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**Typically-developing students' views and
experiences of Inclusive Education
(Support for Learning)**

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Doctorate in Clinical Psychology
The University of Edinburgh
May 2013

DClinPsychol. Declaration of own work

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CONTENT AND FORMAT

This portfolio consists of four chapters: a Systematic Review, two journal articles, and an extended Methods section. The first three chapters explore different aspects of how typically-developing students view Inclusive Education; the fourth provides supplementary information about the empirical study on which the two journal articles are based. This study was written up as two separate journal articles because of the volume of findings produced, and because results naturally lent themselves to being divided in this manner.

Chapters 1, 2 and 3 (Systematic Review and journal articles) adhere to author guidelines issued by the journal, *Disability and Rehabilitation* (see Appendix 11). Chapter 4 follows referencing guidelines issued by the University of Edinburgh's Doctorate in Clinical Psychology handbook.

Throughout the portfolio, students who received Support for Learning (SfL) or who had special educational needs (SEN) were referred to as "SfL students/peers" or "SEN students/peers". This stylistic decision was made due to space restrictions. The author acknowledges that under different circumstances where space was not at a premium, it would have been preferable to avoid defining students by their additional support needs. Where space allowed it, the more conventional, normalising phrase "students/peers with SEN or SfL needs" was therefore used.

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WORD COUNT

Systematic Review:	6286
Journal Article (1):	5887
Journal Article (2):	6476
Extended Method:	7013
Total portfolio:	25662

ABSTRACT

Background: Inclusive Education ('Support for Learning' in the UK) is now a mandatory educational policy across the European Union. And yet, we understand remarkably little about its psychosocial impact on students. Scant research has been conducted in this area, particularly with respect to typically-developing students. Findings from existing studies are difficult to extrapolate from, due to methodological flaws and/or contradictory results.

Method: A Systematic Review was carried out of international qualitative research in this area, to summarise and critique findings. An empirical study was also conducted with typically-developing Scottish adolescents, to explore their views of Support for Learning using a robust qualitative methodology.

Results: Findings from the Systematic Review showed that existing qualitative studies are mostly of poor to medium methodological quality; that typically-developing students tend not to understand Inclusive Education; and that the majority regard it with fearful wariness. The empirical study mirrored these themes, and provided new insights into how students perceive the benefits and dangers of Inclusive Education, as well as barriers to understanding it.

Conclusion: Schools urgently need to inform students about the principles and practices of Inclusive Education, and professionals working with adolescents should be mindful of its perceived psychosocial dangers, in order to challenge prejudicial attitudes.

CHAPTER 1

Systematic Review

Typically-developing students' views of inclusive education: a systematic review of the qualitative evidence

Abstract

Purpose The present review aimed to summarize and critique existing qualitative studies that have examined typically-developing students' views of inclusive education (i.e. the policy of teaching students with special educational needs in mainstream settings).

Methods Guidelines from the Centre for Reviews and Dissemination were followed, outlining the criteria by which journal articles were identified and critically appraised. Narrative Synthesis was used to summarise findings across studies.

Results Fourteen studies met the review's inclusion criteria and were subjected to quality assessment. Analysis revealed that studies were of variable quality: 3 were of 'good' methodological quality, 7 of 'medium' quality, and 4 of 'poor' quality. With respect to findings, three overarching themes emerged: students expressed mostly negative attitudes towards peers with disabilities; were confused by the principles and practices of inclusive education; and made a number of recommendations for improving its future provision.

Conclusions A vital determinant of the success of inclusive education is the extent to which it is embraced by typically-developing students. Of concern, this review highlights that students tend not to understand inclusive education, and that this can breed hostility towards it. More qualitative research of high methodological quality is needed in this area.

Introduction

Inclusive education is a contentious topic, provoking heated ideological debate. At its core, it is based on the principle that students with disabilities or special educational needs (SEN) should be taught alongside their typically-developing (TD) peers in mainstream settings [1,2]. Although it has now become a global trend [3] and is enshrined in the legislation of all EU member states [4], there is, as yet, no consensus about what inclusive education is or how it should be implemented in schools [5-7]. Many competing definitions exist, based on rights [8,9], values [10,11], or the need for structural reform in schools [12,13]. Debates shuttle back-and-forth between those that advocate full-time inclusion [14] versus those more in favour of partial or 'cautious' inclusion [15]. And there

has been a recent trend to move beyond the “theoretical straightjacket” of SEN [16], with schools being urged to protect any student at risk of marginalisation by using inclusive strategies [12,17,18]. In response to the latter, critics argue that this puts students with SEN at risk of being overlooked in regular classrooms [19,20], and fails to recognise that resources are often allocated on the basis of SEN categorisation [13].

In summary, inclusive education is a central, non-optional aspect of our education system, but is beset with debates that are not easily resolved. Indeed, some argue that it is beyond consensual definition [5,7] and that a more fruitful approach is to figure out how to make it work by eliciting the views of key stakeholders [6,21,22]. This presents researchers with a daunting task, given the lack of an operational definition for inclusive education; variability in its provision between schools; and changes in the meaning of terms over time. Notwithstanding these challenges, several authors caution that inclusive education will simply not work unless it has support ‘on the ground’ [6,17,23] and that to achieve this, research must be conducted with all stakeholders.

To date, research into inclusive education has been dominated by adult participants, such as teachers [24], parents [25], and local education authorities [26]. However, children are the ones most directly impacted by inclusive education [27], and several legislative frameworks dictate that their views and experiences of it must be sought [28-31]. Moreover, Greig and Taylor [32] caution against making assumptions about children’s views, because they can perceive and understand the world in ways radically different to adults.

With respect to the impact of inclusive education on SEN students, studies have shown they are targets of bullying more often than their TD classmates [33,34], and are consistently ranked as less popular on sociometric scales [35,36]. Yet inclusive education, per se, does not increase the likelihood of peer rejection: children with SEN in special schools report frequent bullying in the community [37], often to a greater extent than their counterparts in inclusive schools [38,39]. It would seem, then, that attending an inclusive school may serve as a protective factor against bullying [34]. However, if SEN students are not assimilated into peer groups, inclusion may instead maintain or even exacerbate bullying [7,17]. This is concerning, since children with SEN are reported to have poorer social skills than their TD peers [40-42]: a known risk factor for peer rejection in childhood [43].

Scant research has been conducted into the long-term effects of peer bullying on SEN children, yet it is possible to surmise outcomes from the literature with TD children. Studies show that victims of

peer bullying have higher rates of depression [44] and anxiety [45], lower self-esteem [46], and are more likely to have suicidal thoughts [47]. Longitudinal studies have also shown that childhood peer rejection is associated with ongoing mental health problems in adulthood [48,49]. Interestingly, the presence of a close friend in adolescence acts as a buffer against future psychopathology [50]. From a clinical perspective, it is therefore vital to try to understand the factors involved in TD students' rejection of SEN peers, and to actively promote befriending. An obvious approach is asking TD children for their views.

Research with TD children has shown that negative attitudes towards SEN peers are evident at four years of age [51]. Quantitative studies have investigated the cognitive processes behind such attitudes, using standardised rating scales [52], adapted questionnaires [53], and proxy measures of classroom behaviour [54]. In the main, findings have been counterintuitive or difficult to pick apart. For instance, Gannon [55] used a questionnaire to assess the attitudes of 118 TD primary school children towards classmates with Down syndrome (DS). Contrary to expectation, TD children's negative attitudes did not change following prolonged contact with DS peers, or following exposure to educational material about DS.

However, two findings appear to be robust in the quantitative literature. Firstly, with increasing age, TD children's attitudes towards SEN peers become more 'tolerant' [56], possibly due to a growing awareness of the causes, chronicity and controllability of disabilities [57]. Secondly, programmes that encourage joint-working can improve peer acceptance ratings [58], but only if TD students are first prepared using educational material about disabilities [59], such as Frederickson and colleagues' [7], 'Pathways to Inclusion'. Unfortunately, the active elements in such programmes are not well understood [3,6], and TD students have not been consulted to shed light on what works and why.

With respect to the psychosocial impact of inclusive education on TD students, there is little consensus in the literature. The majority of studies have used quantitative methodologies [e.g. 55,60,61], and can therefore only speculate about what accounts for their mixed findings [6,17]. Arguably, a more fruitful approach is using *qualitative* methods to explore TD students' lived experiences of inclusive education: a paradigm routinely used to give voice to SEN students [62]. This approach could also reveal insights into the processes behind TD students' acceptance/rejection of SEN peers. To the author's knowledge, a synthesis of research in this area has not yet been conducted.

Systematic reviews (SRs) play a central role in public health and education, helping to guide practice and shape policies. The value of conducting qualitative SRs has increasingly been acknowledged [63],

but there is little consensus about guidelines or frameworks for producing them [64]. As a result, qualitative SRs often use blended methodological techniques [65]. The present SR adhered to guidelines set by the Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (CRD) for conducting SRs in health care [66, 67]. Its aim was to synthesise findings from qualitative studies that have previously elicited the views of TD students about inclusive education.

Method

Consistent with CRD guidelines for conducting qualitative SRs [66], the following steps were undertaken: identify suitable papers, critically appraise papers, and synthesise findings.

1. Identify papers

1.1. Search strategies

Three search strategies were used to identify candidate papers, including entry of key words into six electronic databases; hand-searching of journals that had previously published qualitative studies about inclusive education; and a 'snowballing' technique, whereby reference lists from key articles were inspected for additional studies (*see table 1 below*).

1.2. Inclusion criteria

Studies of qualitative or mixed design were only included if they met the following criteria:

- (a) Studies are published in English in a peer-reviewed journal, and report primary data.
- (b) Studies examine the views and/or experiences of inclusive education, from the perspective of students aged 5-18 years.
- (c) Participants include at least a sub-group of 'typically-developing' students (i.e. not having SENs or the international equivalent).
- (d) Participants include at least a sub-group of students who are attending an 'inclusive' school (i.e. where peers with SENs are taught in mainstream classes for a proportion of the syllabus), and/or students must have some degree of contact with SEN peers.

Table 1 Search strategies for identifying studies

Databases (Jan 1985 - Dec 2012):

- EMBASE
- PsycINFO
- PubMed
- British Education Index
- ERIC
- The Knowledge Network

Search terms: ["Mainstreaming" AND/OR "inclusive education"] AND ["Special educational needs" OR "special needs" OR "special education" OR "learning disabilities" OR "learning disorder" OR "intellectual disabilities" OR "intellectual impairment" OR "mental retardation" OR "developmental disabilities"] AND ["Student views" OR "student attitudes" OR "student perspectives"] AND ["psychological" OR "social" OR "student experiences" OR "school environment"]. The limits applied were 'English language' AND 'human' AND ['age 2-17' OR 'education level (0-17)'].

Journals (Jan 1994*- Dec 2012):

- CHILD: Care, Health and Development
- International Journal of Inclusive Education
- Support for Learning
- Special and Remedial Education
- Social Development

* Release date of the United Nation's Salamanca Statement [10], calling on the international community to endorse inclusive schooling, or 'Education for All', by adopting it as a matter of law or policy.

1.3. Screening process

In total, 269 studies were identified using the above search strategies. After removing duplicates, 87 studies remained, and these were screened for eligibility based on titles and/or abstracts. 32 studies appeared to meet inclusion criteria, therefore full texts were accessed and further scrutinised. Following this process, a total of 14 studies remained (see figure 1 below), which were then subjected to quality appraisal.

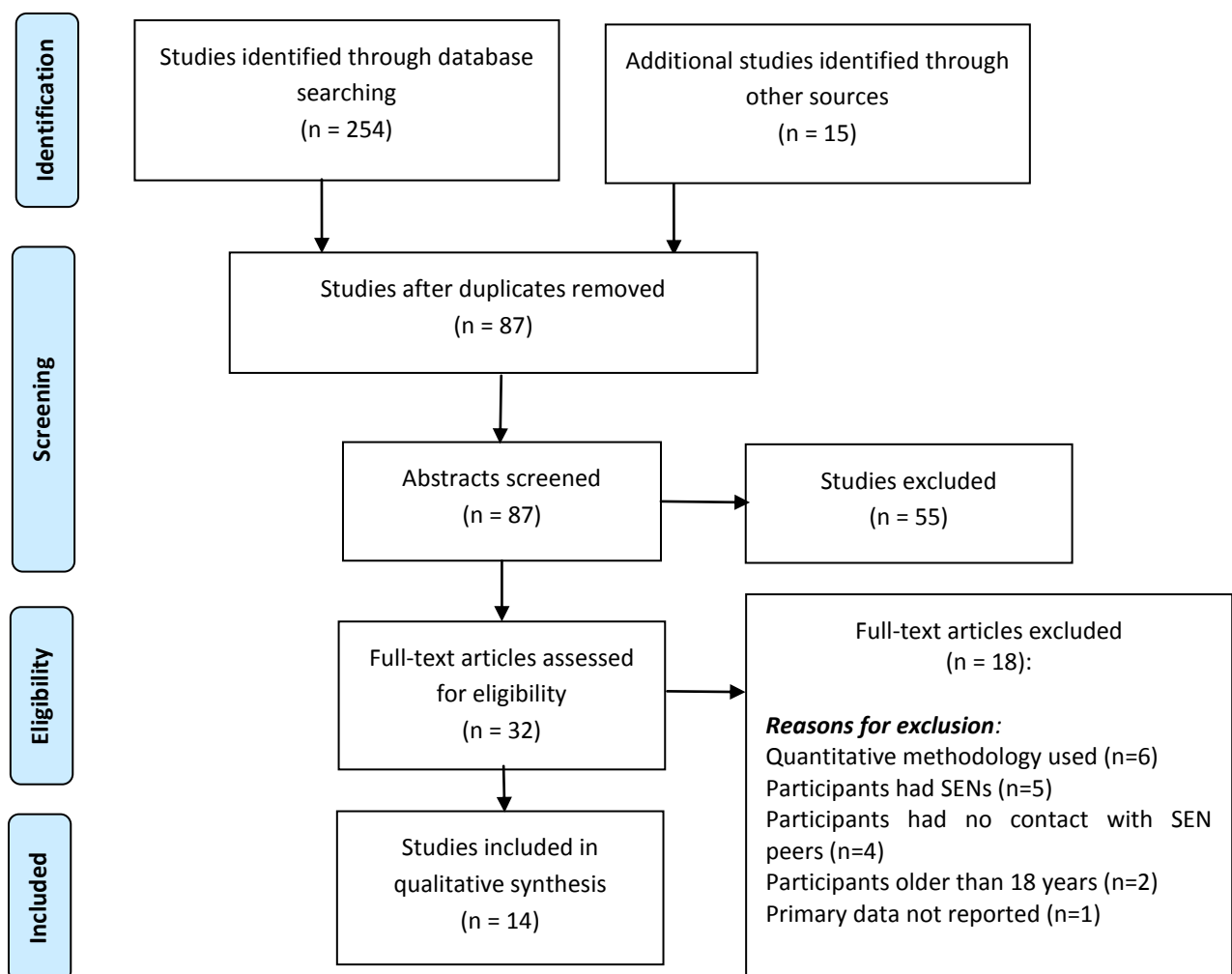


Figure 1 Flowchart for study inclusion or exclusion

2. Critical Appraisal

2.1. Quality assessment criteria

Following previous authors [68, 69], the present SR devised quality assessment criteria by blending the Critical Applied Skills Programme tool (CASP) [70] with a checklist for carrying out SRs in health care research [71]. This resulted in ten criteria.

The extent to which each study met a given criterion was assessed using the quality grading system of the Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN-50) [72]. Studies were given a score of 3 if the criteria was 'well addressed', 2 if 'adequately addressed', 1 if 'poorly addressed' and 0 if 'not applicable/reported'. Total quality scores were calculated by summing scores for each criterion, and marking studies out of 30. Consistent with guidelines set by Cesario and colleagues [73], studies were then given a rating of '++' if they scored 22-30, '+' if they scored 15-21, or '-' if they scored less than 14; this reflected the relative risk of bias in studies' findings (see table 2 below).

2.2. Enhancing rigour

In order to enhance rigour, ratings were carried out independently by the author and a second reviewer. Prior to holding discussions about ratings, there was agreement on 58.6% (82/140) of items. In instances where a reviewer was equivocal about a rating, a discussion was held and final scores were agreed upon. Where discrepancies continued to exist (13/140 items), the ratings of the primary author were used. Overall, a high level of consensus was achieved (90.71%).

2.3. Methodological quality of studies

Results showed that the quality of studies was extremely variable. After applying quality assessment criteria, three studies were judged to be of good quality, seven of medium quality, and four of poor quality. However, consistent with CRD recommendations [67], all 14 studies were retained for subsequent data synthesis.

Table 2 Criteria for assessing methodological quality

Studies	Quality Criteria										Total score	Global rating
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)		
1. Fisher [74]	3	1	3	3	2	1	2	2	0	2	19	+
2. Naraian [37]	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	0	0	2	13	-
3. Whitehurst & Howells [75]	3	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	7	-
4. Attiyah & Lazarus [76]	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	8	-
5. Bowers [77]	3	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	0	1	17	+
6. Bunch & Valeo [78]	3	3	3	2	1	1	2	0	0	3	18	+
7. Kalymon <i>et al.</i> [79]	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	1	3	27	++
8. Hodkinson [5]	3	1	2	1	2	1	2	0	0	1	13	-
9. Nikolarazi <i>et al.</i> [80]	3	1	3	2	2	1	2	1	0	2	17	+
10. Peck <i>et al.</i> [81]	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	3	28	++
11. York & Tundidor [82]	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	29	++
12. Lewis & Lewis [83]	3	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	0	1	16	+
13. Hall & McGregor [84]	3	2	3	2	3	1	3	2	0	2	21	+
14. Staub <i>et al.</i> [85]	3	2	3	3	3	2	1	2	0	1	20	+

(1) The study has a clear aim / objectives

(2) The qualitative research design is clear and appropriate for the research aims

(3) Clear description of the context or setting is adequately described so the reader can relate the findings to other settings

(4) Sampling was suitable and participant characteristics were clearly described. Clear description of how the sample was selected and why

(5) The study provided a clear and systematic account of the data collection methods

(6) The study demonstrated a descriptive and systematic account of data analysis and included or referred to a clear data audit trail

(7) The results were clearly supported by the data

(8) Steps were taken to ensure credibility (e.g. triangulation, respondent validation, negative cases, others involved in the analysis)

(9) Reflexivity was demonstrated (i.e. identification and examination of personal biases, effects of personal characteristics, prior assumptions, relationship between researcher and subjects)

(10) The study contributed to existing knowledge, whilst outlining its limitations

<p>Quality criteria rating score (per item):</p> <p>3 = Well addressed 2 = Adequately addressed 1 = Poorly addressed 0 = Not applicable / reported</p> <p>(adapted from: SIGN-50 [72])</p>	<p>Global rating score (per study):</p> <p>'++' = 22– 30: Low risk of bias '+' = 15 – 21: Medium risk of bias '-' = <14: High risk of bias</p> <p>(adapted from: Cesario <i>et al.</i> [73])</p>
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3. Synthesis

3.1. Data extraction

Descriptive summaries of studies' characteristics are provided in table 3 below. Data collection was carried out using one-to-one interviews in 10 studies, and 4 studies used focus groups. There was large variability in sample sizes (ranging from 4 to 713 participants), depending on whether focus groups were used or not. Data analysis was carried out using a range of methods: Grounded Theory (n=5); Thematic Analysis (n=1); Constant Comparative method (n=1); Content Analysis (n=1); Narrative Inquiry (n=1); and Ethnographic Coding (n=1). Four studies did not specify their method of analysis. Studies were based mainly in the USA (n=7) and England (n=4), with the remainder based in Canada (n=1), Qatar (n=1) and Australia (n=1).

3.2. Data synthesis

Meta-ethnography is the most commonly used framework for synthesising qualitative findings [66], and is considered the best developed technique in the field [86]. However, several authors caution that it should only be used to synthesise findings from studies that have used comparable methodologies [63,87]. Since the 14 studies included in the present review used a range of methodologies for data collection and analysis, meta-ethnography was deemed unsuitable. Instead, Narrative Synthesis (NS) was selected for a number of reasons.

