously, this may have been deemed a sensitive question due to the presence in the room of resource base

staff. A pause in signing was also apparent during discussion about the Deaf Centre closure, after one pupil posed a question, 'What will happen?'

Discussion related to 'Debriefing'

Debriefing is another technique that can enhance credibility, sharing any initial conclusions. As detailed within the Analysis of Data and Results chapter of this study, initial conclusions were shared with both a colleague EP working within my team and the staff working within the resource base at the school. If greater time and circumstances had been available two other techniques to attempt to ensure credibility would have been prolonged involvement and member checks. Prolonged involvement involves: 'Investment of sufficient time to learn the "culture", test for misinformation, build trust...' (Robson 1993, p404) However, as mentioned previously, I would argue that I was fully aware of the "culture" of the Resource Base in my capacity as Educational psychologist; I had worked with the staff in the resource base over a period of 14 years. I had known many of the young people within the study since they were very young – preschool age because I was also the Educational Psychologist who worked with the feeder primary schools linked to the school where the study occurred. Being conversant with the culture of the resource base acted to reduce subjectivity and interpretation based solely on my perspective.

This mentioned, credibility could have been enhanced further by the use of 'member checks.' Member checks involves checking with those from whom the data is gathered. There was a definite intention to do this, however, the timescale of the study and then circumstances did not allow this to happen. In this respect, I do feel a victim of 'real world research'. By the time I had analysed the data, the young people who took part in the focus group had left the school. It would have been my preference to have completed member checks-checking to see if the young people believed the findings from their different perspective. (In fact, it was hoped that the young person who was involved with moderating the focus group may have wanted to be involved with the analysis). However, it should be noted that member checks are not always straight forward. Robson (1993) warns of the dangers of members having an

interest in presenting misleading or biased feedback, especially if the study is perceived to possibly have some influence or a change in their situation and there were elements of potential change that concerned this study.

Discussion related to 'Transferability.'

As mentioned earlier within the Methodology Chapter, Transferability relates to whether or not particular findings can be transferred to another similar context or situation, while still maintaining the meanings and influences of the original study. Transferability is the parallel construct to external validity/generalisability in traditional quantitative research. In quantitative research when a sampling methodology is used, statistical generalisation to a population can occur and forms a crucial part of statistical inference. As Robson (1993) points out when a sampling methodology is not used it is not really appropriate to make the same sort of statistical generalisation to a population. Kennedy (1976) referred to this as the 'first decision span in generalisation.' However, Kennedy (1976) distinguishes a 'second decision span' and this is more appropriate when qualitative data is being considered. A second decision span involves applying the findings from one case to a second case that is assumed to be suitably similar to the first case to authorise that generalisation. As can be seen the decision about transferability then moves to the individual interested in making such generalisation to make the decision. Therefore, it is the role of the individual carrying out and reporting on the first case to provide the information required to enable the individual interested in making such generalisation to do so. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that this can be done by providing 'thick descriptions.' In short, this is a description that specifies all a reader may need to know to understand the findings. For example, detailed accounts of the context of the research, research methods and examples of raw data, to allow readers to consider the interpretations made. Also, to decide whether a study possesses transferability, the original context of the research must be adequately described, to enable judgements to be made, then it is left to the reader to decide whether or not the findings are transferable to another context. Therefore unlike the aim of statistical generalisation within quantitative research the emphasis is on theoretical generalisations; providing insights that may be helpful in similar contexts.

Throughout the study a thorough description of what the reader may need to know in order to understand the findings has been provided, so that while no claims are made on my part about generalisability of the study, a reader of the study should be in a position as suggested by Lincoln and Guba to make any decisions about generalisability her/himself. The required thorough descriptions provided include accounts of the context of the study (the resource base and wider school, where the study was based) within the Introduction Chapter. Also, the thorough descriptions include details about the research methods used (focus group, participatory action research, case study within the methodology and method chapters) and examples of raw data (translated quotes from the participants provided in the Analysis of Data and Results chapter of the study).

Discussion related to ‘Dependability and Confirmability.’

As mentioned within the Methodology Chapter, dependability is the parallel concept/construct of reliability in quantitative research and relates to how stable the data is. Confirmability refers to the neutrality and accuracy of the data. These two criteria are linked because the processes for establishing both are almost the same. In respect of both of these criteria rigour can be achieved by ensuring decisions made throughout the research process are outlined, this provides a rationale for the judgements of the researcher both methodological and interpretative. Although a reader may not have the same interpretation as a researcher, she/he should be able to perceive and understand the ways by which the interpretation was made. Having an audit trail can help the reader in this appreciation of the researcher’s interpretation. This is deemed an essential aspect in a rigorous study. Thereby making judgements about the trustworthiness of a study would be enabled, when the process by which the end product has been achieved can be examined and faithful descriptions can be presented that are recognisable to the readers. This has been done in this study by keeping what Yardley (2016) refers to as a ‘paper trail,’ though elements of these trails in recent times are likely to be electronically based, so perhaps use of the term ‘audit trail’ may be more

appropriate. The trail should then allow anyone wanting to audit the analysis to follow all the stages of the analysis based on the coded transcripts. Within this study information is provided regarding the coded transcript (Please refer to Tables 1 and 2 within the Appendices detailing the codes and categories arising from the focus group and the sub-themes of the theme motivation respectively). Also helpful, is the Research Table within the Method chapter. In addition, my providing a comprehensive record of the contextual background of the data and the inspiration and rationale for all my methodological decisions (Glaser and Strauss 1967), specifically drawing on the work of Braun and Clark (2006) in the Methodology, Method, Analysis of Data and Results chapters of the study, also providing a comprehensive 'trail' of the decisions I have made from data collection to analysis is helpful. Ensuring reflexivity was also achieved by keeping a reflective research diary and notes along the research journey. Keeping research diaries is often typical practice in qualitative research, particularly reflexive research (Etherington 2004). I have provided a position statement within the Introduction chapter of the thesis, this account highlights how my background and personal interests lead me to carry out the research and also displays how my theoretical perspectives may have influenced the data collection and research. My research diary provided the rationale for decisions made and also documented thoughts, ideas and challenges that were encountered during the research which would be helpful during the write-up.

As mentioned within the Methodology Chapter, other criteria that have been developed to enhance and assess validity in qualitative research includes those proposed by Yardley (2000, 2011). Core principles for evaluating the validity of qualitative research include: Sensitivity to context (prolonged engagement in data, reflexivity, and balance of power); Commitment and rigour; Coherence and transparency; Impact and importance (practical importance and theoretical utility). Many of these criteria reflect those put forward by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as discussed above, so to avoid repetition will not be discussed in turn, in relation to the study; only those aspects that have not already been considered will be explored.

Discussion related to ‘Sensitivity to context.’