Firstly, NS is ideally suited to summarising findings from 'views studies' [88], as its chief concern is with telling a "trustworthy story" [66]. Secondly, findings can be readily synthesised across diverse studies, because NS makes explicit any differences in study design [64]. In addition, quality appraisal can be carried out in tandem [67]. Finally, the output of NS is essentially action-focussed: key themes can be garnered by policy-makers and designers of future interventions [66], such as those of Inclusive Education initiatives.

For the present review, NS was carried out in accordance with best practice guidelines [66,67], and involved a four-step process: providing a descriptive summary of studies' characteristics by tabulating their core features (*see tables 3a-c*); highlighting the methodological robustness of studies, by reporting their quality assessment ratings; analysing the relationships within and between studies' findings using mind-mapping techniques; and providing a descriptive, critical synthesis of these relationships in order to identify key themes.

Table 3a Study characteristics

		1. Fisher [74]	2. Naraian [37]	3. Whitehurst & Howells [75]	4. Attiyah & Lazarus [76]	5. Bowers [77]
Study aim	<i>Research question(s)</i>	- Do TD students think IE works? - How do TD students think IE can be improved?	Eliciting students' narratives about an IE program for a classmate with a significant learning disability	Students' perceptions of children with learning disabilities after working on an 'inclusion' project	Students' past and present views about the inclusion of students with physical disabilities into classrooms	Students' perceptions of SEN teachers in the class, and the social desirability of this for SEN students
Sampling and recruitment	<i>Student participants</i>	TD (i.e. "no Individual Education Plan")	TD (i.e. "not receiving special education services")	TD (i.e. "mainstream")	TD (i.e. "general education students of an average IQ")	TD (i.e. "having no Statement of Need")
	<i>Sample size</i>	257	19	N/A	27	713
	<i>Recruitment</i>	Selected at random from general English class	Purposive sampling (proximity to and participation with classmate)	All TD students participating in an extracurricular arts project	Selected at random by school Social Worker	N/A
	<i>Age; gender</i>	High school age; N/A	High school age; N/A	Middle school age; N/A	8-10 years; 13m, 14f	5-16 years; N/A
	<i>Contact with SEN peers</i>	Peers with mild to severe disabilities attended general education classes on daily basis	Participants had been classmates of focal SEN student for at least one semester	N/A	3-6 months of being classmate of peer with disabilities	At least one peer with a Statement of Need attended general education classes on a daily basis
Data	<i>Collection</i>	12 focus groups	5 focus groups	Pre/post 1:1 interviews	1:1 interviews	Group interviews
	<i>Analysis</i>	Grounded Theory	Narrative inquiry	N/A	N/A	Ethnographic coding
Main strengths / limitations	<i>Strengths</i>	Credibility checks with students and teachers	Credibility checks and triangulation	Model generated to promote IE	Good description of context and participants	Good justification for sampling method
	<i>Limitations</i>	Limited description of data collection and analysis	Very limited description of data collection and analysis	No information about participants or analysis	Very limited description of data collection and analysis	Limited description of data analysis and no reflexivity
Quality rating		+	-	-	-	+

Abbreviations: TD = typically-developing; SEN = Special Educational Needs; IE = inclusive education; N/A = information not provided by author

Table 3b Study characteristics

		6. Bunch & Valeo [78]	7. Kalymon <i>et al.</i> [79]	8. Hodkinson [5]	9. Nikolaraizi [80]	10. Peck <i>et al.</i> [81]
Study aim	<i>Research question(s)</i>	Views of peers with disabilities: students from 'special education' versus 'inclusive' school models	Views about the benefits and challenges of being friends with classmates who have disabilities	Meaning of 'inclusion' and 'disability' to students from a school with special school attached versus one without	Cross-cultural comparison of friendship intentions towards peers with disabilities	Views about the benefits and challenges of developing friendships with peers with SEN
Sampling and recruitment	<i>Participants</i>	TD (i.e. "mainstream")	TD (i.e. "non-disabled")	TD (not defined)	TD (i.e. "no SEN")	TD (i.e. "non-handicapped")
	<i>Sample size</i>	52 (31: 'special ed' school, 21: 'inclusive' school)	8	53	196 (92: from USA; 104: from Greece)	21 (from two high schools)
	<i>Recruitment</i>	Three selected at random from each year group	Facilitated by school counsellor	N/A	Selected by school district office	Nominated by SEN teachers due to strength of friendships
	<i>Age; gender</i>	6-18; N/A	13; all male	5 th class; N/A	Kindergarten; USA: 43m, 49f; Greece: 50m, 54f.	7-11; 6m, 15f
	<i>Contact with SEN peers</i>	N/A	Regular, daily contact, in academic and non-academic settings	Some contact for students at school A, none for school B	99: 'inclusive' schools, 97 from 'non-inclusive'	One semester of having a classmate with disabilities
Data	<i>Collection</i>	1:1 interviews	1:1 interviews	1:1 interviews	1:1 interviews	1:1 interviews
	<i>Analysis</i>	Thematic Analysis	Grounded Theory	Grounded Theory	Grounded Theory	Grounded Theory
Main strengths / limitations	<i>Strengths</i>	Good justification for sampling method: typical of UK schools	Credibility checks; audit trail; reflective diary; justification for methodology and analysis	Schools A and B matched for size, location, demographics; large sample	Credibility checks; IE terms discussed pre-interview; large sample	Credibility checks; audit trail; justification for methodology and analysis
	<i>Limitations</i>	Limited description of data collection and analysis	Students' discussions were restricted to peers with significant disabilities	Lack of clarity about origin of comments, as data was collapsed across schools	Superficial level of analysis; no reflexivity; possible selection bias	Highly motivated, atypical student sample
Quality rating		+	++	-	+	++

Abbreviations: TD = typically-developing (students); SEN = Special Educational Needs; IE = inclusive education; N/A = information not provided by author

Table 3c Study characteristics

		11. York & Tundidor [82]	12. Lewis & Lewis [83]	13. Hall & McGregor [84]	14. Staub <i>et al.</i> [85]
Study aim	Research question(s)	- Students' experiences of IE - Perceived pros and cons of IE	Attitudes towards and understanding of classmates with severe learning disabilities after 11 structured integration sessions	Exploring the nature of students' friendships with 3 peers who have SEN in an inclusive school	Four case studies exploring friendships between students with and without disabilities in an inclusive school
Sampling and recruitment	Participants	TD (i.e. "general education")	TD (i.e. "mainstream")	TD (i.e. "nondisabled")	TD (i.e. "without disabilities")
	Sample size	61 (from 5 'mainstream' and 1 'inclusive' school)	8	5	4
	Recruitment	Student Council members, selected by principal	Randomly selected from class	Classroom observations of students in close proximity to focal SEN peers, and nominated by SEN peers as being friends	Nominated by teachers as being close to peer with disabilities, corroborated by researchers' observations of interactions
	Age; gender	7th-12th grade; N/A	6.5 years; 4m, 4f	4th-6th grade; all female	6-12 years; 2m, 2f
	Contact with SEN peers	'Mainstream' students had little or no contact with SEN peers	N/A	Peers with disabilities attended general education classes	Peers with disabilities attended general education classes
Data	Collection	6 focus groups	Pre/during/post 1:1 interviews	1:1 interviews	1:1 interviews
	Analysis	Content Analysis	N/A	N/A	Constant Comparative Method
Main strengths / limitations	Strengths	Credibility checks; triangulation; number of dissenters from themes; justification for sampling	Credibility checks; interview questions sensitive to developmental stage; clear justification for sampling method	Credibility checks; triangulation; clear justification for sampling method	Credibility checks; triangulation; justification for method of analysis; vignettes were based on classroom observations
	Limitations	Only one of six schools was 'inclusive': limits implications that can be drawn for IE	No information about method of analysis or students' contact prior to integration sessions	Limited information about participants or method of analysis	Limited information about interview questions; no clear audit trail
Quality rating		++	+	+	+

Abbreviations: TD = typically-developing (students); SEN = Special Educational Needs; IE = inclusive education; N/A = information not provided by author

4. Results

Reading across studies, three key themes emerged: TD students' attitudes towards peers with SEN; TD students' views of inclusive education (IE); and TD students' ideas for improving IE in future. These are each discussed in turn.

4.1. Attitudes towards SEN peers

With respect to TD students' attitudes towards SEN peers, four subthemes were evident, including befriending SEN peers, bullying SEN peers, poor disability awareness, and the role of contact in mediating attitudes.

4.1.1 Befriending SEN peers

In six studies of medium (n=4) to good (n=2) quality, TD students were open to befriending SEN peers and reported positive experiences of having done so. Participants declared that friendships with SEN peers tended to be reciprocal in nature, as they experienced a two-way sense of fun [37] and/or companionship [85]. Students from Peck and colleagues' [81] study went further, outlining a range of psychosocial benefits, such as becoming less afraid of human differences and experiencing unconditional acceptance. In terms of factors that students said facilitate forming these friendships, some emphasised having a "correct attitude", compassion, and a willingness to help [80]; others said that perceived similarities in interests and psychosocial functioning were key [79]; and a third sample said knowing SEN peers through family links was vital, as was interacting in non-academic contexts [84].

However, six studies of medium (n=4) to good (n=2) quality also reported negative or hostile attitudes towards befriending SEN peers. TD students were wary of developing "unequal" friendships if there was a perceived mismatch in psychosocial or communication skills [79-81]. They reported feeling discomfort when SEN peers displayed unusual physical and/or behavioural characteristics [81], and many said that safety concerns (e.g. medication needs) would prevent them from playing with SEN peers at break-time [79,80,82]. Furthermore, in five studies there was evidence of an assumption by teaching staff that students who befriended SEN peers would adopt a 'caretaking' role in school [79-81,83,85].

4.1.2 Bullying SEN peers

This issue was raised by 5 studies of poor (n= 1) to medium (n=4) quality. Participants from three studies reported that bullying of SEN students by TD peers (e.g. pushing, stealing, lying, teasing) was an ongoing problem in their schools [74,76,78]. Interestingly, a UK study of medium quality found that bullying of SEN students was more common in a mainstream school with a special school attached, versus an inclusive school where everyone was taught together [77]. Also of concern, students reported that SEN classmates were frequently alienated by their TD peers [84], and that teachers had sometimes contributed to this indirectly by voicing negative opinions about IE [74].

4.1.3 Poor disability awareness

Five studies of poor (n=1), medium (n=3) and good (n=1) quality reported a lack of understanding about disabilities, beyond physical impairments. Hodkinson [5] found that students from both non-inclusive and inclusive schools equated 'disability' with wheelchair-use and physical impairments; while students in Lewis and Lewis' [83] study gave causal explanations for disabilities and challenging behaviour that centred on physical or sensory issues. Peers with severe learning disabilities were judged to be chronologically younger [77], whereas those with more subtle learning difficulties were often perceived to be intentionally misbehaving [83]. Interestingly, some students had insight into their lack of understanding. For instance, students from York and Tundidor's [82] study admitted that they were aware of SEN 'labels' but did not know what they meant; and participants from Fisher's [74] study stated that they wanted to hold future classroom discussions about disabilities to increase their awareness.

4.1.4 Contact with SEN peers

Contact was referred to in five studies of poor (n=2) to medium (n=3) quality, suggesting that findings may not be robust. Relative to TD students who had frequent SEN peer contact, those with no contact held more negative attitudes about disabilities; had fewer disabled friends; and reported being less inclined to intervene if they witnessed bullying of SEN peers [75,78]. However, three studies cautioned against drawing the conclusion that contact, per se, is sufficient to combat negative stereotypes. Lewis and Lewis [83] found that integration sessions which paired TD students with peers who had severe learning disabilities maintained positive attitudes towards students with 'obvious' disabilities, but students with subtle learning difficulties continued to be socially rejected. Hall and McGregor [84] also reported that TD students in an inclusive school failed to describe SEN

peers in either positive or negative terms, which the authors believed indicated a more pernicious trend of social neglect. Finally, Hodkinson [5] found that sporadic, superficial contact with SEN peers reinforced negative views: TD students attending a school with a special school attached chose more negative matching descriptors for SEN peers than TD students from a mainstream school who had no contact.

Scant information was provided by authors about the level of contact actually experienced by participants, but two trends were apparent. Firstly, TD students in two studies perceived SEN peers as not participating in extracurricular activities, both during and after school. Secondly, two studies made reference to peer interactions in general education classes, but findings were contradictory: TD students from Fisher's [74] study said that SEN peers were actively involved in classes, while Naraian's [37] participants lamented that there were few opportunities for interaction.

4.2 Views of IE

When students were asked about IE at a conceptual and practical level, studies found that they held inconsistent views; a finding that is perhaps unsurprising given the lack of consensus about these issues in the field [6,54]. All studies examined students' views of IE, but from several different vantage points, discussed in turn below.

4.2.1. Students' rationale for IE

Conceptual understanding: Students' definitions of IE were explored in three studies of poor, medium and good quality. Fisher's [74] participants justified IE on the basis of human rights, social skills training, promoting tolerance, and providing extra learning opportunities for everyone. Similarly, students in York and Tundidor's [82] study stated that peers with disabilities had a right to respect and equality. Curiously, Hodkinson [5] found a gender difference in how 5th class students expressed this concept: for boys, IE was about equity ("It's only fair"), whereas for girls, it was more about equality ("They're the same as us").

Impact of school policy: One UK study of medium quality explored how students' rationale for IE might be shaped by local school policies. Bunch and Valeo [78] compared the views of TD students who were either attending an 'inclusive' or 'segregated' school (i.e. where SEN students were taught inside or outside general education classes, respectively). They found tacit acceptance of both types

of IE models, with 'inclusive' students supporting their school's policy because it enabled them to get to know and value their peers with disabilities; whereas 'segregated' students said it was necessary to provide separate tuition, due to differing academic needs.

4.2.2 Students' experiences of IE

Perceived role of SEN teacher: Although most studies alluded to students being confused about IE, only one addressed this question directly. In a UK study of medium quality [77], students were asked to explain the role of the SEN teacher in the class. While one third of older students (aged 12-16) mentioned pupil-focussed support, younger students (aged 5-11) were confused by the additional teacher's presence, and believed they were helping the class teacher who was struggling (e.g. by providing disciplinary 'back-up').

Impact of SEN teacher's presence: Four studies of poor (n=1), medium (n=1) and good (n=2) quality asked students whether having an additional teacher in the class impacted on their peer relationships and learning. Findings were equivocal. Some students said it provided them with additional learning opportunities [74], while others felt it was distracting [82], and impeded them from making friends with SEN peers [79], as the paraprofessional inhibited students from speaking freely to each other [37].

Double standards: Three studies of medium (n=1) to good (n=2) quality reported a perceived double standard for SEN peers in the classroom. TD students believed that teachers often failed to impose sanctions for inappropriate behaviour [74], and were frequently inconsistent in their limit-setting with SEN classmates [79,82]. The authors of all three studies concluded that these perceived double standards would confuse TD students about the purpose of IE, and required urgent clarification.

4.3 Students' ideas for improving IE

Nine studies of poor (n=3), medium (n=4) and good (n=2) quality made reference to the above theme, with suggestions for improvements being student-generated or author-led, based on students' comments.

4.3.1 Educate students about IE

Seven studies of poor (n=3), medium (n=2) and good (n=2) quality recommended having formal teaching in school about IE and SEN/disabilities. Several samples made this proposal, stating they were keenly aware of gaps in their knowledge and wanted to rectify this [74,80,82]. Two groups involved in initiatives designed to promote inclusion also reflected that education had been key to them making a positive attitudinal shift towards SEN peers [75,83].

Students said that having regular classroom discussions would increase their understanding of IE and promote pro-IE attitudes [82]; would clarify how students and teachers should react to challenging behaviour by SEN students [74]; and would help TD students identify suitable games to play with SEN peers [80]. Two authors stated that schools should take a more proactive approach in educating students about IE [5,83]. And perhaps controversially, Peck and colleagues [81] recommended that TD students who had befriended SEN peers should offer them feedback about appropriate social behaviour (e.g. turn-taking), with adjunct support provided by school.

4.3.2 Teacher training

Four studies of poor (n=1), medium (n=1) and good (n=2) quality reported that TD students were aware some teachers held negative attitudes towards IE, and suggested several strategies to combat this issue. Participants from York and Tundidor's [82] and Fisher's [74] studies felt that training was required, to coach teachers in how to become IE advocates and positive role models. Equally, students from Naraian's [37] study said that teachers should be trained in how to facilitate authentic forms of self-expression by students, particularly those with SEN (e.g. enabling them to tell stories). Two authors also cautioned that SEN teachers must be made aware that their presence in the classroom has sometimes been reported to impede TD-SEN peer friendships [37,84].

4.3.3 Increase opportunities for contact

This final subtheme was mentioned by four studies of poor (n=2), medium (n= 1) and good (n=1) quality. Contact between TD and SEN students was associated with more accepting and open attitudes in two studies [75,78], and both samples concluded it should be promoted in future. Interestingly, participants from Naraian's [37] study felt it was school's responsibility to create more opportunities for peer interactions; whereas participants from Fisher's [74] study said the responsibility lay with TD students to initiate contact with SEN peers outside school hours.

Discussion

Statement of principal findings

This review of qualitative studies examining TD students' perceptions of IE identified three themes: attitudes towards SEN peers, views of IE, and ideas for improving IE. Students expressed a range of attitudes towards SEN peers, from open to wary to hostile, consistent with previous research [34]. Although the psychosocial benefits of befriending SEN peers were discussed, TD students also highlighted several factors that can act as barriers to friendships (e.g. 'caretaking' duties; safety concerns; mismatch in interests and abilities).

Lack of disability awareness was also evident across studies, particularly younger children's understanding of 'hidden' SEN, as previously documented [56,57]. High levels of peer bullying and alienation were reported, which existing research has linked to negative mental health outcomes in the short- and long-term [34]. However, studies in this review found that peer bullying was not linked in a straightforward way to TD-SEN peer contact: a finding echoed in the literature [38,39]. Instead, the quality of interaction between TD and SEN students was vital, as was the school's inclusion policy and the class teacher's perceived attitudes towards IE.

In terms of students' personal experiences of IE, findings were mixed. There was a common thread of students expressing confusion about "double standards" for SEN peers; confusion about the role of the SEN teacher; and confusion about whether or not IE was actually benefitting them. Yet students in almost all studies were eager to make recommendations for how to improve IE in the future. Suggestions included formally teaching students about IE, SEN and disabilities as part of the curriculum; training teachers in how to promote IE and facilitate authentic forms of self-expression by students; and increasing opportunities for contact between TD and SEN students, seen as the responsibility of school and students alike.

Limitations of the review

Although 10 of the 14 studies reviewed were judged to be of medium to good methodological quality, they were not without flaws. Studies often failed to provide key information about participant characteristics (n=7), method of data collection (n=4), and/or method of analysis (n=9). In addition, only three studies demonstrated reflexivity, an essential part of all qualitative enquiry [89], where researchers' beliefs, values and biases are made explicit to contextualise subjective

interpretations of findings [90]. Similarly, four studies neglected to use any form of recommended credibility check [91], such as triangulation, respondent validation, or peer debriefing.

Bias may have been introduced into several studies at various stages. For instance, at the recruitment stage, participants in five studies were selected by school staff; while at the data collection stage, three studies had teachers familiar to students carrying out interviews. Equally, participants often appeared to be unrepresentative of their classmates, because they were self-selecting, highly motivated individuals, such as Student Council members (n=1), or those who had made exceptional efforts to befriend SEN peers (n=3).

Finally, there was a marked difference in how 'TD' was defined across studies. Students were considered TD if they were attending mainstream (n=3) or general education classes (n=2); if they were non-disabled (n=3) or non-handicapped (n=1); or if they were not receiving special education services (n=1), had no Statement of Need (n=2) or SEN (n=1). One study of poor quality neglected to define 'TD' at all. Without doubt, this is reflective of the definitional minefield that surrounds IE, and the fact that studies were sourced from various geographical locations and points in time.

In terms of the review itself, two limitations should be noted. Firstly, the chosen method of data analysis - Narrative Synthesis - is recognised as being inherently subjective, more so than qualitative meta-analysis [67]; and a paucity of guidelines exist for conducting Narrative Synthesis [65]. The author was therefore rigorous about using techniques cited in recently published guidelines [66,67], and strove to be transparent about reporting steps involved in the analysis, as recommended [71]. Secondly, the inter-rater reliability for assessing the quality criteria of studies was relatively low, prior to raters holding discussions about their decisions. On reflection, this may have been rectified by operationalising assessment criteria in greater detail, to further enhance the rigour of the review.

Conclusion

The field of IE is fraught with conflict and debate. Findings from the present review mirror these tensions: the phrases TD students used to describe IE were alternately filled with confusion, fearfulness, ambivalence and hope. Reading across the 14 studies, students' comments also belied a lack of knowledge about IE or disabilities; and yet, they yearned to fill in these gaps, calling for teaching on IE to be written into the curriculum. Clearly we should pay more attention to what TD students have to say about IE, for their sake and for the sake of their SEN peers. Further qualitative research of high methodological quality is much needed in this area, so that TD students can tell their untold stories.

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CHAPTER 2

Journal Article (1)

Struggling to make sense of Support for Learning: a qualitative exploration of typically-developing students' views

Abstract

Purpose The aim of the present study was to explore typically-developing students' views and experiences of 'Support for Learning' (SfL) or 'Inclusive Education'.

Method The views of eleven typically-developing 13-14 year-old students were collected with semi-structured one-to-one interviews. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was used to analyse comments and extract themes.

Results Analysis of students' comments revealed three master themes, one of which is presented here: 'Struggling to Make Sense of SfL'. This master theme consisted of five sub-themes: (1) Process of understanding SfL; (2) Reasons peers get SfL; (3) Gaps in students' knowledge; (4) Barriers to understanding SfL; and (5) Students' ideas to improve SfL.

Conclusion Students had a patchy understanding of SfL and showed poor disability awareness. However, they had insight into gaps in their knowledge, and into the barriers that consistently prevented them from increasing their understanding. Students were highly motivated to fill in gaps and overcome barriers, and suggested several practical initiatives for schools to facilitate this: increase teacher guidance, create student forums, and generate opportunities for contact between students with and without SfL needs. Findings are discussed with respect to the existing literature and clinical implications.

Keywords: *Support for Learning, Inclusive Education, interpretative phenomenological analysis, typically-developing students*

Introduction

"Children's negative attitudes and narrow conceptualisation of disability will, potentially, provide a recipe for disaster in relation to the inclusion of Disabled children" [1]

Including students with special educational needs (SEN) in regular school settings is central to the United Nation's 'Education for All' strategy [2], and is a mandatory policy of all European Union

member states [3]. In the UK, inclusive education commonly takes the form of Support for Learning (SfL). To successfully implement SfL, the UK's Equality Act (2010) states that schools must actively promote 'good relations' between SEN and typically-developing (TD) students [4]. However, a recent review of UK schools concluded "very few, if any" [5] had measures in place to do so. Furthermore, international research shows that TD-SEN peer relationships are usually characterised by superficial mixing [6] and asymmetric roles at best [7], or outright peer rejection and bullying at worst [8,9]. This may be a "recipe for disaster" for SEN students [1]: longitudinal research warns that childhood peer rejection can have long-term psychosocial consequences [10], including mental health problems in adolescence [11] and adulthood [12]. And yet, studies that have searched for intervention targets to improve TD-SEN peer relationships have only drawn equivocal conclusions [13]. Some suggest this is mainly because adults' reports have been used as proxy measures of students' experiences [14,15]. Clearly there needs to be a shift in focus.

Several empirical findings indicate that exploring TD students' views of SfL will reveal new insights. Firstly, TD children have been shown to be sensitive to 'atypical' behaviour from an early age [16], and actively try to make sense of it [17]. Attribution Theory [18] predicts that the way children make sense of SEN peers' behaviour will determine how they feel and act towards them [13]. While attributions of responsibility will lead to social distancing and rejection, non-blaming attributions will lead to sympathetic reactions and approach behaviour. Indeed, Juvonen [19] found that in inclusive schools, if TD children perceived SEN peers to be responsible for 'deviant' behaviour (e.g. hand-flapping), they socially excluded them. Conversely, when TD children perceived that SEN peers were not to blame, they responded in an empathic manner towards them.

In addition, Social Learning Theory [20] reminds us that unless prejudices held by TD children against SEN peers can be identified, they may be reinforced through the socialising influence of school [5,21]. Studies have demonstrated that prejudices internalised from adult role models, such as parents, can be re-enacted and modelled for classmates [22,23]. By exploring TD children's views, attempts can be made to expose blaming attributions and internalised prejudices held against SEN peers. This could point to new, effective targets for intervention.

To date, a number of international studies have used this approach, but have been of mixed methodological quality [2,24]. Three main findings emerge: TD students tend to lack disability awareness, and do not understand inclusive education; they have insight into possible causes for their lack of knowledge; and interventions designed to increase their understanding produce variable results. With respect to the first finding, research has shown that young TD students

struggle to define or explain inclusive education [1]. They also express confusion about the presence of Sfl teachers in the classroom [25], and cannot identify disabilities beyond visible, physical impairments [26]. However, with increasing age, children display greater insight into the causes, controllability and chronicity of disabilities [27].

Secondly, TD students openly admit to their lack of knowledge about inclusive education and disabilities [28], attributing it to lack of formal teaching [25,29], and/or to anxiously avoiding SEN peers for fear of social embarrassment [30]. Students have reported that they fill in gaps in their understanding by drawing on personal experience [31] or from interactions with parents and siblings [32]. Finally, providing TD students with explanatory information about disabilities has led to both positive [33,34] and negative [35,36] social outcomes. This echoes mixed results found for the role of contact in promoting TD-SEN peer friendships [13]. Although it is still unclear what accounts for the failure of such interventions [15], when TD students are asked how they would like inclusive education to be improved, they call for more teaching [29], classroom discussions [28], and contact with SEN peers [37].

As previously mentioned, this body of research has been criticised on methodological grounds; three additional concerns have been raised. Previous studies tended to use hypothetical rather than known SEN peers when discussing befriending, calling into question the ecological validity of findings [13]. The majority of studies have also used primary school-age children as participants, but peer affiliations are arguably more salient during adolescence [30]. Exploring the views of adolescents may reveal differences in how they feel about inclusive education and SEN peers. Lastly, previous study designs have mostly restricted participants to talking about the inclusion of peers with learning disabilities [2,1]. The latter is inconsistent with a recent move to conceptualise inclusive education more broadly [15,38], in terms of community acceptance and belonging [21]. The present study aimed to address these methodological shortcomings, by engaging in an open-ended exploration of TD adolescents' views of Sfl, using a well-established qualitative methodology.

Methods

Sampling and recruitment

Inclusion criteria stated that participants must be 2nd or 3rd year students attending an 'inclusive' mainstream secondary school (i.e. one that provided in-class SfL and/or had a Learning Support base or unit). This age group was selected from to ensure that students had at least one year's experience of SfL provision in their school, and to avoid exam years. Students must have been 'typically developing' at the time of interview (i.e. not being in receipt of SfL), with a record of regular school attendance (>90%) in the most recent academic year.

Following ethical approval from the local education board, seven state-funded inclusive schools in East Scotland were contacted and invited to participate. Two schools expressed interest within the designated timeframe. The author met with school staff, and delivered a presentation to assemblies of 2nd and 3rd year students in both schools. Interested students (n=20) were given information packs and parental consent forms, with enclosed stamped addressed envelopes. In total, 13 students signed up to the study from schools A (n=7) and B (n=6); however, two students were currently receiving SfL and had to be excluded. The sample therefore consisted of 11 participants, the majority of whom were female (n=7), second year students (n=10), aged 13 years (n=10), with some personal experience of SfL (n=9) (see table 1).

Table 1. Participant characteristics

					Personal experience of SfL:		
	Participant	Age	Gender	Year	Received SfL in the past (n=2)	Sibling received SfL (n=5)	Parent's occupation (n=3)
School A	P1	13	M	2 nd	Y	N	N
	P2	13	F	2 nd	N	Y	N
	P3	13	F	2 nd	N	N	N
	P4	13	F	2 nd	N	Y	N
	P5	13	F	2 nd	N	N	Y
School B	P6	13	F	2 nd	N	Y	N
	P7	13	M	2 nd	N	N	N
	P8	13	M	2 nd	N	N	Y
	P9	13	F	2 nd	N	Y	N
	P10	13	M	2 nd	Y	Y	N
	P11	14	F	3 rd	N	N	Y

Procedure and Interview

Interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis by the author (a white, female Trainee Clinical Psychologist), on school grounds and during school hours. An interview schedule was used as a guiding framework, but was adhered to flexibly, since the aim was to elicit participant-led narratives [39]. In order to establish trust and rapport, questions moved from open-ended explorations of the topic, to more evaluative questions about students' experiences:

- What's it like being in this school?
- Tell me about the first time you met someone who got Support for their Learning.
- What's it like learning in a classroom where some people get Support for their Learning?
- If you got to be in charge of your class/school for the day, what bits would you keep the same? Is there anything you'd change to make things better?
- Is there anything else you'd like to add, about this interview or the questions that were asked?

Questions were followed up with reflective prompts so that deeper, richer insights could be gained (e.g. "What did that feel like?"; "Tell me more"). Prior to interviewing, the researcher established a working definition of SfL with each participant, using terms that they were familiar with. Interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes, and participants were rewarded by entering a raffle for a voucher. Each interview was audio-taped and later transcribed verbatim by the author.

Analysis

Transcripts were analysed by the author using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) [40], according to a six-step protocol [39]. IPA was selected because the author wished to engage in an open-ended exploration of students' experiences, and wished to determine how they had imbued experiences with personal meaning [40]. Consistent with current guidelines [41], themes were only extracted if they had been mentioned by more than half the sample. To enhance the rigour of findings, credibility checks were carried out, as recommended by Yardley [42]: samples of transcripts were checked by two colleagues, both experienced in IPA and in working clinically with adolescents; and findings were fed back to participants, who provided corroboration about extracted themes.

Results

Analysis revealed three master themes, one of which is presented here: 'Struggling to Make Sense of SfL'. This master theme was broken down into five subthemes, discussed in turn below. For descriptive purposes, the following key was used to indicate the frequency with which participants contributed to a given subtheme: 'minority' or 'small number' = 2-3 participants; 'some' or 'several' = 4-5 participants; 'most' or 'majority' = 6-10 participants.

1. *Process of understanding SfL*

The majority of participants alluded to this subtheme, but there was much variation in how it was expressed. Most participants referred to engaging in 'detective work' in school in order to understand SfL, using their powers of observation and deduction. It became clear that this effortful process was not guided by teachers, and was driven instead by students' natural curiosity:

"Finding out through my own knowledge and putting in the effort myself to find out" (P2)

"I've seen her coming out of the Base for SfL, so that's how I know she gets it" (P8)

"He was saying how he always got..he couldn't control his temper no matter what he did. So we were all, 'Hmmm'. But as the year progressed and we didn't really see much of his temper, we were all, 'Hmmm, he's probably grown up a bit, and he's probably been able to manage his temper'" (P4)

Analysis revealed another route to understanding SfL: parental modelling. While this led a minority of participants to internalise positive, normalising attitudes towards people with disabilities:

"My mum works with adults with learning disabilities, so I was brought up in that kind of environment to be like, that's just normal... It's not new to me to be around people with a disability" (P5)

"My mum teaches me a little bit about SfL, because she's a Social Worker... She helped me understand that it's not, like, their fault" (P11)

Others seemed to internalise pitying or paternal attitudes. Two participants indicated that their parents had conveyed the message that people with disabilities were helpless and weak, and that others had a moral duty to help them. At first glance, this seems like a socially responsible motive. However, such a view assumes that a 'helper-helpee' relationship automatically exists between TD and disabled people, and sets up an expectation of unequal power dynamics:

"When I see a disabled person in the street, my dad just says to me, 'Poor soul', and I just say, 'Yes dad'" (P8)

"If my wee sister with dyslexia got given extra homework, and my mum wasn't there, she'd have us prepared to help her... Because, you kind of know that something's.. not right, and you need to help them" (P4)

Interestingly, no consistent link emerged between having a parent who worked in the field of disabilities (P5, P8, P11) and the internalisation of positive, pro-SfL messages. In particular, the narratives of P8 and P11 were characterised by a mixture of well-intentioned platitudes, coupled with more subtle signs of prejudice (see subtheme 2). This suggests that parental modelling alone may not be effective in combating anti-SfL attitudes, and in some instances, may reinforce them.

Finally, several participants described how their understanding of SfL had changed and deepened across time. These participants moved from an initial position of confusion and resentment to a more enlightened state of empathic understanding, suggesting that if they had not engaged in self-directed learning, they would have remained resentful of SfL:

“Before I like, understood what SfL was, em, it seemed a bit... not unfair, but you were just a bit clueless about what it was. But once you began to understand, it made a bit more sense” (P2)
“You realised over the years how much people need help and how it was hard for them” (P4)

This has implications for students who are less intrinsically motivated to learn about SfL. Of concern, one participant was adamant that most TD students would not engage in such a process, and said that even if they did, half would remain hostile towards SfL. This is a salutatory reminder of the need for adult guidance in helping students make sense of SfL:

“I don’t really think anybody else in my class would go away and ask questions themselves, in all honesty. I don’t think they’re really that type of people.... I think if they took the time to find out about SfL, it would probably go to, like, just over half the class that thought it was fair” (P2)

2. Why students need SfL

The majority of participants spontaneously talked about why they thought peers received SfL. However, wide-ranging explanations were offered, varying in their levels of empathy and accuracy. Most were aware that recipients of SfL had different cognitive capacities to them. This was either attributed to organic causes, or to operating at another level of consciousness. In both cases, there was an undertone that SfL students were ‘different’ and slightly peculiar:

“I think it’s just that their minds think differently” (P2)
“I just don’t think she’s all there” (P3)
“They’re kind of not with you all the time... they’re different” (P4)

Worryingly, two participants went further, and seemed to suggest that peers were potentially to blame for their cognitive difficulties. This was in spite of one participant’s mother working with

disabled people (P11). Comments indicated a belief that difficulties were self-inflicted, caused by peers not working hard enough or being overly-sensitive:

"I don't know if it's her fault or not, but she's just not quite clear on stuff all the time" (P3)
"Sometimes the teacher will send them out because they get upset easily" (P11)

By contrast, when describing peers who received SfL due to physical disabilities, the affective tone switched to non-blaming empathy, in the main. Visible causes for peers' difficulties seemed to reduce participants' blaming attributions, relative to hidden cognitive difficulties. For instance, four participants used colloquial terms when describing physical difficulties experienced by peers, suggesting a sense of camaraderie:

"He has trouble writing..I think he has a dodgy hand" (P6)
"I think he has speaking problems, so he might get some help with his speech" (P8)
"She gets help because it hurts her, like, it even hurts her just to do sports and stuff. So when she comes into class, it still hurts her, even if she's not writing... that's why she needs a scribe" (P3)

However, a minority again intimated that peers were to blame for their conditions. Remarks from three participants revealed scepticism about whether or not peers were responsible for their physical disabilities and were in genuine need of help, as well as irritation with their lack of physical agility:

"If they have both their legs missing or their arm missing, it might not necessarily have been their fault" (P8)
"A few other people probably... want to.. want the SfL because they're ..lazy or something.. because they can't be bothered writing... They want the teachers to, like, baby-feed them" (P3)
"People who often had a lot of accidents, like who would fall over, or they'd just end up being quite clumsy" (P4)

Curiously, two of these participants had had 'personal' experience of SfL: P8's mother worked in the field of disabilities, and P4's sister received support for dyslexia. Nevertheless, both seemed to have internalised blaming attitudes about physical disabilities, and family interactions were not sufficient to override these. Perhaps participants had 'compartmentalised' information about different types of disabilities, and failed to generalise principles from known cases to unknown ones.

Lastly, most participants said that peers received SfL to achieve their full potential. Interestingly, this explanation was only accompanied by positive, empathic sentiments, as comments were framed in terms of the ideals of human rights. Eight participants stated that everyone deserved to get an optimal education, and recognised that for some, SfL was a prerequisite to achieving this:

"It makes me feel good that teachers are helping them... They should be getting help, to have a better life. Not to, waste it" (P1)

"They need special attention, just to help them push up a bit" (P11)

"If some people need that extra help to get, like, their best ability pulled out of them, they should get it" (P2)

"They've a way of teaching everyone... So, everybody gets a chance" (P8)

3. Gaps in understanding SfL

At various points, participants' comments revealed gaps in their understanding of SfL and disabilities. This was evident across the entire sample. For instance, when asked to describe or explain aspects of SfL in greater detail, most students struggled to do so, highlighting the narrow range of their understanding:

"You can think of it up in your head, but it just won't come out (laughs)!" (P4)

"They needed to just mix them in with classes and.. let them.. be in.. a class, with... people" (P3)

"There's loads of stuff going around in your brain and you can't put it into words" (P6)

Likewise, participants' lack of disability awareness became apparent when trying to probe for further details. Comments were replete with incorrect analogies and explanations, illustrating participants' confusion and limited knowledge:

"They've both got the same thing, but my brother's not got ADHD. My brother's got Autism - I don't know what type it is, though" (P9)

"At birth, the doctors noticed something was physically wrong with them and diagnosed them with a mental disability" (P8)

"He uses this wee typing thing, and I think it's, I don't know... I think it might be because he doesn't really know a lot of people in the school" (P5)

The majority of the sample had insight into these gaps in their knowledge, frequently stating "I don't know" in a frank and open manner. Six participants shared the view that TD students tended not to understand SfL and disabilities, but said this was often not acknowledged by either students or school:

"People think that they know what SfL is about, cause you'll hear it from time to time. But it's not spoken about much" (P11)

"This is a good school, but I don't think it quite understands... that people who don't get Support for Learning don't understand it" (P5)

Encouragingly, most participants said they wanted to fill in these gaps. Again, students' natural curiosity and thirst for knowledge became apparent, as did a genuine philanthropic desire to help:

"We don't really know why they act like that... and I'd quite like to know why" (P4)

"I would definitely like to talk about it much more" (P7)

"It would be good to know if there was someone in your class, what was wrong with them and how to help them - if they did need any help" (P10)

Finally, three participants warned that when gaps in students' knowledge were not addressed, it led to inhibited help-seeking. Links were drawn between a school culture in which SfL and disabilities were not discussed; students being left in a state of anxious avoidance about their own learning difficulties; and students fearing that were they to raise concerns with teachers, they would be dismissed:

"I think learning difficulties need to be talked about more in school, because you're not sure if you have it. Because you might have, like, a little bit of it... And like, my friend's got dyslexia, and they don't do anything about it... I don't think teachers think that dyslexia is that a big thing. But it is – it is a big thing. But they don't really speak about it, so..." (P9)

4. Barriers to understanding SfL

In spite of a desire to deepen their understanding of SfL, 10 out of 11 participants identified intractable barriers to doing so. Several said a lack of teacher guidance acted as a major barrier, and expressed deep frustration at the assumption that it was not necessary for teachers to inform students about SfL arrangements:

"Teachers don't really think that it's important to explain, because they just think that we'll know, and that we'll just understand it, and be fine with it" (P5)

"I don't think we were ever introduced to the people who came in... They could have just said, 'This teacher is here for Support for Learning'" (P3)

Another perceived barrier to understanding SfL was the hidden nature of disabilities. Four participants remarked on how it was not usually possible to detect from someone's appearance if they received SfL and/or had a disability; this contributed to their confusion:

"You can't really notice it on someone. It's not like it marks you" (P6)

"It's sort of the type of person who you wouldn't really think would get it" (P7)

"Like anger issues, you can't, like, see that. It's not in their appearance" (P8)