Yardley (2015) suggests that at the analysis stage sensitivity to the position and socio-cultural context of participants is important; consideration of the reasons why – participants did or did not express specific views, this was explored earlier in this chapter in relation to difficulties interviewing children. Sensitivity to the data also involves considering the balance of power, a key consideration in this study, as discussed in the methodology chapter.

Yardley (2015) also suggests crucially:

‘Most importantly, the analysis must show sensitivity to the data. This involves demonstrating that the analysis did not simply impose the researcher’s categories or meanings on the data, but was open to alternative interpretations and recognised complexities and inconsistencies in the participants talk.’ Yardley 2015, p266.

Within this study, I would argue that I was extremely sensitive to the data and did consider the possibility of different categories or meanings of the data/ alternative interpretations hence another Educational psychologist coding the data as described within the analysis of data and Results chapter. When considering sensitivity to context Yardley (2011) includes in issues linked to balance of power as mentioned above and this was a key consideration in this study, as discussed throughout.

Discussion related to ‘Commitment and rigour.’

Rigour has been previously explored and will be mentioned again shortly below. Commitment pertains to the requirement of researcher to be able to demonstrate substantial personal commitment in order to achieve rigour. Throughout the time frame of carrying out this study I have read many text books and papers concerning methodologies; considering Grounded Theory and IPA specifically. I have also considered different theoretical perspectives and endeavoured to engage thoughtfully with the young people involved with this study and the resulting data to provide useful insights into what supports the learning of Profoundly Deaf young people.

Discussion related to ‘Impact and importance.’

Impact and Importance relates to the difference the findings are able to make. The findings within this study could potentially make a difference by reminding professionals of the importance of actively encouraging pupils whom as individuals within society are marginalised, to express their views and increase their participation in research. Hopefully, professionals will be inspired to be pro-active in developing appropriate methods that are personalised to meet the needs of all individuals. I would also suggest that the findings of this study has the potential to offer implication’s for classroom pedagogy in relation to Deaf education; in providing an insight into pupils views; what supports the learning of a selected-group of Deaf pupils. The study may make interesting reading for resource providers/ policymakers. I sincerely hope the findings of the study will be of interest to the Deaf Community. The findings also highlight theoretical insights regarding the nature and complexity, yet positives of a Bilingual approach. Deaf young people’s views should feature more within research regarding learning. If this research is instrumental in increasing interest in Deaf studies in the first instance and ultimately, over time in connection with further studies in this area, leads to a relocation of Deaf Studies to take its rightful place in so called ‘mainstream’ studies therein would lie the impact and importance of the findings of this study.

Discussion related to ‘Bias.’

Measures can be taken to ensure validity is not affected by bias. Mention is made earlier within this chapter about what measures were taken to ensure validity was not affected by bias. For example, bias in the questions; when the questions were written an attempt was made to use open questions that would not lead the respondent in any way.

Mention has also been made regarding interviewer bias, in this case pertaining to the moderators. Both the young person and me, before the focus group, discussed carefully the importance of attempting to remain neutral throughout the focus group, so not expressing our views or commenting in any way on the responses of the participants. Neither did we utilise non-verbal cues such as nodding in response to participants responses.

It has to be acknowledged as a focus group is a form of interview, interviews by their very nature are likely to involve bias due to the context of the interview, the interaction of individuals taking part in studies and definitions of the situation. It is important to acknowledge that as with any research, bias and subjectivity will occur. Henwood and Pidgeon (1995) p118 suggest: '.....multiple forms of subjectivity are involved in research'. (Henwood and Pidgeon, 1995 p118) so really the best a researcher can do is to attempt to alleviate these. As can be seen in this study, I took a number of measures to do just that.

Discussion related to rigour and the consideration of different qualitative perspectives.

However, it should be noted that assessing the rigour of qualitative research can be further complicated because different perspectives that use qualitative methods are also based on different and occasionally conflicting underlying assumptions. For example, a Psycho-social perspective as described by Hollway and Jefferson (2000) understands the individual to be a complex psyche interacting with the social world, as a result analysis involves interpretations of unconscious dilemmas. However, from a more discursive psychological viewpoint the individual is socially constructed through dialogue in interaction, therefore analysis focuses exclusively on the dialogue and it would so be deemed inappropriate to attempt to discover hidden meanings.

Such differences as just described, result in different research questions, number of participants and methods of analysis being appropriate for different perspectives. Yardley (2011) therefore argues that it is important for qualitative studies to demonstrate cohesiveness by asking questions, using methods and making interpretations that are appropriate to the theoretical approach being adopted, while also being clear about the process of research so that it is possible for it to be evaluated. In this study, I have taken a Critical Realist stance and wanted to access the views of the Profoundly Deaf young people as discussed within the Methodology chapter. However, while adopting a Critical Realist perspective, I also outlined how I possess other sympathies most noticeably a Feminist perspective (which to me is a perspective not solely

focused on studies related to issues women may face, but also focused on studies regarding marginalised groups, and studies where there is a strong emphasis on power differentials, where at the very least attempts are made to alleviate such inequalities). Perhaps, the Critical Realist and Feminist perspectives when added together truly encapsulate my perspective. In terms of analysing the data my theoretical position as discussed earlier within the Methodology Chapter was a key element in my decision to utilise a thematic analysis, such an analysis not being tied to any one theoretical stance. As I was also interested in the interactive elements of the focus group from a Social Constructivist approach, attention was then focused on non-verbal interactions utilising a more Conversational Analysis type approach. I would defend such choices from a post-modernist perspective; returning to the words of Burden (1998) and his 'illuminative evaluation,' that rejects the idea of one single reality. Ultimately, as Burden I would argue perceptions are construed and multi-faceted.

A Critique of the methods used within the study:

Focus group method

The use of focus groups can have its difficulties as has been mentioned, so what follows is a more detailed critique of the use of focus groups to access the views of the Profoundly Deaf young people.

Being a form of group interview a crucial difficulty of young people expressing their genuine views may have been the influence of peers. The pupils were year 10 pupils, so adolescents. Of course, peer pressure can be a concern for any group but, particularly a group of adolescents. At certain points during the focus group it could be argued that the more outgoing members of the focus group were expressing their views, however, the young person acting as the moderator was good at encouraging quieter members of the group to express their views, noting who was not contributing and then gently signing 'Think what ? (BSL gloss/written text conveyed in BSL sign order), while directing attention to a quieter member of the group. 'What do you think?' is the English word order of what was signed. The moderator guarded well, against only certain young people expressing their views.

Although, during this focus group there were times when it felt like a group interview with the young people just responding to a series of open-ended questions, there were glimmers of the group becoming more interactive in their responses; one person mentioning a specific matter/view and another young person elaborating or expanding on that viewpoint. I had hoped that more of this interactivity would have been displayed; however, maybe there was not much of this because the young people's views were very similar as a result of being part of a homogeneous group in terms of their hearing difficulties, school experiences and backgrounds.