Analysis revealed a further barrier: limited interaction between TD and SfL peers. Several participants admitted to not befriending or interacting with peers who received SfL, and reported that in turn, SfL peers usually befriended students who were receiving SfL. This may have diminished opportunities for peer learning:

"I used to hang out with them in primary, but not anymore. Cause I'm not really in most of their classes" (P11)

"Oh yeah, yeah! Sorry, I'd forgotten about her! I just don't really speak to her a lot" (P8)

"Most of them either speak to people who are in Support for Learning, or they actually all have it" (P5)

In addition, a minority of participants' comments revealed that they regarded SfL a private issue, and one that should not be broached. This could have prevented them from making reasonable enquires to learn more:

"I don't think he wants to share it with me, cause it's not really my thing to know" (P9)

"You wouldn't ask anyone that.. Because it's their business, and you don't really want to pry into their lives" (P10)

Several reported a final attitudinal barrier to understanding: anxiously avoiding talking about SfL with others for fear of social reprisals. Firstly, three participants said they avoided discussing SfL with TD friends because they anticipated hostile, critical reactions - SfL was considered a socially uninteresting topic to discuss. This reveals how TD students' dismissive attitude towards SfL censored peer discussions, thereby restricting understanding further:

"I don't really speak about it with people that don't get it, because I know they'll disagree with it, and I know they'll say something bad about it" (P2)

"You don't go off into a conversation saying, "What do you think about SfL"... Everyone would probably just look at you weird and be like, 'Eh, why?!'... We just don't talk about it to each other. Because like, it's not really a subject that you talk about with your friends.. Like, it's just..not.. I can't say not normal to talk about, but it's just not something you're meant to s-say in a conversation" (P6)

Secondly, four participants said they avoided talking about SfL with students who received it, because they feared upsetting or angering them. Comments demonstrated that participants believed SfL peers would be ashamed of receiving support, and it was therefore advisable to avoid the topic altogether:

"You wouldn't go up to someone and ask, "Do you get Support for Learning?" because you might offend someone, because they might say, "Do I look like someone who gets it?" (P6)

"Maybe they might have had it in the past and don't like talking about it" (P7)

"I just.. don't want to.. offend anyone in any way... I don't really want to ask them and upset them" (P10)

Lastly, this barrier of anxious avoidance extended beyond not talking to peers about SfL. One participant recounted not wanting to discuss SfL with teachers for fear of them reacting in a punitive or critical manner. It is unclear what led this participant to draw such a conclusion. Perhaps being in an institution that did not openly discuss SfL implied that it was a taboo subject, and if broached,

would incur sanctions by staff. This view may have been held by others in the sample, and has obvious implications for practice:

“You’re just scared of what teachers’ reactions would be – if they’d end up getting you in trouble for asking such a stupid question or, just in general, being annoyed or something. So I’ve never asked a teacher about it” (P4)

5. Ideas to boost understanding

Eight participants made suggestions for how schools might boost students’ understanding of SfL in future, by tackling the aforementioned barriers. Several recommended increasing teacher guidance about SfL. This took various forms, ranging from the need to prepare TD students for SfL by explaining teacher roles and logistics:

“The class teacher who’s going to get the SfL teacher should say, ‘We’re away to get an extra teacher, his or her name is X, and just ask them if you need extra help, or anything like that’. Or in assemblies, just explain that there will be SfL teachers going about” (P5)

To holding class discussions about SfL-related issues, addressing gaps in students’ understanding:

“You could maybe have some students saying what they think Autism is, or ADHD or dyslexia is, and then you could learn about it. You could learn from your mistakes” (P9)

To formally embedding teaching on SfL in the curriculum. One participant even identified existing subjects that could accommodate such teaching:

“Teach them what SfL is and why people need it, in either Social Education or Religious Education. Because Social Education is about hygiene, mental health and physical health, and Religious Education is about discrimination and people with disabilities” (P10)

Several participants also identified the need to create student forums in school, to share ideas about SfL with peers. This was in response to feeling like SfL was a taboo topic among TD friends, but that much could be learned from such discussions:

“It probably helps you, in a way, to talk about something you’ve never talked about.. It’s a way of seeing how you feel about it” (P6)

“You would just want to try and encourage people to... look into what SfL is” (P7)

“We should all say what we think about SfL, and then we should decide which way it should be”(P5)

Lastly, two participants said their understanding would be enhanced by increasing contact between themselves and students who received SfL. Ideas included 'buddying' or cooperative learning systems, which participants had previously experienced:

"Get activities where like, you can get some normal students to go and help them or hang out with them" (P11)

"In first year, a lot of our courses included, em, team work and cooperation.. and that definitely helped us understand it" (P4)

In summary, these TD students were eager to suggest ideas for how to improve the future provision of SfL. Their eagerness seemed to have been driven by three factors: natural curiosity to learn more about SfL and disabilities; an acute awareness of gaps in their knowledge; and a desire to overthrow barriers that had thwarted their learning in the past.

However, the views of one participant were at odds with the sample. P1 could not identify any barriers to understanding SfL (either institutional or attitudinal), nor any ways to improve it. Instead, they described current SfL arrangements as *"perfect"*. Throughout their interview, P1 slightly idealised SfL, and engaged in defensive minimisation of problems (e.g. *"It makes no difference"*) to justify its existence. This stance may have been adopted because P1 had previously received and benefitted from SfL, and wanted to champion its cause. However, P10 had had a similar experience, but was more circumspect in describing both the pros and cons of SfL (e.g. *"The support teachers aren't experts in every subject"*). This may indicate another consequence of not openly discussing SfL: some students may fail to adopt a more rounded, realistic view of SfL, and resort to defensively justifying it to opponents. Yet in order to advocate effectively on behalf of SfL, students must be mindful of its limitations, and engage in open debate about how to improve it in future.

Discussion

The present study was an open-ended exploration of TD adolescents' views and experiences of SfL. Students' comments indicated that they had engaged in an effortful process of trying to understand SfL over time, relying on their own detective work and parental input. Most expressed varying levels of frustration with school for not fulfilling this role. Using colloquial language, students offered wide-ranging suggestions for why peers received SfL, but their comments belied some blaming attributions, as well as gaps in their understanding. Students acknowledged these gaps and were eager to fill them in, yet identified several barriers: lack of teacher guidance; lack of interaction with SfL peers; the hidden nature of disabilities; and attitudinal barriers (i.e. fear of others' reactions, and considering SfL a private issue). However, students made pragmatic recommendations for how schools might overcome such barriers and increase understanding in future; chief amongst these being that teachers need to proactively discuss SfL with students. As a cautionary note, students warned that failure to do so had resulted in them anxiously avoiding seeking help.

Some of these findings resonate with past research. Former TD student participants have expressed frustration at not receiving adequate information from school about SfL and disabilities [25,29], and have resorted to drawing on personal experience [31] or information from parents [32] to increase their understanding. However, acquiring knowledge in this 'unregulated' manner may reinforce existing societal prejudices: children may internalise negative attitudes about disabled people from parents, and then re-enact and model these in school for classmates [22,23,43]. Indeed, some participants in the sample seemed to have acquired pitying, paternalistic attitudes from parents. Yet no straightforward link emerged between their views and personal experiences: in spite of having parents who worked in the field of disabilities or siblings who received SfL, several expressed prejudicial attitudes towards SEN peers. Confusingly, their narratives were also dotted with well-intentioned platitudes, based on the ideals of human rights and fairness. It would appear that TD students can accept the lofty principles of SfL, but struggle to accept its implementation, and can hold on to prejudicial attitudes in spite of contradictory personal experiences. This suggests that guidance from teachers and other professionals is urgently required.

Similarly, previous TD student samples have been shown to not understand SfL at a conceptual or practical level. They have been unable to explain why peers might receive SfL [1]; struggled to define the role of the SfL teacher [25]; and have been unaware of disabilities, beyond visible, physical impairments [26,44]. Of interest, the present sample's lack of knowledge and understanding only became evident as interviews progressed and more probing questions were

asked of them. This may be attributable, in part, to the older age of this sample, relative to previous studies that mainly used primary-school age participants [30]. For instance, increasing developmental age has been associated with greater understanding of the causes, chronicity and controllability of disabilities [27]. The latter may also partly explain why the present sample reported that their understanding of SfL had deepened across time. This suggests qualitative differences in how older versus younger TD students view and understand SfL. Building on past recommendations [1,30], this demonstrates the need to carry out further research with adolescents in this area.

TD participants from previous studies have been shown to blame and socially reject SEN peers for 'deviant' behaviour, when they have been perceived to be responsible for that behaviour [19]. Likewise, a minority of the present sample blamed peers for cognitive difficulties and physical impairments, perceiving them to be responsible for their conditions. Several participants also questioned the legitimacy of peers' need for additional support, and seemed irritated by their lack of physical agility and mental acuity. Further research is needed with this age group to determine if such negative attributions are translated into later peer rejection.

Finally, previous TD student samples have suggested how SfL might be improved in future, and/or how students' understanding of it could be enhanced. Consistent with the present sample, participants in previous studies have urged schools to teach students about SfL and disabilities as part of the curriculum [29]; have called for student forums to enable peer discussions [28]; and/or have requested increased contact between themselves and peers who receive SfL [37]. Whilst such interventions have proved disappointingly ineffective in the past [13], traditionally, TD students have not been consulted to help design interventions and increase their relevance. UK government policies now dictate that students should be routinely consulted in this manner [45-47].

Addition to existing literature

Previous TD student samples have identified barriers to their understanding SfL, including lack of formal teaching [25,29] and limited interaction with SEN peers [30]. To the author's knowledge, this is the first time TD students have identified an additional barrier to understanding SfL: fear of social reprisals. Half the sample said they avoided discussing SfL with both TD and SEN peers, as they anticipated hostile or negative reactions that would result in them either experiencing or engendering social embarrassment. One participant said this fear of social reprisal even extended to teachers. Such anxious avoidance will stymie TD students' efforts to learn about SfL, and will

perpetuate a sense of fearful wariness about the general topic. Clearly these attitudes and behaviours need to be better understood in order to challenge them.

Limitations of study

Following recommendations for studies that use Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis [39-41], the present sample was small, consisting of only 11 participants. Students were arguably unrepresentative of their cohort, being well-motivated to learn about and discuss SfL; indeed, one participant was adamant that the majority of her class would never seek out additional information about SfL. Nine participants also had had personal experience of SfL and/or disabilities. It is worth noting that in spite of such demographics, some participants continued to express negative and blaming attitudes towards SEN peers.

Key Messages

- TD students have a patchy understanding of SfL and struggle to make sense of it
- Several barriers prevent TD students from understanding SfL, both attitudinal and institutional
- Self-directed learning and/or personal experience are not sufficient to combat negative stereotypes and prejudices about disabilities; responsible adult guidance is required
- TD students want schools to teach them about SfL; to create student forums where they can discuss SfL; and to increase opportunities for contact between themselves and peers who receive SfL

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CHAPTER 3

Journal Article (2)

Typically-developing students' views of the psychosocial benefits and dangers of 'Support for Learning': a qualitative exploration

Abstract

Purpose The aim of the present study was to explore typically-developing students' views and experiences of 'Support for Learning' (SfL) or 'Inclusive Education'.

Method The views of eleven typically-developing 13-14 year-old students were collected with semi-structured one-to-one interviews. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was used to analyse comments and extract themes.

Results Analysis of students' comments revealed three master themes, two of which are presented here: 'Psychosocial Benefits' and 'Psychosocial Dangers' of SfL. These master themes were broken down into several nuanced subthemes. Perceived benefits included containment and peer learning, while perceived dangers involved SfL being a risk factor for peer bullying, magnifying difference, creating uncertainty, and disempowering students.

Conclusion Typically-developing students were readily able to identify the psychosocial benefits and dangers of SfL for both themselves and their peers who received support. Of concern, perceived dangers seemed to outnumber perceived benefits. Implications for clinical practice and for those working with students are discussed, as well as recommendations to schools for how to militate against perceived dangers of SfL.

Keywords: *Support for Learning, Inclusive Education, interpretative phenomenological analysis, typically-developing students*

Introduction

The policy of inclusive education, or teaching students with special educational needs (SEN) in mainstream settings, has now become a statutory requirement across the European Union [1,2]. In the UK, it commonly takes the form of Support for Learning (SfL). Rights-based arguments assume inclusive education will provide a sense of belonging and community acceptance to students with SEN [3,4]. Meanwhile, value-based arguments assume it will beget a more tolerant, integrated

society [3,5]: through contact with peers who have SEN, typically-developing (TD) students should become more accepting of diversity [6]; and through having TD peers as role models, students with SEN should develop better social skills [7]. However, critics maintain that such assumptions are naive, idealistic aspirations [8-10]. For instance, Contact Theory [11] and Social Referencing Theory [12] warn that *increased* hostility towards out-group members can result from contact if facilitators of positive change are not first in place [13-17]. Applied to inclusive schools, facilitators may include students with and without SEN collaborating on a shared activity [16]; both parties feeling they have equally valued and meaningful roles [13]; teachers providing interpretative support [14], and/or acting as pro-inclusion role models [15-17].

Unfortunately, a recent review of UK schools [18] found that in general, no such facilitators are in place to promote positive SEN-TD student relationships. Equally, research into the psychosocial benefits of inclusive education for students has so far yielded mixed or discouraging findings [3,8,9,19]. With respect to students with SEN, some have reported benefits of being in an inclusive school, such as improved social skills from interacting with TD peers [20,21], or gaining a sense of mastery after receiving subject-specific support [22]. However, numerous dangers have also been identified for students with SEN: they routinely suffer peer bullying in inclusive schools [19,23], with incidence rates often exceeding 50% [24,25]; are often socially excluded and/or rejected by TD peers [26]; and are perceived as being less intelligent [27] and less desirable to befriend [28], relative to their TD counterparts.

In terms of the psychosocial impact on TD students, much less is known. A paucity of research exists in this area [2,8,9], and studies that have been carried out are criticised on methodological grounds, such as failing to specify how data were collected and analysed [3,8], or only using primary school-age children as participants, rather than adolescents [9,14]. Notwithstanding these limitations, TD students tend to report the following perceived benefits of inclusive education: it increases their awareness of diversity issues [20,29,30]; cultivates a sense of moral responsibility [14]; and having friends with SEN enables them to experience unconditional positive regard, albeit in a unidirectional manner [21,31]. Yet once again, perceived dangers seem to outnumber benefits. For TD students, these include double standards in how peers with SEN are treated in school [14,32]; anxiety about their personal safety when peers have 'outbursts' [14]; uncertainty about how to manage peers' challenging behaviour [20]; confusion about the role of the SEN teacher, and resentment at having to accept their unwanted help [27]; plus fearful wariness of peers with SEN following superficial contact [33], particularly in the absence of teacher guidance [34].

In summary, rights- and value-based arguments that justify the policy of inclusive education do not seem to be supported by empirical evidence. Although some psychosocial benefits for students have been found, the literature suggests that these are far outnumbered by perceived dangers, such as social isolation, bullying, and fear-based resentments. This is concerning, not only because inclusive education is now a mandatory, ubiquitous policy [1,2], but because experiencing such dangers in childhood can lead to long-term psychosocial problems in later life [35,36]. A critical gap in our understanding concerns how inclusive education impacts on TD students, particularly adolescents, who are increasingly seen as key stakeholders in the inclusion debate [2,8,34]. Most existing research in this area has been methodologically flawed or limited in its scope. The present study was therefore an open-ended exploration of TD adolescents' views of inclusive education (or 'SfL'), using a well-established qualitative methodology.

Methods

Sampling and recruitment

Participants were adolescent students attending an ‘inclusive’ mainstream school (i.e. where SfL was provided in the classroom and/or via a learning support base or unit). In order to ensure that exam years were not selected from, and that students had at least one year’s experience of SfL provision, participants must have been in either 2nd or 3rd year. For the purposes of this study, ‘typically-developing’ was defined as not being in receipt of SfL at the time of interview, and having a record of regular (i.e. >90%) school attendance in the most recent academic year.

After obtaining ethical approval from the local education board, the author contacted seven state-funded inclusive schools in East Scotland. Two schools expressed interest before the deadline for responding lapsed. The author liaised with school staff, and made a presentation to assemblies of 2nd and 3rd year students in both schools. Students whose interest was piqued by the presentation (n=20) were given information packs and parental consent forms, with enclosed stamped addressed envelopes. Thirteen students signed up to the study (7 from school A, 6 from school B). However, two students had to be excluded from the sample because they were receiving SfL. The final sample therefore consisted of 11 participants, most of whom were female (n=7), 2nd year students (n=10), aged 13 years (n=10), who had some personal experience of SfL (n=9) (see table 1).

Table 1. Participant characteristics

					Personal experience of SfL:		
	Participant	Age	Gender	Year	Received SfL in the past (n=2)	Sibling received SfL (n=5)	Parent’s occupation (n=3)
School A	P1	13	M	2 nd	Y	N	N
	P2	13	F	2 nd	N	Y	N
	P3	13	F	2 nd	N	N	N
	P4	13	F	2 nd	N	Y	N
	P5	13	F	2 nd	N	N	Y
School B	P6	13	F	2 nd	N	Y	N
	P7	13	M	2 nd	N	N	N
	P8	13	M	2 nd	N	N	Y
	P9	13	F	2 nd	N	Y	N
	P10	13	M	2 nd	Y	Y	N
	P11	14	F	3 rd	N	N	Y

Procedure and Interview

The author (a white, female Trainee Clinical Psychologist) carried out one-to-one interviews with students, on school premises and during school hours. Interviews were semi-structured, with a predefined interview schedule being used in a flexible manner, as recommended [39]. In order to build rapport, questions moved from general explorations of the area, to more reflective questions about students' personal experiences:

- What's it like being in this school?
- Tell me about the first time you met someone who got Support for their Learning.
- What's it like learning in a classroom where some people get Support for their Learning?
- If you got to be in charge of your class/school for the day, what bits would you keep the same? Is there anything you'd change to make things better?
- Is there anything else you'd like to add, about this interview or the questions that were asked?

Follow-up prompts were used to probe for deeper meaning (e.g. "What did that feel like?"; "Tell me more"). Before each interview commenced, the researcher helped participants to identify a working definition of SfL, using terms of their choosing. The duration of interviews was between 30 to 60 minutes, and the incentive offered was entry into a raffle for a voucher. All interviews were audio-taped for later transcription by the author.

Analysis

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) [40] was used to analyse transcripts, following a six-step protocol devised by Smith and colleagues [39]. IPA was chosen to enable an open exploration of students' experiences and their attendant ways of 'meaning-making' [40]. As stipulated by best practice guidelines [39], themes were only extracted if they had been referred to by at least half the sample. To lend rigour to findings, credibility checks were performed [42]: extracts of transcripts were scrutinised by two colleagues, both experienced in IPA and in working clinically with adolescents; and findings were fed back to participants, who confirmed that themes reflected their lived experiences.

Results

The process of analysis revealed three master themes, two of which are presented here: Psychosocial Benefits and Psychosocial Dangers of SfL, as perceived by TD students. These consisted of several subthemes. For descriptive purposes, the following key was used to indicate the frequency with which participants contributed to a given subtheme: 'minority' or 'small number'= 2-3 participants; 'some' or 'several' = 4-5 participants; 'most' or 'majority'= 6-10 participants.

1. Psychosocial Benefits

All participants spoke at length about this theme, identifying benefits of SfL for TD students, either spontaneously or with minimal prompting. Two subthemes of containment and peer learning emerged.

1.1 Containment

A strong subtheme for the majority of participants was that SfL teachers were adept at containing the socially undesirable behaviour of SfL peers. This was perceived to have benefits for TD students, which operated at two levels. Firstly, SfL teachers were seen as managing erratic, emotional outbursts of SfL peers using specialist skills and knowledge; this was experienced as reassuring by TD students:

"The SfL teachers know them and what's wrong with them, so they know what to do and what to say, that wouldn't, like, get them angry... But if they were in a normal class, then they could just go and like, be angry at someone, and maybe go punch them"" (P8)
"Another teacher comes and deals with him if he happens to get angry or emotionally upset" (P4)
"Sometimes he walks out of class, which is where the extra teacher comes in, because they go and get him" (P7)

Secondly, SfL teachers provided a disciplinary function, targeting their support at the most disruptive SfL students in class; this enabled TD students to concentrate on their work. There was variability in how this function was described, ranging from skilful mediation to authoritarian monitoring:

"They try and help the people that are the centrepiece of the noise, so it usually quietens them down a bit... It helps them behave better if they've got that extra pair of eyes looking at them" (P7)
"The SfL teacher can maybe tell them to be quiet" (P9)
"She's there to tell him when to shut up and be quiet and everything if he's mucking about" (P8)

Of special interest, these comments revealed insights into how TD participants perceived their SfL peers – as volatile nuisances, whose behaviour must be heavily managed by a trained specialist. This

became more apparent again when eight participants discussed the consequences of SfL support being absent or withdrawn from classes. A picture of chaos emerged, with SfL students incessantly demanding help from teachers, disrupting learning for TD peers at many levels:

"You don't get as much help from the teacher, as you normally get in classes where there's a SfL teacher... Because they're shouting at them all the time saying, 'How do you do this? How do you do that?'" (P6)

"He was never on ahead with his work. He was never concentrating. He would rather.. he would just be like, 'What's the answer for that?'" (P4)

"It's not really pushing you, because there's always a weight on the end... Like, always holding you back" (P3)

Several participants were also sensitive to how this absence of support impacted on the class teacher, referring to their evident exasperation at not having a 'helping hand' to manage unruly behaviour:

"When the SfL teacher's not there, the class teacher has to stop quite a lot of the time and just tell him to be quiet. But most of the time she gets fed up and chucks him out of the class anyway, but he comes back in" (P8)

"It's hard for the teacher to concentrate on just one pupil and then everyone else who needs help. Cause everyone is shouting, 'I need help!'" (P11)

"There were a lot of people who were upset because they couldn't do the work, and the teacher would get them in trouble. And they'd be like, 'I can't do it because I need more help', and the teacher would have so many other things to do..." (P4)

At first glance, the finding that TD participants perceived SfL teachers to be specialists who could contain emotionally fraught situations seems like an indisputable benefit for everyone. And yet, what underlay this view was an assumption that SfL peers required such strict disciplinary controls, in order to keep their immature, erratic or aggressive behaviour in check. This negative view of SfL peers may have been inadvertently reinforced by some teachers; for instance, SfL teachers who were authoritarian in their interactions with SfL peers, or class teachers who openly expressed their frustration at students' 'acting out' behaviour, in response to lack of support.

Finally, the reassurance that SfL teachers provided by averting 'catastrophes' existed alongside reassurance of a different sort. Three participants described how the availability of SfL was reassuring, in and of itself, as it offered them an emotional safety net. This minority said they got peace of mind from the thought that if they ever needed additional support in future, SfL would be there for them. P9 went further, saying she already used the SfL Base as a haven, to contain and manage her distress:

"I feel that if I needed that extra help, I would like to know it was there for me" (P2)
"I'd like to know that if I did need help in anything, that I'd have someone to help me" (P10)
"And you can just go to the Base if you're having a bad day" (P9)

Participants therefore conveyed the message that the provision of SfL was containing for TD students. This sense of containment was associated with several psychosocial benefits, operating at multiple, nuanced levels.

1.2 Peer learning

This second perceived benefit was voiced by over half the sample. Participants were aware they had grasped important philosophical concepts from being exposed to the different learning styles of SfL peers. For instance, realising that the same learning goals could be achieved through alternative routes:

"It's good to see how everyone learns in a different perspective" (P2)
"Everyone does learn differently.. so eventually everyone can get up to the same speed anyway. So it shows that just because in the start you weren't as good, doesn't mean that you can't get better" (P9)

Several participants also seemed to have normalised the concept of 'difference', by appreciating that we all have relative strengths and weaknesses:

"Even if they don't get SfL, they might need just a little bit more help from the teacher, because they might not catch on...People work at different levels" (P6)
"They still go out and have, like, normal lives...it's just that one thing they need a bitty more help with" (P1)

One participant was more pragmatic, and spoke of how SfL peers often had greater insights into taught material, due to receiving extra tuition. TD students were perceived to benefit from this expertise during class discussions:

"Their point of view of the work is different to ours, normally, because they are getting it in more detail than us... They tend to have slightly varied opinions, compared to the rest of the class" (P2)

Finally, an intriguing picture emerged of SfL peers acting as a source of inspiration to some. Five participants said they admired and respected an individual who had received SfL, overcome adversity, and/or made a transformational change:

"He was sort of badly behaved.. But he got SfL, and now he seems to have turned, and em, he's sort of changed - for the good. He's become a bit more of a friend than before...probably because he's changed as a person" (P7)

*“Last year two people left and went to college, and they had a Sfl teacher in the class” (P5)
“She’s got, like, a real good love of dance, but she can’t take it to any level.. which obviously changes her. But she’s still an amazing person” (P2)*

Reading across accounts, there was strong evidence that Sfl students imparted philosophical lessons to their TD peers. However, these seemed to be assimilated at a cognitive and/or emotional level, with little evidence of behavioural change: only one participant (P7) linked peer learning to befriending, but then qualified his statement with, “a *bit* more of a friend”. This suggests that peer learning may serve to enhance the social cognition of TD students, but might not be translated into behavioural change if other facilitators are not also in place.

We now turn to findings that TD students can perceive not only the benefits of Sfl, but also profound and troubling dangers, assumed to act as further barriers to peer befriending.

2. Psychosocial Dangers

All participants in the sample discussed the perceived dangers of Sfl from different vantage points, with four subthemes emerging.

2.1 Risk factor for bullying

The narratives of 10 participants supported the notion that receiving Sfl acts as a risk factor for peer bullying. The majority described witnessing incidents of bullying in school, perpetrated by TD students against Sfl peers. Unsurprisingly perhaps, all said they had been passive bystanders to incidents rather than actors. Various types of bullying were referred to, ranging from social exclusion to more evident forms of harassment. Comments indicated that students with Sfl needs were intentionally targeted by TD peers:

*“If you get Sfl then you might get bullied or picked on for who you are... People, em, go for you” (P8)
“When they used to get annoyed they used to throw tantrums, so like, everyone would try to annoy them so they could get a laugh out of it” (P6)
“Sometimes they’ll follow them about, even though they don’t want to be followed. Or chase after them, or say nasty things to them that they don’t like. Or say, ‘Go with this person’” (P11)*

When asked if TD students ever defended Sfl peers against such attacks, all participants replied in the negative. Three engaged in defensive justifications or distancing techniques, indicating that they were aware of the moral imperative to intervene, and may have felt guilty at not acting on this impulse:

"In secondary it's hard to notice, because you just go about with your friends" (P6)

"If you're teasing someone who doesn't have many friends, then, people are more likely to join in" (P5)

"I-I'm not involved in it... I don't want to say anything because it's not, like, my problem. I just want to be left out of it" (P8)

One possible reason why TD students tend not to offer protection against bullying may be because they consider SfL peers as 'separate' and the 'Other'. This may diminish a sense of social responsibility to advocate on their behalf. Evidence for such pernicious attitudes came from five participants, whose accounts indicated that TD students regard SfL peers as either curious or insignificant social entities:

"You just didn't really know what to expect because, you'd never see them around" (P4)

"A lot of people do think really badly of people who have a disability, and think that it's like, funny" (P5)

"It's not really important to like, talk about in your group of friends.. Like, you could talk about your Sfl teacher... but you'd never talk about the pupils getting Sfl" (P6)

Of concern, two participants felt that teachers compounded the problem, by failing to protect Sfl students. While one believed that teachers were simply not aware of bullying because they missed subtle signs of incidents, the other expressed frustration at a permissive school environment where no-one seemed to take charge and prevent attacks:

"The teacher doesn't tend to notice it, I don't think. Teachers don't really.. I mean, they pay attention, but they don't notice a lot of things" (P5)

"Those really nasty people that, like, make fun of people for having Sfl. Personally, I don't think that that should be allowed" (P3)

Participants' comments suggested that bullying of Sfl students was widespread in school, and that no peer defence systems were in place to militate against it. Moreover, a minority said that teachers often failed to intervene to protect at-risk Sfl students, further increasing the likelihood of victimisation.

2.2 Magnifying difference

Another danger alluded to by most participants was that they were already primed to notice differences between themselves and peers, and that Sfl acted as a magnifier of difference. Support came from descriptions of a general intolerance of difference, and a relentless drive to conform in school. This permeated TD students' perceptions and treatment of others, and applied not only to Sfl peers – who were victimised for being 'different' - but to anyone who transgressed social conventions:

"They get bullied because they're different" (P11)

"Say if a person had speech problems, they might, like, act out the way they speak, because they're not talking normally" (P8)

"It's not just people who get Sfl. It's like, if a boy's got long hair then they don't like him, or if someone's overweight then they don't like them" (P5)

Additional evidence came from comments that showed some TD students tended to over-generalise Sfl peers' difficulties, perceiving them to be inept in numerous domains. Receiving Sfl seemed to draw undue attention to difficulties, resulting in lowered expectations overall. This may have led to self-fulfilling prophecies during TD-Sfl peer interactions, impeding the development of true, reciprocal friendships:

"Just because she needs help in one thing, people think that she can't do anything" (P5)

"We didn't really expect much of them, because you knew that something was wrong" (P4)

"They can't do the basic things that normal children would be able to do" (P11)

Finally, comments from nine participants indicated that they believed Sfl magnified differences by branding students as atypical; it was therefore considered socially undesirable. Firstly, several participants implied that Sfl recipients may feel ashamed about receiving 'special attention':

"There's nothing really to be ashamed of" (P4)

"They always look around the class, like, to see who's watching, when Sfl teachers are explaining stuff to them" (P6)

"It's like, 'I've got to help you and only you'" (P9)

Secondly, three participants believed that Sfl signified inferiority to most TD students. Comments indicated an anxious preoccupation with being 'accused' of receiving Sfl, as it was associated with stupidity, or with being a social misfit:

"If someone came up to me and said, 'Do you get Sfl, because you look like someone who does?', I would probably be offended... Because they might think that you look like someone who might get it... like someone who is dumb or something" (P6)

"They think differently on people who have Sfl...that they're not as clever, not as good as everyone else" (P5)

"They were meaning it in a nasty way, that I should go to Sfl.. because they said I didn't have any friends" (P2)

Lastly, several participants said that Sfl magnified differences by being exclusionary. This was again viewed by TD students as socially undesirable, and was presumed to instil a sense of loneliness and isolation in Sfl peers:

"If they're not being treated the same as everybody else.. it might make them feel that, almost that they're thought of as being different to everyone else... like you're not part of the group" (P7)

*"In the main class you just get to be treated normally, and then you don't have to go up to SfL.. It's not their fault that they have to be there" (P8)
"They probably feel, maybe a bit lonely" (P11)*

For numerous reasons, then, SfL was considered socially undesirable by these TD students. Because it constituted 'special treatment', SfL acted as a magnifier of difference. It was also regarded by some as a mark of inferiority. On both fronts, SfL may have been perceived as thwarting students' natural drive to conform with peers. This sample therefore presumed that receiving SfL would lead to negative psychosocial outcomes, including victimisation, lowered peer expectations, social isolation and shame.

2.3 The Unknown: Resentment, anxiety, confusion

Another danger implicit in most participants' accounts was that they did not understand SfL, and consequently, harboured feelings of resentment, anxiety and confusion towards SfL peers. One manifestation of this was a perceived double standard in how SfL peers were treated in school. Six participants referred to the latter with palpable resentment, as SfL peers were seen to enjoy special privileges for unknown reasons:

*"It's not fair, how come they behave badly and get to still play football and miss parts of school?"(P11)
"They get to go on trips, and have quite a bit more fun than we do in our class" (P10)
"There's this boy in my class, and he was, like, getting SfL help, and this other boy was like, stuck, and he kept shouting, 'It's not fair!'" (P1)*

Anxiety was also evident in a minority of narratives when participants described the volatile behaviour of SfL classmates. For instance, P4 vividly recalled a classmate's outburst in response to a seemingly reasonable request, leading TD students to negatively reappraise him, and to fearfully anticipate a more serious incident in future:

"As soon as the Science class hit (laughs), we were like, 'Woah!' It was a bit scary, because I'd never seen him so angry before. And, it was just... you didn't know really what to think or expect. So we began to ask questions about why he got so angry - well not to his face, obviously, but just to each other - because all he got told to do was to spit his chewing gum out or something, and then he went off his lid, so... But, em, it's not... Nothing severe has happened, so far - jinx, touch wood!" (P4)

This sense of uneasiness and confusion was echoed by two participants when discussing SfL teachers. Because students were not ordinarily introduced to SfL teachers, they were perceived as unfamiliar adults in the classroom, whose purpose was unknown. Participants also described finding it disconcerting that they could not predict when a SfL teacher would be joining their class:

"It's just, one day you've got a teacher in your class, and the next day you don't, and then a week later maybe you've got them in again. And it's a bit confusing, and uncomfortable" (P5)
"I don't think we were ever introduced to the people who came in... They could have just said, 'This teacher is here for Sfl. It didn't take me that long to realise, but still..." (P3)

These TD students seemed to regard Sfl peers and teachers as unknown entities, whose behaviour could not be predicted or understood. This clearly contributed to their sense of resentment, anxiety and confusion about Sfl arrangements: a psychosocial danger for TD and Sfl students alike.

2.4 Students disempowered

A final perceived danger was that students could feel disempowered by Sfl: comments from eight participants suggested Sfl was imposed and unwanted. Some were exasperated by receiving excessive help from Sfl teachers during group-work, and others at being forced to pair up with Sfl classmates for subjects at which they excelled. The implication was that Sfl hindered students' learning, but they had no power to contest it:

"If we're doing group work in classes the Sfl teacher will come over and just sit there. So it's like.. the teacher's brain, not the pupil's... She just gives massive hints, and then you feel a bit.. angry, and wish you could do it by yourself... So you just put as much as you can forward, before they get a chance to ruin your train of thought" (P3)
"She was complaining that she didn't want to be put in the bottom class because she was already good at PE. But she had to be put in a Sfl class... And all she wanted was to try to, like..push herself" (P11)

Four participants also perceived that Sfl was sometimes foisted on peers when they believed themselves not to need extra help. Teachers' decisions were observed to trump students' subjective needs and wishes:

"He doesn't really feel like he needs that extra help, but em, all the rest of teachers think that he is needing it, so..." (P7)
"I think she'd want Sfl to be a choice. Like, she doesn't want to be so far behind in her class subjects.. Like, if she does eventually go back to French, she's got, like, a year of catching up to do, which isn't very fair on her" (P5)
"The boy that's in my Science class.. he's..quite clever, like, you'll hear him saying, scientificy stuff. But when the teacher comes, he just sits there" (P3)
"He says he doesn't think he needs it in certain subjects. He thinks he needs just a little bit of extra help in some subjects, but he doesn't need it in other ones" (P9)

Of particular concern, one participant felt that students' desire to not receive Sfl often went unnoticed, because they lacked the requisite social skills to assert themselves with teachers:

"They're not social, so they're scared to tell the teacher that they don't need Sfl" (P9)

Finally, this subtheme of disempowerment was indicated by participants' affective tone, frequently characterised by passive resignation. Six participants described how students coped with SfL by resigning themselves to it being externally imposed, suggesting an element of learned helplessness. This coping style applied not only to TD students, but to SfL peers as well:

"It's kind of, just.. there. And it is what it is" (P5)

"I think we've come to em, deal with it more, now that we've been around it for a year" (P3)

"Well, everyone will get used to something" (P10)

"You can see that boy who gets SfL doesn't like it, but he just deals with it when it happens" (P7)

In summary, these TD students felt that both themselves and their peers who received support were disadvantaged at times by SfL, but were powerless to communicate this to teachers. This may reflect unequal power dynamics in school, as well as a culture in which SfL was perceived to be not up for debate or discussion. Interestingly, a schism seemed to emerge between how students talked about perceived dangers versus benefits. While benefits were mostly acknowledged at an intellectual level (e.g. aphorisms about human rights), students consistently referred to dangers using vivid, emotionally-charged language. This suggests that rights- and value-based arguments in favour of inclusive education may resonate with students, but only to a degree; by contrast, the strong emotional valence attached to perceived dangers may override such 'lofty' cognitive principles.

Curiously, one participant's account was at odds with the rest of the sample. P1 readily acknowledged the benefits of SfL, but only mentioned one perceived danger before quickly dismissing this (*"It's fine, at the end of the day"*). One plausible explanation is that P1 had received SfL in the past, and was positively predisposed towards it. However, P10 had also formerly received SfL and benefitted from it, but showed a more realistic appreciation of its disadvantages (e.g. *"We have to slow down for SfL students"*). Perhaps this indicates that some TD students resort to defensive minimisation when trying to advocate on behalf of SfL, because they perceive its dangers to outweigh its benefits, and fear that admitting to dangers will unleash a tide of criticism that they will not be able to withstand.

Discussion

To the author's knowledge, this is the first study that has used Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis to examine TD students' views about inclusive education. This approach yielded rich, nuanced insights into students' perceptions. Perceived benefits included SfL providing a sense of containment (by managing SfL peers' erratic behaviour, and offering reassurance about the availability of support); as well as opportunities for peer learning (e.g. exposure to different learning styles, or to people who had overcome adversity and thrived). However, three caveats applied: most benefits appeared to be intellectualised; they did not seem to be translated into behavioural change, such as increased SfL peer befriending; and they suggested TD students believed SfL peers needed to be heavily managed by trained specialists – a view that was possibly reinforced by teachers' behaviour. By contrast, perceived dangers were consistently referred to using emotionally-charged language, with vivid accounts being provided of negative personal experiences. These included SfL being seen as a risk factor for peer bullying; magnifying students' already heightened sensitivity to difference; breeding resentment, anxiety and confusion, due to not being understood; and being unquestioningly imposed on students, thereby disempowering them.

Most of these findings mirror past research. In terms of perceived benefits, a small number of studies have also found that the provision of SfL can be experienced by TD students as reassuring. Bowers' [27] participants felt that the SfL teacher served an important disciplinary function in the classroom, keeping the behaviour of SfL peers in check; while other samples observed that the absence of SfL support resulted in class teachers becoming exasperated and overwhelmed [20,41]. This finding could point to an endemic problem: TD students might commonly perceive SfL peers as volatile and unmanageable, and teachers may reinforce this view by expressing hostility towards SfL students, either overtly or covertly. Indeed, Social Referencing Theory [12] predicts that students will look to familiar authority figures (i.e. teachers) to determine how they should behave towards unfamiliar others (e.g. SfL peers) [17]. Future research needs to be carried out to determine whether such processes operate in inclusive classrooms, and if they do, how they can be challenged.

Previous TD participants have also identified peer learning as a psychosocial benefit of SfL. Several samples reported that contact with SfL peers enabled them to expand and normalise how they viewed 'difference' [3,17,20,21,29,31]. Furthermore, unlike the present sample, this change in social cognition was frequently translated into greater SfL peer befriending. This is consistent with Contact Theory [11], as all of the aforementioned samples had received consistent support from school to promote TD-SfL peer friendships, whereas the present sample had reportedly not. Supports

included educational material about disabilities [3,29]; active integration strategies (e.g. cooperative learning) [20,21,31]; or observing 'pro-inclusion' teacher role models [17]. However, other studies defy this pattern, preventing strong conclusions from being drawn [3,8,9]. For instance, Gannon [42] found that even after TD students received educational material about disabilities, negative attitudes towards disabled peers remained, and social rejection continued. Additional studies of high methodological quality are needed to better understand under what conditions institutional supports can challenge negative attitudes towards SfL students, and thereby facilitate TD-SfL peer friendships.