In fact, I also hoped there would be more interactive elements because the pupil moderator (facilitator), I would argue, possessed, as Gibbs (1997) suggests is important – good interpersonal skills and personal qualities, being a good listener (*I would change 'listener' to 'observer'- listening in a visual way which would be typical for the young person*). He was also non-judgmental and adaptable, and this should have encouraged the participants trust in the moderator and increased the chance of open interactive dialogue. Perhaps, the less interactive nature of the interview may have been because although the young people trusted the pupil moderator (facilitator) and thought highly of him, it made for an untypical situation being interviewed by a peer. Although, the pupils experienced a familiarisation to the focus group approach, the moderator during the familiarisation was an adult; perhaps, the pupil moderator carrying out the familiarisation focus group may have had a significantly different effect, perhaps resulting in more interactive elements.

Perhaps, the composition of the participants in the focus groups was a factor in terms of fewer aspects of the interactive elements of the focus group being evident. As mentioned earlier, the pupils were identified with the support of the Teacher of the Deaf from within the same setting, all pupils were Profoundly Deaf with BSL as their preferred language and all had hearing parents. Gibbs (1997) argues that if a group is too heterogeneous the difference between participants can have a considerable impact on their contributions. However, perhaps, it could be argued that if a group is too homogeneous maybe, they

feel inhibited because information or a view has been given that they agree with/ were going to express and so to add to this may seem unnecessary. However, this would maybe reflect a misunderstanding of the focus group process.

It should be noted that although there seemed less examples of interaction in terms of the content of what was signed, there did seem to be more interaction in behavioural terms displayed through the pupil's body language and the use of non-manual features of sign language. In terms of accessing unconscious aspects of an individual's being, this may have some significance.

The possibility of bias occurring in the expressing of views always needs to be considered. However, I was conscious of this prior to the focus group, as was the young person who took on the role of a moderator (facilitator). The young person and me during 3 sessions of discussing focus groups had discussed the importance while running the focus group of adhering to asking open questions (the questions were negotiated prior to the focus group occurring), not providing any personal opinions or displaying approval or otherwise for particular responses. As a result, it was hoped that leading, bias would not occur during the focus group interview. In fact, in general the young person moderating was effective in not leading the young people in their responses. He would tend to sign 'more' if trying to access further views, or he would repeat the question and on occasion also, pointed to a particular young person to request their view.

Also, while I would acknowledge that as a researcher with theoretical knowledge around an issue, I may have possessed a possible viewpoint about what affects the young people's learning and perhaps, through particular signed comments or even non-verbal cues I may not have been conscious of, bias could have crept in and resulted in leading the respondents. Herein lays the benefit of having two moderators. A positive of the moderator (facilitator) being a pupil it could be argued prevented leading/bias occurring because the pupil may not yet, have any specific theoretical knowledge around the area being discussed, so was less likely to lead the respondents in any particular direction.

However, just as an extra guard against bias having one moderator facilitate and the other taking notes, the moderator taking notes could also focus on the process and observe any inadvertent non-verbal cues of the moderator (facilitator). Although, it could be argued that the demands of observing signed conversations and taking notes leaves little time to concentrate on the focus group process; it is a demanding activity! In fact, this helped the moderator, though aware; to fully appreciate the demands placed on the Profoundly Deaf pupils during lessons when they have to attend to signed input and learning stimuli within their environment. However, the session was video-taped, so there was less pressure on the moderator in terms of worrying about missing any comments while focusing also on the process.

Perhaps, another criticism that could be levelled at the focus group is that it only yielded a small amount of information; however, in defense I would argue that only a small number of pupils were involved. Perhaps, what could have been considered is running a series of focus groups with the same group and different questions to gather more information or with groups of young people from another area- of similar background to the pupils within the focus group. Then information across focus groups could have been considered. However, the time to pursue this approach may have been difficult.

It should be acknowledged that careful consideration went into the design of the study prior to embarking on the work and running the focus group as mentioned within the method chapter of the study. The following criteria detailed below and as mentioned within the Methodology Chapter of this study were applied prior to deciding to utilise a focus group approach to enable the expression of the views of the young people involved in the study.

Criteria:

- The research aims involve a critique of some process which the children concerned have knowledge of, where discussion among the children might significantly extend their understanding of the process to the benefit of the research.

- All children forming the group can be encouraged to actually participate in the discussion.
- Clear links can be made between the sample of children participating and the population from which they come.
- Adequate time is available for preparation, data collection, analysis and interpretation of the data.
- The ethical criteria for the research can be met.

It could be argued that as each criterion was met, the criteria served as delimitations.

An unpublished paper I wrote in 2006 as briefly mentioned within the methodology chapter of the study, provided a critique of focus group methodology when applied to research and development work based on collecting children's views; it concluded that in general terms, focus groups can provide an appropriate methodology to collect children's views if the above criteria are met. It was then suggested that individual researchers can expand and exemplify the criteria, in terms relevant to their own research through the construction of their own list of criteria. A later unpublished paper I wrote in 2009 went on to do this.

Something I was conscious of from the start was to try to ensure that if a focus group methodology was employed within my Doctoral Thesis that I would avoid the scenario that Grudens-Schuck (2003) describes where:

Too often people do focus groups without adequate preparation, training or thought and consequently the results can be flawed. They then blame focus groups but, it is really because it hasn't been done well,

(Grudens-Schuck, 2003 p 2)

I embarked on my thesis by exploring the criteria mentioned earlier and concluded that focus group methodology could be utilised to access the views of Profoundly Deaf pupils within the study. However, I was able to identify some of the possible issues that were highlighted through previous work

with using this approach, so ensuring these issues could be prevented and addressed if possible, but at the very least acknowledged. Below is a summary of some of the collective issues that were identified as mentioned earlier within the Methodology Chapter, these issues are re-visited and discussed as required:

- **Consideration was given to the term pupil voice**

This is explored within the Literature Research Chapter of this thesis but, suffice to say the term 'pupil views' was adopted to prevent exclusion of those who choose not to or are unable to use 'voice.'

- **Specific modifications were made to ensure the Profoundly Deaf pupils could participate utilising their preferred language of BSL**

The modifications employed were described in the method chapter of this thesis.

- **A young person volunteered to participate as a moderator to facilitate the focus group process.**

This helped to avoid issues regarding the researcher leading respondents and to ensure validity/rigour was maintained by decreasing the effects of the researcher. It appeared to make the Profoundly Deaf individuals taking part in the study feel more comfortable and ensured their understanding was enhanced. A Deaf BSL moderator was deemed to be preferential to a hearing individual with BSL knowledge, experience and skills but, whose first language is English. As one of the Deaf young people volunteered to be involved in moderating the focus group, this also led to increased ownership of the research by the young people and in a positive way addressed specific issues linked to power and agency (O'Conner 1995).