With respect to perceived dangers, the present sample's concerns fit with those expressed in the literature. Firstly, previous TD student samples have linked SfL to peer bullying, describing a continuum of minor to severe incidents witnessed in school [17,20,27,30,43]. Echoing present findings, participants reported being passive bystanders to attacks, suggesting a more widespread trend of lack of peer protection from bullying. Worryingly, research has shown that the latter acts as a risk factor for ongoing victimisation [19,44]. Possible reasons for this behaviour from the literature include TD students regarding SfL peers as 'different' [32,33,45]; being generally intolerant of any form of difference [21,33,34]; wanting to conform with the TD majority [14]; and perceiving SfL peers as having a lower social status [9,44,46-48]. Findings from the present study support these speculations, but further research should be carried out to identify possible new targets for bullying prevention programmes.

Secondly, a minority of studies have also indicated that TD students consider it socially undesirable to receive SfL. Some samples said that when students receive SfL, TD peers over-generalise their difficulties and lower their expectations of them [14,28,49]; SfL peers are predicted to consequently feel ashamed of receiving support [3]. These perceptions seem consistent with Social Comparison theory [50,51], which states that 'upward' comparisons with others who are judged to be socially superior can result in lowered self-esteem. Although this effect has not been conclusively documented for students with disabilities in mainstream classes [52], it is revealing that TD students presume it to be the case. This may indicate another attitudinal barrier to the effective implementation of inclusive education, and one that needs to be better understood.

Finally, former TD participants have voiced the present sample's views about SfL engendering a sense of resentment, anxiety and confusion. Some of these studies found that TD students resent a perceived double standard in how SfL peers are treated by teachers [14,20,32,41]; feel anxious

about how to manage SfL peers' challenging behaviour [14,20,21,41] or medical needs [33,50]; and are confused by the presence and role of the SfL teacher [27]. The authors of all these studies attributed students' negative appraisals to lack of knowledge about SfL, and called for schools to proactively inform them about such areas of concern.

Addition to the literature

Former TD student samples have identified containment as a benefit of SfL, but only in terms of SfL teachers serving a disciplinary function. The present sample alluded to three new forms of containment: a minority of TD participants found it reassuring that SfL support was available to them, were they to need it in future; one participant already retreated to the SfL Base to help contain her distress; and several participants believed SfL peers felt contained after specialist interventions by SfL teachers. These are encouraging findings, and signal what some students prize about SfL. In terms of perceived dangers, previous TD students have discussed the social undesirability of SfL. However, a new psychosocial danger identified by the present sample was that SfL is often seen as being imposed and unwanted. This applied not only to TD students, but to SfL peers as well, and both groups seemed to cope through 'learned helplessness' [53], instead of discussing the issue with teachers. This clearly indicates a breakdown in communication, and warrants further investigation.

Limitations of study

Consistent with best practice guidelines for studies that use Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis [37-39], the present sample was small, consisting of only 11 participants. Students were arguably unrepresentative of their cohort, being well-motivated to discuss the psychosocial impact of SfL. Nine participants also had had personal experience of SfL and/or disabilities. It is worth noting that in spite of such demographics, most participants (bar one) were able to identify the psychosocial dangers of SfL, for themselves, their SfL peers, and their teachers.

Key Messages

- TD adolescent students were able to reflect deeply about the psychosocial benefits and dangers of SfL, on both a cognitive and emotional level
- Analysis revealed that dangers were accentuated, possibly due to their greater emotional charge. They centred on adolescents' inherent sensitivity to difference, intolerance of social deviations, and relentless drive to conform, coupled with a lack of understanding about SfL

- In order to militate against perceived dangers, schools should provide students with various forms of support, such as information about the purpose of SfL and the nature of SENs; access to 'pro-inclusion' adult role models; and involvement in active integration strategies, such as cooperative learning
- Professionals working clinically with adolescents need to be mindful of possible attitudinal barriers to SfL-TD peer befriending, and should empathically challenge prejudicial attitudes where they are found to exist

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CHAPTER 4

Extended Method

4. Extended Method

4.1 Design: Qualitative

For the present study, a qualitative research design was used to explore typically-developing students' experiences of inclusive education. The main aims of the study were to provide rich descriptions of students' personal views and experiences, in order to gain insight into how inclusive education might impact on their psychosocial development. Given these aims, and the paucity of existing research in this area, a qualitative design was selected for several reasons, outlined below.

While quantitative research concerns itself with identifying associations between known events (i.e. 'what happened'), qualitative research focuses on how people make sense of life events (i.e. 'what is the *meaning* of what happened') (Smith *et al.*, 2009). In essence then, it is more exploratory, subjective and interpretative than quantitative approaches (Osborn, 1994; Rennie *et al.*, 2002), and enables researchers to delve more fully into peoples' lived realities. Corbin and Strauss (2008) conclude that qualitative methodologies should be used to study psychosocial phenomena that are little understood and hard to access, but where there is a natural curiosity to find out more. Inclusive education and its impact on typically-developing students is arguably one such phenomenon.

A growing number of studies have also shown the effectiveness of qualitative approaches in eliciting the opinions of adolescents about issues that concern them (e.g. Bunch & Valeo, 2004; Kalymon, 2010; Spratt *et al.*, 2010). This trend is consistent with best practice guidelines [e.g. Department for Education and Skills (DfES), 2001a, 2001b, 2003] which state that young peoples' views must be sought about government policies that affect them directly; policies such as inclusive education. In order to elicit such views, quantitative approaches necessarily place restrictions on participants' responses (e.g. forced-choice questionnaires). However, this may prove problematic when trying to explore little-understood phenomena, particularly with young people: Greig and Taylor (1999) caution that they can perceive the world in ways radically different to adults. Placing restrictions on adolescents' responses about inclusive education might therefore prevent new insights from coming to light.

By contrast, qualitative research can open up discussions, through providing a space in which participants can reflect deeply on issues, and engage in live 'meaning-making' (Smith *et al.*, 2009). This is particularly important when reflecting on topics that might not ordinarily be discussed in everyday life; topics such as inclusive education.

4.2 Methodological approach: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

The qualitative approach selected for the present study was Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, 1996; Smith & Osborn, 2003; Smith & Eatough, 2007; Smith *et al.*, 2009), discussed below with respect to its theoretical underpinnings; competing qualitative approaches that were considered; and the researcher's justification for selecting IPA.

4.2.1 Theoretical underpinnings of IPA

IPA is founded on three pillars of philosophical thought: hermeneutics, phenomenology and idiography (Smith *et al.*, 2009). These are discussed in turn, with implications for IPA's epistemological stance (i.e. assumptions about what interview data can tell us).

Hermeneutics, or the theory of interpretation, is inextricably linked to the 'I' in IPA. Consistent with contemporary hermeneutic philosophers (e.g. Gadamer, 1990; Schleiermacher, 1998), IPA assumes that human beings are sense-making creatures; that verbal accounts of their experiences reflect an attempt to share meaning; and that access to this meaning is dependent on the listener's interpretation (Smith *et al.*, 2009). Yet interpretation is not a straightforward, linear process. To capture the complexities involved, IPA researchers refer to a 'double hermeneutic': the researcher must make sense of the participant trying to make sense of what has happened to them (Smith & Osborn, 2003). As Smith and colleagues remind us, "*the researcher's sense-making is therefore second-order*" (Smith *et al.*, 2009; p.3). Consequently, IPA requires intense engagement from the researcher, demanding that they immerse themselves in the data and interpret it from several different levels. This has been dubbed the 'hermeneutic circle': meaning is extracted at the level of the part (e.g. the single word) right up to the whole (e.g. the complete text) and back again, to discover how different levels of the narrative relate to one another (Smith *et al.*, 2009). Interpretation is seen as a dynamic and iterative process.

The second pillar of IPA, phenomenology, concerns itself with the study of lived experience (Smith *et al.*, 2009). In order to faithfully represent the subjective experiences of others, IPA researchers must transplant themselves into the participant's world, and try to view events from their vantage point (Flick, 2007). This demands a reflective stance: in so far as possible, researchers must set aside or 'bracket' their own biases, assumptions and values before approaching analysis. Smith and colleagues state that this is a cyclical process, and caution that it can only ever be partially achieved (Smith & Osborn, 2003; Smith *et al.*, 2009). Therefore, best practice guidelines dictate that IPA researchers should maintain a reflective diary throughout projects, and should strive to make their

assumptions, values and biases as transparent as possible to readers (Smith *et al.*, 2009; Smith, 2011).

Finally, IPA is avowedly idiographic: it focuses on the particular rather than the general (Smith *et al.*, 2009). This is in stark contrast to nomothetic approaches to psychological research, where the aim is to identify patterns at a group level, calculate averages, and then infer general laws of human behaviour (Willig, 2008). Instead, IPA zooms in on details. It uses small, purposively-selected samples, and seeks to represent each person's story on its own terms before identifying common themes. The goal of IPA, then, is to capture information at a single-case level, retain this richness, and determine the degree of convergence and divergence across participants (Smith *et al.*, 2009). By adhering to this analytic process, IPA studies can claim to synthesise phenomenological data across participants, whilst still being able to retrieve the unique, personal accounts of individuals (Smith, 2011).

4.2.2 Alternatives to using IPA

Although IPA was selected for the present study, two other phenomenological approaches were considered as candidate methodologies. These are briefly discussed, along with the rationale for why they were discounted.

Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Charmaz, 2006) is considered the main alternative to IPA (Smith *et al.*, 2009). It has as its aim generation of an explanatory, theoretical account of a particular phenomenon, which may or may not be psychosocial in nature (Willig, 2008). Given this aim, Grounded Theorists use significantly larger sample sizes than those advocated for IPA studies, and consequently, the level of analysis tends to be less nuanced and idiographic; participants' accounts are primarily used to illustrate theoretical claims (Smith *et al.*, 2009).

For the present study, Grounded Theory was therefore discounted. The researcher was interested in engaging in a micro-level analysis of students' experiences, examining "*actual slices of human life*" (Smith *et al.*, 2009; p.202), rather than generating a theory about such experiences. The literature also shows that we currently lack a clear understanding of how inclusive education impacts psychosocially on typically-developing students (Kalymon, 2010). It therefore seemed pertinent to adopt an open-ended, discovery-based methodological approach, such as IPA, to enable students to tell their untold stories without being fettered by theoretical constructs. It is hoped that this micro-level approach will inform the development of more macro-level accounts of inclusive education in future.

The second alternative, *Discourse Analysis*, is based on social constructionism (Smith *et al.*, 2009). Broadly speaking, techniques focus on either power dynamics (e.g. Parker, 1992) or the function of communicative interactions (e.g. Potter & Wetherell, 1987). The former approach involves deconstruction of participants' narratives, to determine how their use of language regulates and creates power dynamics; whereas the latter approach examines what participants say in particular social contexts to achieve specific aims (Willig, 2008). In both cases, there is an assumption that reality is discursively constructed, and is shaped by the interpersonal contexts that people inhabit (Flick, 2007); therefore, cognitions and *intrapsychic* processes are considered of secondary importance (Willig, 2008). For this reason, Discourse Analysis techniques were not used in the present study. The researcher was interested in uncovering students' cognitive and affective reactions to experiences of inclusive education, and wanted to explore how they ascribed meaning to these experiences at both an inter- and an intra-psychic level.

4.2.3 Justification for selecting IPA

"Your prime reason for choosing IPA over any other qualitative approach should be because it is consistent with the epistemological position of your research question" (Smith et al., 2009; p.46)

The present study's research question was how typically-developing students view and experience inclusive education; the implicit epistemological position being that by asking students open-ended questions, it would be possible to find out about their most salient personal experiences, and how these had been imbued with meaning. The researcher therefore sought a qualitative approach that was discovery-oriented, to facilitate open exploration of the topic; and sought an approach that would yield rich insights into students' cognitive processes, at both an inter- and intrapsychic level. As discussed above, neither Grounded Theory nor Discourse Analysis could achieve these ends. However, IPA's theoretical assumptions and analytic process seemed uniquely suited to the task.

Furthermore, IPA has recently been used to elicit the views of adolescents about a wide range of experiences that have impacted on their psychosocial development; experiences such as having a sibling with autism (Petalas *et al.*, 2012), participation in a pro-anorexia internet site (Mulveen *et al.*, 2006), or weight-related victimisation in school (Nesdale, 2008). Finally, IPA was chosen because comprehensive, step-by-step guidelines exist for how to conduct studies, aimed primarily at novice IPA researchers (Smith *et al.*, 2009; Smith, 2011).

4.3 Reflective Prologue

One of the central tenets of qualitative research is that data gathering and analysis will inevitably be influenced by researchers' biases, values and assumptions about the topic under investigation (Smith *et al.*, 2009; Smith *et al.*, 2012). The latter should therefore be rendered as clear as possible to the reader (Smith, 2011). What follows is an account of how I, the researcher, came to be drawn to this research topic; factors that shaped my attitudes towards it; and reflections on how my background may have impacted on both data gathering and analysis.

My interest in the area of Inclusive Education was sparked by direct personal and professional experiences. On a personal level, I attended an inclusive secondary school, and for several generations, the vast majority of my family have worked as teachers, including my father and sister. In terms of professional experience, I have been employed as a Support for Learning teacher; as an Instructor for adolescents with additional support needs; and most recently, as a Trainee Clinical Psychologist (TCP) in a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, where a core aspect of my job is liaising with inclusive schools. Based on these experiences, I have developed a keen interest in finding out more about how Inclusive Education can impact on children's psychosocial development.

My attitude towards Inclusive Education has undoubtedly been shaped by these experiences, particularly as they have been neither resoundingly positive nor negative, but context-dependent. For instance, as a TCP, I have worked with children who have flourished in inclusive classrooms where they have been integrated in sensitive and meaningful ways; but likewise, have provided input to 'included' children for low mood and anxiety caused by peer bullying and/or excessive academic demands. In my view, inclusion should most certainly be aspired towards, principally so that children of all ability levels can gain a sense of community belonging and acceptance. However, I firmly believe this should not come at any cost: the 'presumption of mainstreaming' should never be made without first engaging in careful planning and allocation of resources. My experience tells me that otherwise, children with additional needs tend to experience social rejection and possible mental health problems, while typically-developing children learn to treat 'difference' with disdain.

Given the strength of my views, it is highly likely that they impacted on data gathering and analysis. Although I tried to 'bracket' my values, biases and assumptions by keeping a reflective diary throughout the project, I was aware that much of what participants said resonated with my own personal and professional experiences. It is quite probable, therefore, that this influenced the weight I attached to certain statements, and not to others; to my line of questioning; and to how I subsequently analysed findings. The reader is respectfully advised to bear these factors in mind.

4.4 Participants

4.4.1 Sampling method

As previously discussed, the goal of IPA is to investigate the lived experiences of a specific, well-defined group of people in a particular context. Purposive sampling is therefore considered the most appropriate sampling technique (Smith & Eatough, 2007), as it involves selective recruitment of individuals known to have experienced the phenomenon under investigation (Charmaz, 2006; Silverman, 2005). For the current study, purposive sampling was achieved by adhering to participant eligibility criteria (*see* journal articles 1 and 2).

4.4.2 Recruitment

Participant recruitment was carried out between June and November 2012, and interviews were conducted from September to December 2012. Once ethical approval was obtained, seven state-funded 'inclusive' schools in the local area were contacted by telephone and/or email and invited to participate. One school declined, as the Depute Head teacher reported that students from 2nd and 3rd year were already undertaking research with the local education department. Three schools failed to reply, and one school registered their interest after the deadline for recruitment had lapsed and the requisite number of participants had been recruited to the study.

Two schools declared interest in participating within the designated timeframe, and were emailed further information about the study (*see* Appendix 1). Both schools provided Support for Learning via 'Integrated Special Units' (i.e. individualised or small group specialist teaching in specific areas of the curriculum) and through in-class provision; and both had student populations of less than 700 pupils (Education Scotland, 2013).

In order to inform 2nd and 3rd year students about the study, the author arranged a suitable date with Depute Head teachers for visiting schools to give a five-minute presentation to students. It was agreed that the most opportune time for doing so would be morning registration classes, as all 2nd and 3rd year students would be in attendance. The presentation provided students with background information about the research question and aims of the study; procedural information about what participating would involve; information about the inclusion of anonymised quotes in the final report; the need for parental consent; and reassurance that participation would not affect their schooling in any respect, nor would it impact on any help that they or their families might get from

the NHS. As an incentive to sign-up to the study, students were informed that all participants would be entered into a raffle for a £20 voucher of their choosing.

Following the presentation to school A, interested students were invited to stay behind and sign their names on a registration sheet (n=13). They were then given information packs with further details about the study and consent forms for themselves and their parents to sign (see Appendices 2a and 2b). Students were requested to use the stamped addressed envelopes enclosed in their packs to return consent forms to the author as soon as possible. For school B, identical information packs were given to the school guidance counsellor. Following the presentation, students from school B were asked to approach the guidance counsellor if interested in participating, and were requested to return consent forms by post as soon as possible. Students from both schools were told that they could contact the author at any stage using details supplied in their packs, and were encouraged to inform their parents that they were also welcome to do so.

It was agreed that interviews would be held on school grounds and during school hours, through consultation with the local Educational Psychology department and senior school management. The author determined with Depute Head teachers when would be the least disruptive time for students to participate in interviews, and devised a list of possible dates and times. This list of interview sign-up slots was given to guidance counsellors from schools A and B. Students from school B visited the guidance counsellor, obtained information packs, and then placed their names beside slots of their choosing (n=7).

However, it was necessary to provide 'refresher' information to students from school A: their presentation was delivered in June 2012, and students informed teachers that when they returned to school after the summer holidays, they could no longer remember details about the study and/or had misplaced their information packs. The author therefore delivered a second presentation to 13 students who had originally registered interest in the study. Students who remained interested were given new information packs (n=7), and were invited to write their names beside interview slots of their choosing. Unfortunately, one of these students reported that they were currently receiving Support for Learning, and was therefore not eligible to participate in the study.

4.4.3 Sample size

Since IPA concerns itself with detailed examination of the individual case, followed by analysis of how themes diverge and converge across multiple cases, studies must necessarily use small sample

sizes (Smith & Eatough, 2007). Guidelines for professional doctorates recommend aiming for a maximum of 6-8 (Turpin *et al.*, 1997) or 4-10 participants (Smith *et al.*, 2009). Indeed, it has been found that the mean sample size for IPA studies published between 2006 and 2009 was 12 (Cassidy *et al.*, 2011). If this recommended sample size is far exceeded, only a superficial level of analysis may be achieved (Smith & Eatough, 2007; Turpin *et al.*, 1997), and the richness of participants' individual accounts might be lost amongst the clamour of other voices (Smith & Osborn, 2008; Smith *et al.*, 2009).

For the present study, 11 participants were included in the sample. In total, 13 students signed up to the study from schools A (n=6) and B (n=7). However, two of these students had to be excluded because they did not meet participant inclusion criteria. One female student from school A informed the author prior to interviewing that she was currently receiving Support for Learning (for dyslexia); and one male student from school B informed the author after being interviewed that he was also currently receiving Support for Learning (for behavioural management and social skill development).

4.4 Ethical considerations

Research with children invariably raises a number of ethical issues (Coyne, 1998), as they are considered a vulnerable participant group [British Psychological Society (BPS), 2010]. Furthermore, all qualitative enquiry demands that researchers engage in “*sustained reflection and review*” (Smith *et al.*, 2009, p.53) to ensure that participants’ opinions are faithfully represented. The main ethical issues arising from the present study are outlined below, along with steps taken to address them.

4.4.1. Informed consent

Obtaining true informed consent from participants below the age of 16 has long been recognised a contentious issue (BPS, 2010; Fundudis, 2003). The following measures were therefore undertaken:

- In order to maximise the number of students who received information about the study, school assemblies with mandatory attendance were chosen as the forum for delivering presentations.
- To ensure students fully understood what participating would involve, a second presentation was made to students from school A, as they reported not being able to remember study details due to a time lag between the initial presentation and signing-up phase.
- To confirm that written information about the study was in accessible, age-appropriate language, information sheets and consent forms were run through readability software (Flesch-Kincaid). These were piloted with two adolescents not participating in the study.
- The author’s contact details were provided in information packs and given to Depute Head teachers so that students and/or parents could ask questions about the study at any stage of the project.
- Parental consent was considered mandatory for participation, consistent with previous guidelines and recommendations for conducting research with children below the age of 16 years (BPS, 2010; Fundudis, 2003; Mack *et al.*, 2009).
- Immediately before conducting interviews, the author checked each participant’s understanding of ‘Support for Learning’ and collaboratively defined related terms (e.g. ‘Learning Support base’).