- **Conversations around focus groups served to address training needs linked to young people moderating the focus group**

I met on three occasions with two young people possibly interested in moderating the focus group to discuss focus groups and the young people produced a booklet regarding focus groups to share, if they wished, with their peers and others in their community.

- **Careful consideration regarding planning, setting time aside for preparation, data collection, analysis and interpretation of the data was ensured.**

In terms of planning time, as I work as a full time Senior Practitioner, Educational Psychologist, time issues were not completely eradicated, however, there was some time available and utilised from work time. This was possible because as part of my work role, at a particular point during the research I was a member of a Research and Development Team where some of the work time was allocated to DAHIT (Deaf and Hearing Impaired Team) issues and the achievement of deaf children in general.

- **Ethical criteria were carefully considered by the researcher.**

Within the area of research involving Deaf individuals many ethical issues apply. I completed an ethical review as part of my submission to the University of Sheffield prior to conducting my study. In addition, I was mindful of those issues highlighted by the University of Bristol Deaf Studies Teaching Department (2005): the use of sign language; the use of Interpreters; confidentiality; the use of video; dissemination; effects on Deaf communities and individuals; minority groups and Deaf people in other countries and suspending confidentiality. Also as mentioned previously, within the Methodology Chapter I also considered and adhered to the requirements of professional bodies such as the Health Professionals Council (HCPC) and the British Psychological Society (BPS).

- **sample issues were considered.**

Within the study the sample size needed to be relatively small. A focus group usually comprises of six to ten individuals and due to the specific nature of this focus group, in that it was to be conducted utilising a visual modality and the practical adaptations that this would require, it was decided to focus on the views of six individuals, then becoming five as one young person volunteered to be involved with moderating the focus group.

Access to the sample of young people was facilitated via my current and previous links with professionals working within two local authorities. The authorities were neighbouring authorities which eased travel issues and allowed efficient use of time.

- **Use of sign language**

Practical Issues – regarding the use of sign language were explored as described in the method section of the report and ethical issues as mentioned below:

- **Integrity of data**

Careful consideration was given to who collected the data because if the person conducting this – a Communication Support Worker or researcher, only had beginner levels of sign language proficiency, then it would be unlikely that the information received would be of a quality to be representative of viewpoints considered valid within the Deaf community. Therefore for the study – I, as the researcher and a Teacher of the Deaf, Deaf adult and Communication Support Worker were all present during the focus group. The interview was taped on DVD and notes were taken by me, as the Researcher and a Communication Support Worker. Later the notes were cross referenced, before being transcribed and shared with the Teacher of the Deaf and Deaf adult.

- **Related to the position of the Deaf participants**

When introduced to a researcher (deaf or hearing) Deaf participants may make a judgement about the cultural compatibility and language proficiency of the researcher which could affect whether the researcher is seen as negative or positive and how much Deaf individuals may disclose. However, many of the young people knew me for some years from my work within the previous authority as an EP responsible for working with pupils with hearing difficulties. I had been involved with some of the families since the children were very young. In fact, I had written advice for statements for some of the children when they were as young as 3 years old. I felt I had a good rapport with the young people and staff alike, within the resource base of the school. Also, the inclusion of a Deaf young person (the other young people knew well) as a moderator was deemed likely to have a positive impact here too.

- **Ethical issues surrounding confidentiality**

Informed consent in research is important and was gained (please refer to method section). Also, information in the results section was anonymised.

- **Ethical issues regarding the use of video**

A video recording of the focus group exists- this aided the method and results part of the research for example, with transcribing information that was missed, analysing of the data etc. It was explained to the young people that this would be the predominant use for the recording. It was made clear that the video recording would not be made public or widely available and that the EP would have possession of it while she wrote up her study.

- **Ethical issues regarding dissemination**

The young people were made aware that a copy of the completed study would be sent to the Resource Base within the young people's school,

in written format. This would allow options for it to be disseminated to the wider community in an accessible format, Deaf adults, Teachers of the Deaf being part of the school community.

As mentioned previously, Hollway and Todres (2003) highlight some fascinatingly different approaches to disseminating research. For example, they look to 'Performative Social Science' and mention the innovative ways in which Kip Jones (2005) disseminates his research. Although, it would be exciting to consider attempts to disseminate research via less conventional methods, as a relative novice to undertaking qualitative research, this is perhaps something to consider for the future. In terms utilised by Hollway and Todres (2003) I still consider myself to be learning the craft.

- **Ethical issues regarding the effect on Deaf communities and individuals.**

A number of considerations can occur here but, I wanted to focus on that of acting as an agent of change. In essence, this is about not setting up unrealistic expectations at the start of the study, being mindful of issues of control/ power differentials and making the extent of personnel commitment on the part of the researcher explicit. I made it clear to the young people that I wanted to access their views about what helps them with their learning and then this may then in turn help the staff within the resource base to reflect on their views. As mentioned within the Methodology Chapter, Race et al (1994) describes how focus groups can become a forum for change. This links into the section on participatory action research of this study.

- **Individuals from other cultural groups.**

Consideration was given to those who use additional languages to allow access but, all pupils in this group preferred language was BSL- please refer to the method chapter and section regarding the sample issues and homogeneity of the group. However, I was mindful of any cultural

issues regarding implicit rules involving interacting with others, this was important, in fact, right at the start of this study the young people identified their own rules in terms of interaction during the focus group – please refer to method chapter for further details.

As I explored the aspects mentioned above, as reported, resultant suggestions became apparent as means of how to avoid difficulties conducting the research.

A Critique of the Focus group extended to the practical arrangements.

The practical arrangements of the focus group could have led to difficulties, but, because I ensured the focus group interview was organised, equipment and the space required was available; so meticulous planning of the focus group occurred, this meant there were few if any issues in this area. Prior consideration of issues was crucial in aiding planning as explained in the Method Chapter.

While I do not feel that there were any obvious issues either surrounding the choice of location to run the focus group, (one of the rooms within the resource base was chosen) it has to be acknowledged that perhaps, the choice of location to run the focus group did inhibited the young people in expressing their views. The location was one of the teaching rooms within the resource base. Powell and Single (1996) suggest that neutral locations can be helpful in ensuring neutrality; preventing either negative or positive associations with a particular site. However, it was a conscious decision to hold the focus group in one of the teaching rooms of the resource base in the school because it was felt that the young people may be more relaxed in a place they knew and felt safe also, the room fulfilled the acoustic requirements. The rooms within the resource base are sound proofed, this is important because of the interference via the pupil's hearing aids from background noise, that could have distracted the pupils' during the focus group.

Participatory action research element of the study

As concerns the participatory action research aspect of the study as Lewin (1946) suggested 'action research' implies learning about organisations and attempting to modify them. However, its use is also about utilising a democratic approach within research.

The plan once this study is completed is to share the study with the staff and young people in the resource base within the school where the study was conducted. However, some of the staff within the resource base were actively involved in the study, so were aware of the young people's responses. As mentioned previously Robson (2002) among others, argues practitioners are more likely to make better decisions and engage in more effective practices if they are actively involved in the research.

Staff within the resource base appear to be reflexive practitioners; I have worked with the school previously in the capacity as school EP. It is perhaps fair to say, as mentioned earlier, that staff were not surprised by the pupils' responses and part of this may be because the pupils are being educated within a bilingual environment, which has been established over a long period of time. (The city council where the school is located historically possessed personnel that were strong advocates of bilingual education and well placed politically to exert influence). I feel certain that the staff will consider the pupils' responses, even though there was no action plan set out in terms of considering the responses. By its very nature Action Research requires this flexibility. However, this does open the method up to criticism because the researcher loses some power of decision making but, this is perhaps appropriate as hopefully, the research will then have wider ownership, so that hopefully, the staff and young people could be deemed co-researchers rather than 'subjects' in the research process and then as Titterton and Smart (2008) suggested they may collectively engage in discussions and construct knowledge to further improve the learning experiences within the resource base. However, it would possibly be helpful for the study's reach to extend throughout the whole school, if staff not directly involved with the study are able to reflect on some of the findings too and consider possible aspects of school improvement.

Of course, there are many ways that this could occur, I could have arranged to meet with staff within the wider school to share the study's findings or if feasible even considered a presentation to the wider staff with the involvement of the young people, though it may be considered that this goes against the spirit of Action Research and maybe I need to let go of the study and allow school staff and the pupils to move things forward.

Case study approach

As this study employed a case study approach with the involvement in the study of a small sample, it has been made clear that no attempts are being made to generalise the findings of this study to any other individual within other settings or within the same setting at a different period in time. The whole premise of the study was to gain a better understanding of what supports the learning of a very specific group of young people from their perspective.

To ensure rigour, attention has been focused throughout this study within the separate Chapters: on issues of design; data collection; analysis; interpreting and reporting. One of the crucial features of a case study is focus on the research study site; the context of the study. The site within this study was the research base within the school in which the study took place, therefore information is provided within the Introduction Chapter regarding the resource base. However, it was noted earlier within the section – 'Critique of focus group method,' that perhaps the findings of the study may have been affected had the research been conducted in a different setting perhaps, a more neutral environment. Though, it could be argued, that as regards this case study approach, it is important that the study was located within the resource base (the case study site- as referred to by Miles and Huberman (1994) who mention that case studies always occur in a particular social or physical setting) because this is the social environment for the young people; they may be more relaxed in this setting, and so likely to express their views more openly and the impact of social interactions upon the young people's views may be more evident.

While the possibility of generalising to other situations may not be possible with this study and was not the intention, consideration could be given in the future to carrying out other similar case studies that could potentially be used cumulatively to provide generalisations as suggested is possible by Mitchell (1983). I would also argue that in being explicit in articulating to the reader of this study what I have done in terms of how the study was designed, what the results were and how the results were analysed, this may allow other interested researchers to conduct similar studies and over time these studies could be utilised to explore generalisations.

However, returning to this study, the intention was to engage with a piece of research that would be illuminating and insightful. As mentioned previously within the position statement at the beginning of this study, it would be extremely pleasing to me if this case study was deemed by others to be illuminating, insightful, accessible and engaging and perhaps one day led as Wellington (2000) suggested can occur, to subsequent research that could be disseminated widely, be vivid and of value in teaching.

Critique of the thematic analysis

In terms of the thematic analysis I was keen to go beyond the specific content of the data and articulate meaning to the reader. A common difficulty when carrying out a thematic analysis is that if there is little analysis of the data-the results can end up being a grouping together of what was expressed by the participants of the study without analysis or worse the use of the data collection questions from the interview schedule whether that be individual or group, being reported as the 'themes' from the onset of analysing the data. Through becoming familiar with the work of Braun and Clarke (2006) and Wibeck (2001) I was aware of these difficulties and so attempted to avoid them.

Another difficulty can be producing an unconvincing analysis where perhaps, the themes overlap or are not clear and consistent; then aspects of the themes do not come together around a pivotal concept. Perhaps, because this study's focus group involved a small sample the analysing was relatively straight-

forward. It was not difficult to capture the entirety of the data. However, it could be argued that the small size of the sample could lead to an unconvincing analysis; obviously there were fewer examples to draw from the data, which could make extrapolating themes problematic. Bryman (1988) talks about the difficulty of 'anecdotalism' in qualitative research; when only one, or a few instances of a phenomenon are rectified into a theme, when it or they are really idiosyncratic. However, having another colleague look at the data to identify themes and comparing these with the themes I identified, then deciding upon the final themes I would argue has resulted in a rigorous process in the identification of themes.

Braun and Clarke (2006) mention a pitfall that requires 'considerable thought' is to ensure that claims can be supported by the data. They argue:

It is important to pick compelling examples to demonstrate the themes, so give this considerable thought.

(Braun and Clarke, 2006 p 95)

When considering the effectiveness of a thematic analysis it is important to ensure that there is a match between theory and analytic claims; that interpretation of the data is consistent with the theoretical framework. However, the flexibility of thematic analysis, in that it does not appear to be tied to any particular theoretical position appealed to me. That thematic analysis is essentially – independent of theory and epistemology and can be applied across a variety of theoretical and epistemological approaches was viewed as an advantage by me. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest though thematic analysis is sometimes positioned as being a realist/experiential method (Roulston 2001) it is really compatible with both essentialist and constructionist paradigms within psychology.

By following prescribed guidelines for analysing the data as detailed by Braun and Clark (2006) I feel that I may be able to counter criticisms from those unfamiliar with qualitative research, those who perhaps feel methods of analysis in qualitative research are not applied rigorously enough to the data. However, there are proponents of qualitative research (Elliot et al 1999,

Reicher 2000, Parker 2004) who feel that such an approach to following guidelines can reduce freedom and possibly result in stifling methodological development. However, I am inclined to believe that because thematic analysis is such a flexible method that allows for a range of analytic options, there is a need for clarity regarding what you are doing. As Wibeck (2001) has pointed out and was mentioned within the Methodology Chapter of this study, the reader of a study utilising a focus group approach is often:

'... informed of how the study was designed and what the results were, but very little is said about the actual procedure of analysis,'

(Wibeck, 2001 p 7)

As Attride-Stirling (2001) also highlighted including in the 'how' in the process of qualitative research conducted by psychologists is important because without this it can be difficult for others to evaluate the research and this could then affect other researchers being able to carry out similar studies in the future.

It is also important however, that what you suggest you are doing in terms of analysis actually accords with what you actually do. As I went beyond the thematic analysis to consider other aspects it has been possible to explore some other elements through the young people's non-verbal language and non-manual features of BSL and perhaps then, also retain some flexibility.