4.4.2 Participant vulnerability and distress

It was anticipated that there was a low risk participants would become distressed during interviews. Questions were designed to gather information about their common daily experiences of learning alongside peers who had special educational needs, rather than probing for experiences that may have caused them upset or distress. However, it was recognised that some students could have such negative experiences to report, and that inclusive education is a politically sensitive topic (Hodkinson, 2010). Safeguards were therefore put in place to minimise participant distress.

To militate against students volunteering for the study when they did not meet participant eligibility criteria, several precautions were taken. The author informed senior school management that students currently receiving Support for Learning were not eligible to participate, and were requested to screen students at the sign-up stage. This stipulation was also made explicit on study information sheets and consent forms (both student and parent versions), and the author checked with students that they were aware of this criterion at the point of signing up and on the day of interviews. Having conducted interviews, Depute Head teachers were again asked to confirm that no participants in the sample were currently receiving Support for Learning. In spite of these precautions, three students had to be excluded from the sample at various stages (sign-up, pre-interview and post-interview), as they reported currently receiving Support for Learning.

The act of excluding these students from a study for which they had volunteered may have been tantamount to rejection for some, particularly when it was on the grounds of receiving Support for Learning. Being excluded from the study could have resulted in students feeling confused, frustrated and possibly stigmatised. The author therefore carefully explained the aims of the study again to students, apologised for the mistake, thanked them for their time, and invited them to use the author's contact details should either themselves or their parents wish to discuss the matter further. School staff were also alerted to this matter, in the event that students later expressed negative thoughts or feelings about the experience. However, no students subsequently approached either teaching staff or the author.

Secondly, while conducting interviews, it quickly became apparent that the majority of students were unaccustomed to talking about inclusive education, and struggled to find words to accurately describe their experiences and views. Some were hesitant when framing their answers, as they reported being afraid of inadvertently causing offence to their classmates with Support for Learning needs. The author therefore provided frequent reassurance during interviews that most people struggle when trying to discuss such issues, as inclusive education is a highly complex and emotive

topic. Students were encouraged to regard the interview as a space in which they could make sense of their personal experiences, and were invited to see themselves as engaging in live 'meaning-making' about a complex issue that no-one fully understands.

Finally, the author strove to ensure that participation would not hamper students' academic progress. Through liaising with Depute Head teachers, convenient time slots for conducting interviews were identified in each school. It was also decided that the incentive for students to participate should be a voucher of nominal value, rather than credits towards an academic subject. This decision was based on two factors: teachers said it would prove difficult to determine a fair number of credits to assign for participating, without disadvantaging students who had opted not to participate; and associations with the curriculum may have inhibited participants from responding honestly to questions about their experiences in school.

4.4.3 Participant anonymity

Writing about ethical practice and the inclusion of verbatim quotes in IPA reports, Smith and colleagues advise, "*Anonymity is all that qualitative researchers can offer. To say that something is 'confidential' is to say that no one else will see it, and this is not the case*" (2009, p.53). Therefore, best practice guidelines state that IPA researchers should inform participants that their views and experiences will be 'represented' in a faithful and sensitive manner, and that quotes will be fully anonymised (Smith *et al.*, 2009; Smith, 2011), instead of promising full confidentiality.

For the present study, several measures were undertaken to ensure participant anonymity throughout the project. At the point of data collection, participants were assigned a random identifier number, known only to the researcher, used to reference verbatim quotes. During transcription, all personal identifiable information was also replaced with an arbitrary code (e.g. 'Mrs X'). Recorded interviews and subsequent transcriptions were stored on an encrypted, password-protected memory stick, supplied and approved by the local NHS Trust. Interview recordings were only listened to by the researcher, and were permanently erased from the recorder once transcribed. In line with data storage guidelines issued by the British Psychological Society (BPS, 2005), hard copies of consent forms and anonymised interview transcripts will be stored in a locked filing cabinet on NHS property for five years before being destroyed.

4.4.4 Ethical approval

A research proposal for the current study was initially reviewed and approved by the University of Edinburgh DClinPsychol ethics committee in August 2011. Ethics approval was sought from the local City Council's Education Board in March 2011, and a favourable opinion was granted in July 2012 (see Appendix 3). The study was also submitted for registration and approval with the local NHS Research and Development department, and a favourable opinion was received in July 2012 (see Appendix 4).

4.5 Procedure

4.5.1 Data collection: interviews

Semi-structured one-to-one interviews are conventionally used to gather data in IPA studies (Smith *et al.*, 2009), and were selected for use in the present study. However, a focus group format was also considered, but then discounted for reasons set out below.

The researcher was mindful that participants were adolescent students, and wished to use a data collection method that would enable them to speak freely and honestly about their experiences of inclusive education - both positive and negative aspects. To achieve this aim, the relative merits of individual interviews versus focus groups needed to be carefully considered. Consultations were held with individuals who had previously carried out research with adolescents (an experienced IPA researcher and qualified Clinical Psychologists), as well as those who work on a daily basis with adolescent students in schools (a local Educational Psychologist and Depute Head teachers from schools A and B). These discussions provided the researcher with a greater appreciation of the pros and cons of both interview formats, which were weighed up alongside relevant literature (Barbour, 2007; Flick, 2007; Smith *et al.*, 2009; Willig, 2008).

On balance, it was agreed that focus groups could potentially offer several advantages when working with this age group. For instance, they could facilitate the discussion of controversial topics by giving peers 'permission' to do so; or they could enhance the study's ecological validity by simulating group processes at work in the classroom. However, it was also recognised that focus groups could bring notable disadvantages. For instance, themes might be skewed by the contribution of dominant individuals, or social desirability biases could inhibit true responding (e.g. students' answers could deviate towards the group mean, or comments could be made simply for peer approval). A technical note also raised by the experienced IPA researcher was that focus group data takes the form of a "messy" collective voice, which proves significantly more difficult to analyse than individual interviews.

In addition, several advantages were identified for using one-to-one interviews, over and above focus groups: it would be easier to develop rapport and a trusting relationship on an individual basis; easier to intervene and clarify students' statements; and easier to tailor questions according to an individual's cognitive ability. One-to-one interviews were therefore selected as the method for data collection. However, focus groups were used to feedback extracted themes to participants in schools A and B, due to ease of delivery.

4.5.2. Interview schedule

Interviews were given structure by a predetermined schedule (*see* Appendix 5), adhered to flexibly by the researcher. Since the aim of IPA interviews is to enter into the participant's 'lifeworld', interview schedules should be open and responsive to participant-led interactions (Smith *et al.*, 2009). Following guidelines for its development (Flick, 2007; Smith *et al.*, 2009; Willig, 2008), the interview schedule included a sequence of five questions that moved from broad, neutral questions about the general topic, to more evaluative questions about students' personal experiences. Follow-up prompts were included in the event that the researcher needed to clarify a statement or elicit further details.

In order to ensure that the schedule was engaging whilst being sensitive to students' developmental age, the researcher elicited advice from several professionals in the field. These included academic and clinical supervisors; an Educational Psychologist; the Quality Improvement Officer for Education and Children's Services in the local health board; Depute Head teachers; and researchers from a special interest IPA group. Feedback on the wording of questions was also sought from two adolescents (aged 12 and 14) from a different health board who were not participating in the study. Following these discussions, minor amendments were made to the schedule before questions were finalised for use.

4.5.3 Pilot interview

In order to test the feasibility of the schedule, a pilot interview was carried out with the first participant recruited into the study. Feedback was sought from this participant about the wording, content and ordering of questions, as well as their experience of the interview process, and ideas for additional questions. The pilot interview was also discussed with a clinical supervisor who had experience of IPA, and who has extensive experience of working in Child and Adolescent Mental Health services. Feedback from both sources indicated that revision of the interview schedule was not required, and that data from the pilot interview could be included in the study sample.

4.5.4 Interview format

Interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis. They took place on school grounds and during school hours, as familiar environments have been shown to put participants at greater ease and

facilitate more open discussions (Flick, 2007; Smith *et al.*, 1995). Prior to each interview commencing, students were reminded that their participation was voluntary and that they had a right to withdraw at any point; that they could choose not to answer an interview question if they so wished, or could ask for a comfort break; and were reminded of the limits of confidentiality. The researcher also established a working definition of inclusive education with each student, using terms that they were familiar with, and based on local provision in their school (e.g. “*Support for Learning is where a student gets help in the classroom from a special teacher, or where they go out to the Base for some of their subjects*”).

In order to ensure that participants felt listened to and understood, the researcher drew on skills developed during Clinical Psychology training (e.g. rapport building, active listening, reflective techniques). At the end of each interview, participants were asked for feedback about the interview process, and were given an opportunity to ask the researcher questions. The duration of interviews ranged between 25 and 52 minutes.

4.5.5 Data analysis

As previously discussed, IPA is committed to carrying out in-depth analysis at the level of the single case, before moving on to cross-case comparisons. This demands that each time the researcher first approaches a case, they must immerse themselves in the data anew, and try to ‘bracket’ themes that have been identified in previous cases, as well as their own biases, values and assumptions (Smith *et al.*, 2009). To assist with this process, the researcher maintained a reflective diary throughout the project (see Appendix 6).

Data analysis was carried out in accordance with Smith and colleagues’ (2009) guidelines, developed primarily for use by novice IPA researchers. Their six-step protocol for analysing interview data is summarised below. Steps one to five describe how to analyse each case on its own terms; step six introduces cross-case comparisons.

Step 1: Reading and rereading transcripts

After transcribing interviews verbatim, the researcher immersed themselves in the data through repeatedly reading individual transcripts. Observations and comments were noted in the researcher’s reflective diary to aid with later analysis.

Step 2: Initial noting

Each transcript was then analysed on a line-by-line basis using the technique of ‘exploratory commenting’. This involved interrogating the data at three levels: descriptive comments (i.e. describing what the participant has said at a superficial level); linguistic comments (i.e. identifying noteworthy ways in which the participant expressed themselves using language, such as metaphor); and conceptual comments (i.e. questioning the participant’s meaning at a deeper, conceptual level). All three ‘layers’ were looked for in parallel. The researcher worked on a computer, and noted comments in the right-hand margin of transcripts (see Appendix 7).

Step 3: Developing emergent themes

By exploring patterns that developed during initial noting, the researcher identified emergent themes, or, “*phrases which speak to the psychological essence of the piece, and contain enough particularity to be grounded but enough abstraction to be conceptual*” (Smith *et al.*, 2009; p.92). Emergent themes should reflect the participant’s initial words and thoughts, as well as the researcher’s interpretation of their meaning (Smith & Eatough, 2007). Emerging themes were noted in the left-hand margin of the transcript (see Appendix 7).

Step 4: Connections across emergent themes

In order to categorise themes that appeared to cluster together, the researcher explored connections between themes. Higher-order descriptive labels – or ‘super-ordinate’ themes – were then devised. To facilitate this process, the researcher drew mind maps of all emergent themes, to visually inspect how they were connected to each other, and how they might best be categorised. To illustrate how super-ordinate themes and sub-themes were developed, a summary table was produced for each participant’s transcript (see Appendix 8).

Step 5: Moving to the next case

Consistent with the idiographic principles of IPA, steps one to four were repeated for each of the 11 transcripts. This enabled the researcher to identify new emergent and super-ordinate themes on a case-by-case basis, and in a data-driven manner.

Step 6: Looking for patterns across cases

Finally, the researcher examined how themes converged and diverged across cases. To do so, each participant's summary table of super-ordinate themes was compared, to distinguish between recurrent themes versus those that were unique to the individual. Although Smith and colleagues have previously stated that the frequency with which themes are reported across the sample is not of paramount importance (Smith & Eatough, 2007; Smith *et al.*, 2009), this has recently been contested. Smith (2011) carried out a 12-year review of published IPA studies, and identified core features of high-quality research. He concluded that when studies have sample sizes greater than eight, super-ordinate themes should be referred to by at least half the participants.

The present study adhered to this quality assurance guideline: super-ordinate themes were only identified if they could be evidenced by six or more participants. The incidence with which participants contributed to a given theme was documented in a frequency table (*see* Appendices 9a and 9b). Lastly, super-ordinate themes were subsumed into a table of 'master' themes, with mind maps again being used to facilitate this process. Master themes represented the views of the entire sample, and were supported by illustrative quotes (*see* Appendices 10a and 10b).

4.5.6 Theories of Child and Adolescent Development

Given participants' chronological age (being predominantly 13 years old), several developmental factors should be recalled when contextualising findings. According to Piagetians, most participants were probably at a formal operational stage of cognitive development, beginning to apply logic and hypothesis-testing to interrogate their social world (Carr, 2006). However, it is likely that the majority would not yet have developed 'dialectical thinking' (Riegel, 1973): the ability to tolerate ambiguity, and weigh up conflicting practical and ethical considerations. This may have led some to hold narrow or rigid beliefs about Inclusive Education. Certain aspects of participants' social development will also have been constrained by their age and stage, such as the ability to empathise with others who are 'different', and form peer affiliations consistent with their values (Newman & Newman, 2003). This may partially explain participants' reluctance to both befriend peers with additional support needs and defend them from peer bullying. Other critical determinants of social development at this age include secure attachments, authoritative parenting, and scaffolding (Carr, 2006). Since most participants expressed dismay at not receiving teacher guidance about Inclusive Education, and some suggested parents had modelled 'disablist' attitudes, it is perhaps unsurprising that their views often reflected negativity and fearful wariness about Inclusive Education.

4.6 Ensuring quality

Debates are ongoing about how quality should be assessed in qualitative research, prompted by years of failed attempts to use the quantitative gold standards of validity and reliability (Flick, 2007; Smith *et al.*, 2009). Although numerous checklists now exist for assessing analytic rigour in qualitative studies (e.g. Patton, 2002; Seale, 1999; Spencer, 2003), no consensus has yet been reached about which checklist should be used for a given type of study (Meyrick, 2006). However, some checklists are based on broad principles about what constitutes good qualitative research (e.g. Elliott *et al.*, 1999; Yardley, 2000, 2008), and therefore transcend theoretical orientations and methodological choice.

Smith and colleagues recently recommended one such checklist (Yardley, 2008) when appraising the quality of IPA studies (Smith *et al.*, 2009). This checklist comprises four broad principles: sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence, and impact and importance. These principles are discussed below, along with how they were evidenced in the present study.

4.6.1 Sensitivity to context

Yardley (2008) suggests several ways in which qualitative researchers can demonstrate sensitivity to context. For instance, sensitivity to the sociocultural milieu where the study takes place, or sensitivity to data obtained from participants. For the present study, two specific contextual factors needed to be taken into account, related to sociocultural milieu. Firstly, interviews were conducted on schools grounds and during school hours, but research questions inquired about students' experience of school life. Secondly, the researcher was a Trainee Clinical Psychologist working for the NHS in a local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service. As a result, power imbalances may have been set up between the researcher and participants (e.g. due to students' preconceived ideas about the NHS and Psychologists), and/or students may have been more likely to engage in socially acquiescent responding (e.g. due to wanting to give the 'right' answer while in school). In order to address both issues, the following strategies were used:

- Prior to conducting interviews, the author explained the role of the researcher to students, distinguishing this from their clinical role in the NHS. Students were also reminded that their participation would not affect any input that they or their families might receive from the NHS in future.

- Participants were reassured throughout the interview process that there were no right or wrong answers, and that the researcher was interested in hearing about their experiences of inclusive education, from their own perspective and in their own words.
- On the day of interviews, participants were informed again about anonymity, and were reassured that their specific comments would not be discussed with teachers or parents, nor would their participation affect their education in any way. The study's independence from school was emphasised throughout the project.

4.6.2 Commitment and rigour

According to Yardley (2008), 'commitment' to one's study refers to extensive engagement with relevant background literature, methodological techniques and gathered data. For the present study, the researcher strove to evidence commitment through: attending monthly meetings and workshops run by an IPA special interest group; carrying out a comprehensive systematic review of the subject area; transcribing all interviews, enabling data immersion; and consulting with various professionals in the field (e.g. Educational Psychologist, Depute Head teachers, Quality Improvement Officer for Children's Educational Services).

Meanwhile, 'rigour' refers to methodological thoroughness, in terms of how appropriate sampling and data collection techniques are judged to be, and how systematic and credible the reader finds data analysis (Yardley, 2008). In the present study, rigour was demonstrated by the following:

- Purposive sampling ensured that all participants had at least one year's experience of learning in an inclusive school, and none were currently receiving Support for Learning. The sample was therefore relatively homogenous, consistent with best practice guidelines (Smith *et al.*, 2009).
- Multiple perspectives were obtained on analysed data (i.e. 'triangulation'). Samples of transcripts were checked by a clinical and an academic supervisor, both experienced in using IPA and in working clinically with adolescents; and participants gave feedback about extracted themes. This feedback provided corroboration of identified themes, as well as suggestions for minor adjustments.

- The researcher routinely checked themes against individual transcripts, to ensure that they were data-driven. Direct participant quotes were also used, as well as tables illustrating how themes were extracted and developed.

4.6.3 Transparency and coherence

'Transparency' refers to the extent to which the researcher discloses and clearly documents all steps undertaken in the analytic process (Yardley, 2008). For the present study, the researcher aimed to render these steps transparent by using summary tables, illustrative quotes from participants, and extracts from the researcher's reflective diary. The principle of 'coherence' refers to whether findings are presented in a way that is consistent with the study's research questions and methodological approach. Efforts to increase coherence included asking clinical and academic supervisors to check samples of analysed transcripts and to periodically review drafts of the write-up. The core underlying principles of IPA (i.e. hermeneutics, phenomenology and idiography) were highlighted in each section of the write-up.

4.6.4 Impact and importance

Yardley's (2008) final principle refers to whether research findings will be of inherent interest to readers, and more importantly, whether findings will make a contribution to applied practice. It is anticipated that findings from the present study – highlighting the views of typically-developing students about inclusive education – may offer new insights to professionals working with students, both inside and outside of school contexts. By understanding gaps in students' knowledge of inclusive education, and the impact it can have on their psychosocial development, professionals should be in a better position to tailor support to meet their needs. Through providing such support, it is hoped that potential mental health problems may be offset for both typically-developing students and their peers receiving Support for Learning.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1:

Study Information Sheet for Schools

Dear Principal,

Study title: The views and experiences of typically-developing adolescents of 'Inclusive Education' in Scottish secondary schools

My name is Helen Bates, I am a Trainee Clinical Psychologist with NHS [REDACTED] Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. I am carrying out research for my doctoral thesis looking at young peoples' experiences of, and attitudes towards, inclusive education. As part of this, I will be holding interviews with students from S2 and S3 in the Y area. I would like to invite you to consider having students from your school participate in this study, which has received ethics approval from [REDACTED] City Council's Department of Education.

What will the interviews involve?

Students will be asked about their experiences of learning in an inclusive classroom. Interviews will last between 1-1½ hours and will be conducted on a one-to-one basis (between myself and the student). They will be audio-recorded. I will also be meeting with students several months later to discuss my findings with them. This second meeting will last approximately 20 minutes. All interviews will take place on school premises during non-class time (i.e. break periods/free study time), as agreed to by teaching staff and students.

Will students' identity be protected?

Only I will listen to recordings of interviews, strictly to aid with transcription. Recordings will then be deleted. When the interviews are typed up, all names will be removed; students will be referred to by a number, so that their identity will be protected. Hard copies of signed consent forms and interview transcripts will be stored securely in NHS offices for five years and will then be destroyed, consistent with best practice guidelines (British Psychological Society, 2005).

What will happen to the results?

I will discuss results of the study with students during our second meeting. If they wish, they can have a written summary of findings, which will be disseminated to participating schools. I will write up the study for my thesis, and hope to publish findings in a scientific journal. I will also deliver a presentation of findings to my colleagues in Psychological Therapies.