Critique of Communicative Strategies

Analogies and Distinctions

When communicative strategies were explored it transpired that the young people did not tend to use analogies or distinctions during the focus group. This may have been because the topic of conversation-learning was relatively concrete or rather was interpreted as concrete and very much linked to the young people's current lived experiences. Had the topic been interpreted in a more abstract way perhaps analogies and distinctions may have been utilised by the young people in their expression of their views.

Quotes or Reported Speech

The young people did not tend to use quotes or reported speech, which is not surprising as the intention of the research was to allow the young people the expression of their views not the views of others. Therefore, the need for an analysis in this study focusing on quotes or reported speech became redundant.

Body Language and Non-Manual signs

Within the study a number of communicative strategies were being used for example, eye contact. The use of eye contact displayed throughout the focus group was very effective and highlighted the interactive nature of the focus group. Pupils were using eye contact to attract and hold attention, indicate when they wanted to offer their views. In terms of body language, aspects of the young people's body language suggested different things throughout the focus group. As the focus group progressed the young people seemed to display more open posture but, for certain questions there were noticeable examples of closed posture as detailed in the Results and Analysis of Data Chapter. Also, non-manual features of BSL seemed to be being used. (Please refer to the Results and Analysis of Data Chapter). Some analysis of the data in these areas was provided, but under the caveat that for any detailed analysis it would be better to have the comments of a Deaf individual. For me this is important ethically because any interpretation by a hearing individual albeit a hearing individual with knowledge of BSL could never match the knowledge and experience of a Deaf individual. Had it been possible I would have liked to include the Profoundly Deaf young person who moderated the focus group to take part in the analysis. It seems likely that a Deaf individual would attribute more meaningful explanations for the use of non-verbal behaviour and use of non-manual signs than a hearing person may and identify subtle aspects of communication involving facial features.

It should also be noted that while it was useful to have a framework based on the work of Wibeck (2001) to consider further analysis of the focus group in relation to the interactive elements and communicative strategies, as argued in the Literature Review Chapter, communicative strategies utilised in a focus

group conducted using a visual mode may vary to the communicative strategies utilised within a focus group conducted via spoken language. Perhaps, an important consideration within the study that highlights this is the use of smiles and or laughter. I was initially proposing that smiling may be an equivalent indicator to analysing laughter within the focus group because some of the young people may chose not to produce audible laughter. Wibeck (2001) in her work suggested that laughter similar to pauses may signify a tiredness of the topic or that participants are ashamed for some reason on a rhetorical level. However, it became clear on analysing the results that smiling could not be used as an equivalent indicator as laughing because it appeared that often smiling was simply used by the pupils to indicate pleasure with what was being discussed. For example, when question 2 was posed- 'What type of lessons do you like best?' This was interpreted by the pupil as 'What is your favourite subject?' and the responses were in some instances accompanied with smiles. Also, because it appeared certain pupil's temperament/personality was such that they just smiled a lot.

Accessibility of the study to the Deaf Community

As mentioned a copy of the completed study in written format will be sent to the Resource Base where the focus group took part. However, I hope the study proves accessible to the general public and would specifically want that accessibility to include members of the Deaf community. Consideration of the production of a signed summary of the study I do feel would not be beyond the realm of the Resource Base staff and pupils, though of course, if staff wanted to consult with me further regarding this possibility and my involvement I would be pleased to be involved.

Chapter 7: Implications of the study and conclusion

As mentioned within the discussion chapter, the analysis within this study revealed some interesting and insightful perspectives surrounding what helps this particular group of pupils with their learning. The study also highlighted the validity of engaging young people in research to explore the views of a marginalised group and their ability to create an expression of their views, experience and culture.

Implications related to the use of a focus group approach.

As the focus group approach was modified and carried out in such a way to ensure that the young people could discuss using their preferred language (BSL), it proved helpful in enabling these young people to express their views. It is my view, that a focus group approach built into a system within schools of engaging young people and ensuring their participation in learning could be utilised to support young people with their learning and potentially lead to important gains both academically and socially.

The use of a focus group approach within the study utilising the young people's preferred language BSL was helpful and raises a number of positive implications for the pupils, EP's and teachers/school staff, if such a system as briefly described above is considered or further studies utilising focus groups were to be carried out in the future.

Implications for the pupils

The young people:

- could have a comfortable space where they can express their views.
- would be able to work collaboratively with researchers to consider appropriate teaching methods/ strategies to support their needs.
- may be empowered, as they are viewed as the experts they truly are about their own lives.

Implications for EP's

EP's would be able to:

- access the knowledge, ideas, stories and perspectives of pupils, also, pupils' linguistic and social interactions within a specific cultural context.
- present a broader view of social reality.
- encourage learning approaches that may more effectively meet the needs of young people who are identified as Profoundly Deaf.
- support teachers evaluating and modifying educational approaches.

Implications for teachers

Teachers would have:

- time to access the views of the young people that they work with, in an efficient manner.
- the opportunity across the school setting to create learning approaches and environments in collaboration with pupils that may more effectively meet the needs of young people who are identified as Profoundly Deaf.
- the opportunity if deemed helpful to work collaboratively with EP's evaluating and modifying educational approaches.

Implications related to the specific results of the study

The thematic analysis performed on the data, highlighted three main factors that the pupils suggested influenced their learning: motivation, additional support and the importance of community.

The three main factors that the pupils suggested influenced their learning revealed further sub-themes that could indicate aspects to focus on that may further help the young people with their learning. For example, the theme 'Motivation' was further refined to include the themes preferred subjects, interesting subjects and new words/vocabulary. Therefore, ensuring that the curriculum incorporates interesting subjects and that those subjects are personalised to take account of pupil preferences could further help the young people with their learning. The theme 'additional support' was further refined to include support from human resources, support from technological aids, peer support and further to this the identification of specific types of support:

Interpreter, Deaf Instructors, Teacher of the Deaf (human resources), Intervener screen for the computer (technological aids), and DAHIT pupils working in a group (peer support). These sub-themes again indicate aspects that could be focused on to further support the young people with their learning, ensuring access to Interpreters, Deaf instructors, Teachers of the Deaf, intervener screens for computers and other deaf pupils.

Although, the young people were not explicitly asked about English Language, interestingly, it was found to be a theme. Within this study the young people appeared to be clear in the type of additional support they valued that helped them with this language that is not their preferred language. The young people mentioned that they valued support personnel modifying the level of the language and help: interpreting the language; writing the language; amending word order and clarifying/understanding the language.

Ensuring there is support with the techniques of English appeared to be a factor that supported the young people with their learning within the context of a bilingual setting. This kind of support requires specialised and bilingual skills and so could present implications for the resource base within the future.

As can be appreciated, the results outlined raise a number of implications for the Resource Base and wider school staff. Perhaps, the greatest implications may be financial- resource related. The young people were clear that certain types of support help them with their learning both human resources and technological. However, there are other important implications too related to peer support, the deaf community and curriculum issues.

Implications linked to Human resources

Currently, working within the Resource Base are Teachers of the Deaf, Deaf adults and Communication Support Workers; therefore there is access to specialist support for the young people. This support appears crucial for the young people in terms of having access to staff who understand their needs and can support them in such a way to improve their learning. In line with the constructivist approach to learning as advocated by the likes of Piaget (1936)

and Brunner (1961) in a learner-centred approach the teacher becomes a cognitive guide of the learners learning. Within this study the young people were very clear about the specific help that supports them with aspects of their learning; significantly for them support with their understanding of English. In the future without concerted efforts, access to specialist support may not be available. As mentioned in the Literature Review Chapter, CRIDE's most recent report (2014) indicates that the number of qualified Teachers of the Deaf is falling. This is concerning enough on its own, but perhaps more so when it is considered that the number of deaf children in England identified by local authorities rose in 2014 up 7 % from 2013 as pointed out by NDCS. Also, to add to the worrying picture over half of all Teachers of the Deaf are due to retire in the next 10-15 years. Therefore, the issue does not only involve current numbers of Teacher of the Deaf within the teaching profession but, there also becomes training issues to secure a continuing supply of Teachers of the Deaf for the future.

Implications linked to Technological resources

As well as human resources technological resources can be expensive. An intervener screen for the computer was mentioned as a technological aid that would support the young people in their learning. I am not sure how budgets are allocated within the school for equipment, whether there is a separate pot of money that goes direct to the resource base. If there is not, negotiations and bargaining for the resources required could create political tensions within the school community and perhaps, even within the Resource Base itself. From a Critical Disabilities stance, an unimaginable situation could occur where the young people have to be categorised into groups of pupils who are deemed eligible to access this type of support and those who are not, if we take on board the warnings of Kumari-Campbell (2009) when she compels us to imagine unimaginable situations where certain pupils can access particular resources and not others due to the consequences of a move away from the notion of permanent disability. Where for example, governments may be reluctant to invest in long term services for any individual other than those deemed to have an unalterable disability. The resultant political and civil rights implications of such situations appear unacceptable.

Implications linked to Peer support

Access to peer support appeared key to supporting the young people with their learning. Such a view of course could be considered in line with the theories of Bandura (1977) and Vygotsky (1978) that stress the importance of social learning.

Within the resource base and schools in general there appears more of a move away from a didactic type of teaching to a more modern approach, typically involving group work. Currently within the authority where the focus group took place there are a number of Deaf children educated within the same school, so issues regarding access to a Deaf peer group does not arise but, in future with the increase in Inclusion and perhaps, more Profoundly Deaf children educated within their local mainstream school, this may become an issue. It is perhaps fair to say that it is already an issue for the authority in which I currently work – being a county spread over such a vast area with relatively small numbers of Deaf young people spread across the county, the existence of a Deaf peer group for these young people is difficult to ensure and presents organisational difficulties. Some creative thinking will be required to overcome this issue.

Implications linked to the Deaf Community

Perhaps, a creative idea would be the opportunity for young Deaf people as a group to have learning opportunities within a learning community. This fits with the views the young people expressed regarding the importance of community. Belonging of course, being another social concept within Psychology extending back to the work of Maslow in the 1950's.

Lave and Wenger in (1991) proposed Situational Learning Theory. They argue there is no learning which is not situated, emphasising the relational and negotiated aspects of knowledge and learning, also the engaged nature of learning activity for individuals involved. According to this theory it is within communities that learning happens most effectively. Interactions taking place within a community of practice for example, cooperation, problem solving, trust

building, understanding etc. This provides the opportunity to foster social capital and enhance the community members' wellbeing. There are those such as Sergiovanni (1994) and Eaker, Dufour and Dufour (2002) who discuss learning communities arguing that academic and social outcomes will only improve when classrooms/schools become learning communities and teaching becomes learner-centred. This could be viewed to link well with socio-constructivist views of learning that explore metaphors for learning as being participation and social negotiation.

The dilemma here though, appears to be that more and more opportunities for Deaf people to meet within their wider local areas are being eroded. The young people were keen to discuss the closure of the Deaf Centre and the impact this would have on them; losing their confidence, feeling sad, lacking stimulation etc. This raises further concerns not just possible implications for education but, implications for the long term well-being of the young people. Perhaps, a start would be developing links across authorities' provision to meet this social and educational need. If sustained attention is not placed on this issue in a time when Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) teams are under increasing pressure and with few specialised CAMHS community care centres within the country involved with focused work with Deaf individuals (there are currently only 4 such teams within the UK) then the future does not look promising in terms of addressing any resultant wellbeing needs of these young people. Social Policy Research Unit Research (2009) has recognised access to generic CAMHS in the UK is poor.

Implications linked to curriculum issues

The young people clearly seem to feel that being motivated in their learning helps them. This would again tie in with the work of Maslow in the 1950's but, also there are interesting areas linked to Attribution Theory that may be significant.

Having access to interesting subjects, words, vocabulary, preferred subjects and so, a personalised curriculum helps them with their learning. Also, specific help with their non-preferred/ additional language – English was also deemed

to be something that supports the young people. Again, this could place increasing financial pressures on the resource base and/ or school. Over time, this could lead to less schools being willing to incorporate bases resourced to meet the needs of young Deaf pupils within their schools.

Conclusion

Although the focus group method is limited in respect of the ability to generalise findings to a larger group as a result of the small number of pupils involved and the possibility that those involved will not be a representative sample, when considering this discrete group of Profoundly Deaf pupils it proved illuminating.

Considering the future, as it can be seen there are many implications arising from the study related to continued access to specialised support. It raises training issues, issues linked to access to: specialised equipment; wider Deaf peers; the wider Deaf community and to personalised curriculums. However, there appear possibilities for the use of focus groups as an approach built into a system to support pupils with specific needs learning, and so it seems that it may be worthwhile for such an approach to be considered within educational settings.

Although, I am not making any claims that the findings of this study could be generalised to any other young Profoundly Deaf pupils, it may be helpful for other studies both within the UK and globally to explore some of the positive aspects of learning for Profoundly Deaf young people. I would argue that focus group methodology should be used more in schools as a method of enquiry into issues concerning both pupils and parents with Educational Psychologists but, also teachers and pupils acting as moderators. It would be positive if this then lead to EP's and Educationalist's looking beyond their disciplines for other methods or research which could prove useful within the context of the school, family and community. Such educational studies may then be able to provide information to policy makers or those in key positions of power to consider, so that in the future preferred learning situations are created to ensure that the best outcomes for all young people can be achieved.

Key however, are the young people as Lewin (1999) states:

...educational reform cannot succeed and should not proceed without much more direct involvement of students in all its' aspects.

(Lewin 1999, p 2)

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Appendix A: Parent Consent Form

Your ref: Res. EP

Our ref: SLM 1

Tel: [REDACTED]

Please call: Sharon Lourd-Moyo

e-mail:
[REDACTED]

13/12/2010

[REDACTED] MA, FRSA

Corporate Director – Children and
Young People's Service

[REDACTED]
Assistant Director – Access &
Inclusion

County Hall, Northallerton,
North Yorkshire, DL7 8AE

Switchboard: [REDACTED]

Fax: [REDACTED]

www.northyorks.gov.uk

Information sheet and consent form

You are being invited to take part in a project. This research is part of my Doctorate at the University of Sheffield. Before you decide if you want to take part you need to know why I am doing the project and what it involves. You will be given the chance after learning about the project to find out more from your teachers and me. My name is Sharon Lourd-Moyo. I am an Educational Psychologist currently working for North Yorkshire County Council. An Educational Psychologist is a little bit like a teacher but, we mainly work in the area of Special Educational Needs and visit a number of different schools and settings. As part of our work we sometimes carry out projects.

I would like to carry out a project about learning in your school and access Profoundly Deaf pupil's views about learning. To find out about your views I would like to have a discussion with a group of Profoundly Deaf pupils using something called a focus group, which is a bit like a group interview. If you decide to take part in the group discussion, as part of the group you will be asked some questions about learning. The discussion will last about an hour. I will record your views (write them down, maybe video tape the focus group session) and eventually write up this work as part of my project. I hope this project will give you the opportunity to let others know your views and so help other people working with Profoundly Deaf children or young people.

Please note: if the focus group is recorded, any video recordings of the focus group are just to help me not to miss any information. I will not use the recording for anything else without asking your permission and other people not involved in the project will not be allowed to see the tape. All the information gathered will be kept confidentially and your identity (details about you, like your name) will not be made known to others. Also, if you change your mind about taking part in the project, you will not have to be involved in the discussion. If you change your mind about taking part in the project during the discussion, you will be free to leave the room where the discussion is being held.

This project has been ethically approved by the University of Sheffield ethics review procedure.

If you or your parents would like more information about the project please contact me on the details above. You are also welcome to discuss the project with my supervisor at the University of Sheffield: Professor Tom Billington, The University of Sheffield, 338 Glossop Road, Sheffield S10 2JA Tel: 0114 222 8113.

You will be given a copy of this information sheet and consent form to keep.

If you have decided to take part in this project Thank you.

Pupil's name:

Please delete as appropriate:

I do/do not consent to participating in this project:

..... (Pupil's Signature)

I do/do not consent to the above pupil participating in this project..... (Parent Signature)

I give/do not give permission for my child's participation to be video recorded.

I would like to discuss this aspect of the project further (please tick box)

Project Leader: Sharon Lourd-Moyo

Signature:

Date:

Appendix B:

Guidance booklet on running a focus group- devised by pupils.

Setting up a focus group

[Picture]

What is a focus group?

A type of qualitative research that can help us to understand peoples' experiences.

A focus group can help us get different people's views about the same topic.

It is a group of six to 10 people.

The group often has/have something in common. In our focus group the pupils are all Deaf.

The group should be representative of the population. For example, not all black or white children, male, female etc.

The group discuss a topic.

The links between people in the group as they discuss is important.

What do you need to set up a focus group?

Permission for young people to take part

A good size room with good acoustics

Chairs arranged in semi-circle facing the video recorder.

Tapes for the video recorder

Batteries or a lead for the video recorder

Flip chart

Large sheets of paper for ground rules

A4 sheets of paper

Flip chart pens

Tips for the moderator (person running the focus group)

[Picture or Sign]

Things to do

Get a good night sleep before the focus group session

Have questions with you.

Let people in the group know that the discussion is confidential.

Agree on ground rules

Start off with a game so people get used to the video recorder in the room. Gently encourage all people in the group to take part (sign their views)

Things not to do

[Picture or Sign]

Have questions written down but try not to look at them all the time.

Nod or shake your head when people are signing.

Give comments to agree with people for example, signing fantastic or good after a person signs.

Ask personal questions

Give your personal views

Discuss what someone signs outside of the focus group.

Appendix C: Focus group questions for the young people (English Word Order for recording purposes though delivered in BSL)

- Are you doing your best work in school?
- What type of lessons do you like best?
- What helps you to learn?
- How do you like to work?
- Who helps you most with your work? And what do they do to help you?
- What support helps you?
- What makes lessons interesting?
- What makes you feel involved in your learning?
- What makes learning difficult?
- What things could help you to do better in school?
- The X Deaf Centre is closing; how do you feel about this?

Table 1: Educational attainment of Deaf children in England.

Source: NDCS 2015 reproduced in Wilson, M and Hoong Sin, C (2016) Research into the Deaf audience in the UK. A review of evidence. Final report to the British Sign Language Broadcasting Trust December 2015.

School level	Year	Deaf children	Children with no identified SEN	All children
Key stage 4: Proportion of children achieving expected GCSEs benchmark – 5 GCSEs (including English and Maths) at grades A* to C	2014	40%	69.3%	60.3%
	2013	42.7%	70.4%	60.6%
	2012	37.4%	69.3%	58.8%
	2011	39.7%	69.5%	58.2%
	2010	36%	66.5%	55.1%
	2009	29.4%	61.3%	50.7%
	2008	28.3%	57.8%	48.2%
	2007	27.2%	54.3%	45.8%
Key stage 2: Proportion of children achieving expected level at reading, writing and mathematics	2014	54%	90%	79%
	2013	49%	88%	75%
	2012	44%	88%	74%
	2011	36%	81%	67%
Key stage 1: Proportion of children reaching expected level at Key Stage 1 for reading	2014	66%	97%	90%
	2013	66%	96%	89%
	2012	65%	95%	87%
	2011	57%	95%	85%
	2010	62%	94%	85%
	2009	61%	94%	84%
Key stage 1: Proportion of children reaching expected level at Key Stage 1 for writing	2014	60%	94%	86%
	2013	60%	94%	85%
	2012	58%	93%	83%
	2011	51%	92%	81%
	2010	55%	92%	81%
	2009	53%	92%	81%

Table 2: Codes and Categories arising from the Focus Group.

Code	Reference (line numbers)
Physical wellbeing	4,5
Motivation	15,16,19,23,24,31,32,33,35,36,37,38,
Additional support	17,18,21, 28,29,39,42,51,55,56,57
Teaching styles	33,40,48,52,53,54
Learning styles	21,22,37,39,42,43
Practical subjects	33,35,36
Understanding	23,24,41,52,53,54
Confidence	60,61
Lack of stimulation	62
Community support	63,64,66,67,68,69,70
Emotional wellbeing	64,65

Table 3: The sub-themes of the theme motivation.

Theme of Motivation:	Reference (line numbers)
Preferred subjects	15,19,32
Interesting subjects	33,35,36,37,38
Interesting new words/vocab	16,23,24,31

Figure 1: Position of camera in relation to the young people and moderators.