Do students have to take part?

Participation is entirely voluntary. It will be made clear to students that they can opt out at any stage of the project. It will also be stressed to students that participation will not affect their education, or any help they might get from NHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in future. Written consent will also be obtained from students and their parent(s).

When is the research taking place?

I hope to meet with staff from interested schools in **May 2012** to discuss the logistics of carrying out this study. I will then contact students by post in **early June 2012**, and deliver a presentation to

them on schools grounds in **mid-June 2012**. Following this, my aim is to carry out interviews during the months of **June 2012** and **January 2013**, with a break for school holidays.

What is next?

Please read the enclosed information sheet providing further details about this study. Should you have any questions or comments, feel free to phone me on [REDACTED], or contact me by email: [REDACTED]

If you are interested in students from your school participating in this research, please fill in the form below and return it to me using the enclosed SAE. I will then contact you in due course to arrange a meeting on school grounds, at your convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Bates
Trainee Clinical Psychologist

Expression of Interest

Study title: Inclusive Education: The views and experiences of typically-developing adolescents in Scottish secondary schools



I am interested in students from my school taking part in this research. I am happy for Helen Bates, Trainee Clinical Psychologist, to contact me to further discuss carrying out this research.

Your name and job title

Name of school.....

Contact telephone number.....

Signed

Date

Thank you

Appendix 2a:

Study Information Sheet for Students

Dear Student,

My name is Helen Bates, I am a Trainee Clinical Psychologist with NHS [REDACTED]. I am carrying out some research looking at what young people think about 'inclusive education' (in other words, **what is it like having someone in your year/class who gets Support for their Learning?**). I would like to invite you to take part in this research.

What would taking part involve?

I would like to meet with you to talk about your experiences of 'inclusive education'. This meeting will last between 1–1½ hours. I will record what we talk about on a voice-recorder. This is so I don't forget anything you have said. I will also invite you to meet me a couple of months later, along with other students who will have taken part in this study, so I can tell you what I found. This second meeting will last about 20 minutes. Meetings will be held in school, during your break or free time.

Will anyone know what I have said?

Only I will listen to the recording of our talk, to type up what you have said. The recording will then be deleted. All names will be removed from the typed report. You will be given a number instead. This means that no-one will be able to tell what you have said. The typed report of our talk will be stored safely in NHS offices for five years.

How will I find out the results?

I will discuss the results of the study with you in our second meeting. If you like, you can have a written summary of the results as well. I will write up the results of our talk for my thesis. I also hope to publish it in a scientific journal. Plus, I will tell people I work with what I have found through a presentation.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you if you decide to take part in this study or not. If you say no, this is okay. You can change your mind at any time and you don't have to tell me why. Taking part in this study will not affect your learning or education. And taking part will not affect any help you might look to get from NHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in the future. Your mum/dad will know that you would like to take part in this study, and they will have agreed to this. Your school will also know you are taking part, but will not be able to identify who said what during interviews.

When is the research happening?

I will start talking to students from your school in **October 2012** and will continue to meet with students **until December 2013**. If you have any questions, please phone me on [REDACTED] or email me on [REDACTED].

If you are happy to take part, please sign the consent form below, and return it to me.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Bates
Trainee Clinical Psychologist

Student Consent Form

Name:

Year/Class:

Study title: Inclusive Education: The views and experiences of typically-developing adolescents in Scottish secondary schools

1. I have read the information sheet for this study.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I have had a chance to talk to someone about the study and to ask questions.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I know I do not have to take part in this study, and that I can stop at any time. I do not have to tell anyone why I want to leave.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I understand that participating in this study will not affect my learning/education, or any support I might look to get from NHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in the future.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I understand that our talk will be voice-recorded, and that only Helen Bates will listen to this.	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I agree to our talks being typed up, and to this report being stored for 5 years.	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I understand that quotes from what I say in the talk will be included in reports of the research findings. I also understand that no names will be used in any reports so that no-one will know it is me.	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I agree to take part in this study.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thank you!

Appendix 2b:

Study Information Sheet for Parents

Dear Parent,

What are young peoples' views and experiences of learning in an 'inclusive' classroom (i.e. where some classmates receive Support for Learning)?

My name is Helen Bates, I am a Trainee Clinical Psychologist with NHS [REDACTED] Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. I am carrying out research for my PhD looking at what young people think about 'inclusive education'. As part of this, I will be holding one-to-one interviews in [REDACTED] high school with students from S2 and S3. I would like to interview your son/daughter.

What will the interview involve?

Students will be asked about their experiences of learning in an inclusive classroom. Interviews will last between 1–1½ hours. They will take place on school premises on a one-to-one basis with myself. Interviews will be carried out during break or free time within the school day. They will be voice-recorded. I will also be meeting with students on school grounds several months later to discuss my findings with them. This second meeting will last about 20 minutes, and will be with the group of students who have taken part in the study.

Will my child's identity be protected?

Only I will listen to the voice recording of the interview, to help type up what was said. The recording will then be deleted. When the interview is typed up, all names will be removed; your son/daughter will be referred to by a number, so their identity will be protected. Hard copies of signed consent forms and interview transcripts will be stored securely in NHS offices for five years and will then be destroyed.

What will happen to the results?

I will discuss the results of the study with your son/daughter in our second meeting. If they wish, they can have a written summary of the study's findings, which schools will automatically have received. I will write up the results of the interviews for my thesis. I also hope to publish findings in a scientific journal. Plus, I will make a presentation to my colleagues in the Psychological Therapies Service to inform them of the findings.

Does my son/daughter have to take part?

Your son/daughter's participation is entirely voluntary. It will be made clear to them that they can opt out at any stage of the project. Your son/daughter's participation will not affect their education, nor will it affect any help they might seek from NHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in the future.

When is the research taking place?

I will start talking to students in your son/daughter's school in **October 2012**, and will continue to meet with students until **December 2013**.

What is next?

If you are happy for your son/daughter to take part, please return the consent form below to me, using the enclosed SAE. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me on [REDACTED] or by email on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,

Helen Bates

Trainee Clinical Psychologist

Parental Consent Form

Study title: Inclusive Education: The views and experiences of typically-developing adolescents in Scottish secondary schools

1. I confirm I have read and understood the information sheet for this study. I have had a chance to consider the information and ask questions.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I understand that my son/daughter's participation is voluntary. I understand that they are free to leave the study whenever they choose without giving any reason.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I understand that my son/daughter's participation will not affect their education. I also understand that it will not affect any help they might seek from NHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in the future.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I understand that the interview will be voice-recorded. I also understand that only Helen Bates will listen to this recording, and will then destroy it.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I agree to the interview with my son/daughter being typed up, and to this report being stored securely on NHS premises for five years.	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I understand that direct quotes from the interview will be included in reports of the research findings. I also understand that no names will be used in reports of the findings, so that my son/daughter's identity will be protected.	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I agree to my son/daughter taking part in this study.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Parent's name **Child's name** **Date** **Parent's Signature**

Appendix 3:

Ethics Approval from local Education Department

**[REDACTED] CITY COUNCIL: EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
APPLICATIONS TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH**

- (a) Approved without conditions (b) Approved with conditions
(c) Undecided (d) Refused

Please tick the appropriate box and give further details/reasons below for categories (b), (c) and (d).

Signature of Authorised Officer

[REDACTED]

Date

19/7/12

Please return this form to:

[REDACTED]

Appendix 4:

Ethics Approval from local NHS Research Ethics Service

EoSRES



East of Scotland Research Ethics Service

Medical Sciences Centre
Residency Block C, Level 3

Helen Bates
Trainee Clinical Psychologist
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

Date:
Your Ref:
Our Ref:
Enquiries to:
Extension:
Direct Line:
Email:

July 10th 2012

12/GA/059

Dear Helen,

Re: The views and experiences of typically-developing adolescents of 'Inclusive Education' in Scottish secondary schools

You have sought advice from the Research Ethics Office on the above project. I have considered this and can advise that this does not require ethical review under the terms of the Governance Arrangement for Research Ethics Committees (GAfREC) in the UK. The advice is based on the following documentation provided to me:

Document	Version	Date
Letter to Principal	Not specified	June 5 th 2012
Expression of Interest by Schools	Not specified	Not specified
Student Information Sheet	Not specified	Not specified
Student Consent form	Not specified	Not specified
Parent Information Sheet	Not specified	Not specified
Parent Consent Form	Not specified	Not specified

- You are undertaking a study involving S2 – S3 school students as part of your doctoral studies
- You will require an ethical opinion from the Education Board, City Council

Please note that this advice is issued on behalf of the Research Ethics Service Office and does not constitute an opinion of a Research Ethics Committee (REC). It is intended to satisfy journal editors and conference organisers, who may require evidence of consideration of the need for ethical review prior to publication or presentation of your results.

Appendix 5: ***Interview Schedule***

1. What's it like being in this school?

Prompts:

- What are the people in your class like?
- Is there anyone who gets 'Support for their Learning'?

2. Tell me about the first time you met someone who got Support for their Learning.

Prompts:

- What kind of a person were they?
- Can you think of a more recent example?
- Do you know anyone else like this outside of school (e.g. someone in your family)?

3. What's it like learning in a classroom where some people get Support for their Learning?

Prompts:

- What's good or bad about it?
- What do you think other people in your class would say?
- What's it like for your teacher?

4. If you got to be in charge of your class/school for the day, what bits would you keep the same? Is there anything you'd change to make things better?

Prompts:

- To help you?
- To help everyone in your class?
- To help the people who get Support for their Learning?
- To help your teacher?

5. Is there anything else you'd like to add, about this interview or the questions that were asked?

Appendix 6: ***Extract from Reflective Diary***

12th February 2012

What definition of 'Inclusive Education' will I use during interviews?

- Stick with a broad, neutral one – no accepted definition exists anywhere in the literature, so look at terms previous researchers have run with:
 - Most common one is teaching students with any kind of special educational need (cognitive / emotional / physical), in the classroom or in an attached learning support base or unit
 - Must remember, not a fishing expedition! Don't know what to expect, as this study has never been done before with Scottish teenagers, so follow their lead, and ask really open-ended, neutral questions
 - Plus, given my dual role (researcher / CAMHS trainee) and background interest in this area (previous jobs, personal experience of being student in an inclusive school), all the more reason to stick to neutral, non-leading questions, and use a wide open definition of Inclusive Education

- Vast majority of studies show that students are baffled by Inclusive Education and don't have much disability awareness... How will I get around this?
 - Will have to try to elicit specific examples from students about their real life experiences. But, I can't use examples of classmates to bring specific diagnoses to life (e.g. "How do you feel about X in your class who has a diagnosis of ADHD"? – students probably wouldn't be aware of their peer's condition, and could be stigmatising to single out students that way, defining them by their disability/diagnosis
 - Instead, before starting each interview, might be an idea to ask participants to define Inclusive Education/SfL themselves, using terms they understand and/or have heard elsewhere. We could then use this as a 'working definition' throughout each interview..? Check with Educational Psychologist and supervisors

**Appendix 7:
Extract of Coding**

EMERGENT THEMES	Line No.	INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT	EXPLORATORY COMMENTING <i>Key</i> : Descriptive; <i>Linguistic</i> ; Conceptual
<p>Didn't know what to think or expect – classroom unsafe and unpredictable? Lack of explanation by teachers Desire to find out more: asked questions amongst selves Assumption could not ask Sfl peer – fear of upsetting him? Sudden unpredictable burst of rage TD students disempowered, but directly affected Wanted guidance about what behaviour to expect of Sfl students Perceives students need Sfl if struggling with their work Limited vocabulary (repetitious): limited knowledge? Sfl students as homogenous group, defined by need? Struggling to explain Sfl Reasons cited for receiving Sfl do not include disabilities Us/them – social distancing Overwhelming number of Sfl students in primary Lowered expectations . Pathologising?</p>	<p>133 134 135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144 145 146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157</p>	<p>and.. it was just.. you didn't know really what to think or expect, so.. yeah I: Did it change how you were around him afterwards? P5: Well not, not much, but we began to ask questions about why he got so angry and stuff, but he didn't.. – well not to his face, obviously, but just to each other –we were wondering why did he get so angry, all he got told to do was to spit his chewing gum out or something, and then he went off his lid, so.. We were just.. wondering what happens next I: Mmm. And I wonder, is there anything that you would've liked to have happened, to help you understand it a bit more? P5: Em, well we could've been told, like what we were supposed to expect. Because in primary we had a unit that all the people with disabilities went to if they were, like, struggling with their work. Well if they were struggling with their work they went to, em, a teacher that did helping out with letters.. like, a dyslexic teacher, you know, like someone who helps the dyslexics. So they all went to them, and then there was a special unit for people who were like em.. hard to explain but, they couldn't talk, or they were too shy to do stuff, and they didn't have enough <i>confidence</i> in themselves, so there was a lot of people who were in that Unit, there were two rooms full of them, but we didn't really expect much of them because you knew that something was wrong</p>	<p>Confusing – overwhelming, unpredictable. Turned preconceptions on their head. Lack of safety and stability. No explanatory or predictive framework. How can students learn in such an environment? TD students wanted to understand why got so angry, as was reasonable request. <i>Emphasis (obviously) – assumption that would not be possible to ask Sfl student about why he had had an outburst. Social norm. Scared of upsetting him – or scared of him?</i> <i>Figure of speech (went off his lid) – sudden unpredictable burst of rage. Wondering what happens next – trying to anticipate next steps, without being informed. Disempowered, though directly affected by classmate's behaviour. Calling for guidance and education to prepare selves for attack?</i> <i>The dyslexics – perceived as homogenous group. Lack of individual identity – or, due to limited vocabulary?</i> <i>Hard to explain – struggling to describe Sfl. Lack of info given in primary school as well.</i> Several reasons cited for receiving Sfl (couldn't talk, too shy, not confident). Disabilities not mentioned – why? <i>Two rooms full of them – distinguishing Sfl from TD students. The 'other'; social distancing?</i> Lowered expectations because had been made explicit n school that something was <i>wrong</i>. Unwittingly pathologising – or realistic appraisal of their ability level?</p>

Appendix 8:

Extract of Participant's Summary Table

Key: Superordinate themes; Emergent themes

UNDERSTANDING SfL	ATTITUDES TOWARDS SfL
<p><i>Struggling to describe SfL</i> Hesitation and uncertainty Frustration at lack of vocabulary</p>	<p><i>Passive indifference</i> Not really bothered Doesn't really affect us</p>
<p><i>Multiple functions of SfL</i> Getting learning back on track Critical period for intervening Teaching students to fend for themselves Boosting self-confidence</p>	<p><i>Defensive justification</i> There's nothing to be ashamed of It's not a bad thing</p>
<p><i>Perception of SfL teachers</i> Lower-order professional Disciplinarian or confidante Initially does everything for SfL student</p>	<p><i>Multiple benefits to SfL students; no negatives</i> Can feel 'normal' No longer isolated and hidden away Learn to tolerate differences of opinion TD students help SfL students if teacher is absent Mood improves when interact with TD students/classes Grow in confidence Increased agency and self-identity Fewer behaviour problems</p>
<p><i>Indirect sources for understanding</i> Not teachers; own observations and reflections Asking SfL students</p>	<p><i>Minimal benefits for TD students</i> SfL teacher also helps TD students if beckoned over Visibility and interaction reduced fear of PWD's</p>
<p><i>Lack of understanding</i> TD students do not understanding cause of behaviour Lack of disability awareness</p>	<p><i>Multiple negatives for TD students</i> Teacher is focussed on SfL students; have to wait turn Must draw on personal resources to cope with SfL Surviving SfL – not thriving SfL students can jeopardise opportunities for the whole class through "stupid" behaviour Frustration at SfL peers who are disruptive, and undermine process of effortful learning Double standards for TD vs. SfL students' behaviour?</p>
<p><i>Barriers to increasing understanding</i> Lack of teacher guidance or information Afraid teacher's reaction would be punitive/critical Asked SfL students, but they did not know either SfL only rarely discussed in class</p>	<p><i>Minimising negatives of SfL</i> Extent of negative impact on TD students minimised SfL as frustrating for class teachers, but assumed not to have massive impact on them</p>
<p>IMPROVEMENTS TO SfL</p>	<p><i>Submissive acceptance</i> TD students must accept IE; powerless to change it Stops short of fully articulating frustrations Adding SfL pupils to the class puts teachers under pressure, but they must accept it as part of their job Principle of IE more important than focussing on barriers to its implementation</p>
<p><i>Employ more SfL teachers</i> To accompany SfL students in class</p>	
<p><i>Employ school counsellors</i> To help understand SfL To facilitate self-</p>	
<p><i>Educate TD students about SfL</i> Initially minimised Cause of SfL students' behaviour – satiate curiosity What behaviour to expect - increase predictability in class</p>	

Appendix 9a:

Frequency of Themes ('Struggling to Make Sense of SfL')

Key: P1-11 = participants; X = theme present; **X** = quote cited in write-up; O = theme not present

SUPERORDINATE THEMES	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	Incidence (out of 11)
Process of trying to understand SfL										O		10
- detective work	X	X	X	X	X	X		X				7
- parental modelling:												
a) positive attitudes				X	X			X	X		X	3
b) negative attitudes				X				X				2
- change across time		X	X	X			X		X			5
Reasons students get SfL									O			10
- different cognitive capacities:												
a) 'different'		X	X	X	X	X	X				X	7
b) blaming attributions			X								X	2
- physical disabilities:				X		X		X				4
a) empathic			X	X				X			X	3
b) blaming	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	8
- achieving full potential												
Gaps in knowledge about SfL												11
- struggling to give details about SfL			X	X		X					X	4
- confused facts about disabilities	X		X		X			X	X		X	6
- insight into gaps:												
a) "don't know"		X		X	X		X	X		X		6
b)TD don't understand SfL, but lack insight		X							X		X	3
c) schools aren't aware of TD students' gaps			X	X	X				X	X	X	3
- desire to fill in gaps				X	X		X		X	X		6
- inhibits help-seeking					X				X			2
Barriers to understanding SfL	O											10
- lack of teacher guidance			X	X	X			X		X		5
- hidden disabilities					X	X	X	X				4
- limited TD-SfL peer interaction				X	X	X		X			X	5
- private issue		X							X	X		3
- anxious avoidance of topic:												
a) with TD peers		X				X	X					3
b) with SfL peers						X	X		X	X		4
c) with teachers				X								1

SUPERORDINATE THEMES	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	Incidence (out of 11)
Ways to increase understanding	O	O						O				8
- teacher guidance:												
a) explain roles and logistics			X		X							2
b) hold class discussions					X				X			2
c) teach as part of curriculum									X	X		2
- student forums					X	X	X		X			4
- increase TD-SfL student contact:												
a) buddying systems											X	1
b) cooperative learning				X								1

Appendix 9b:

Frequency of Themes ('Benefits and Dangers of Sfl')

Key: P1-11 = participants; X = theme present; X = quote cited in write-up; O = theme not present

MASTER THEMES	SUPERORDINATE THEMES	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	Incidence
1. BENEFITS OF Sfl	Containment	O		O	X	O	O					O	6
	- of Sfl peers' emotional outbursts				X			X	X				3
	- disciplinary function							X	X	X			3
	- reassurance for TD		X							X	X		3
	- chaos without:												
a) for TD students			X	X		X	X	X		X			6
b) for class teacher				X				X	X			X	4
2. DANGERS OF Sfl	Peer Learning		X	O		X			O		O	O	7
	- exposure to diff learn styles		X			X				X			3
	- normalising differences/relative s+w	X				X	X	X		X			5
	- extra tuition		X										1
	- overcoming adversity		X		X	X		X		X			5
2. DANGERS OF Sfl	Risk factor for bullying	O											10
	- witnessed incidents		X			X	X	X	X		X	X	7
	- pernicious attitudes:												
	a) The Other				X	X	X		X			X	5
	b) Lower social status				X		X					X	3
	- lack of protection:												
	a) Peer defence					X	X		X	X		X	5
	b) Teacher intervention			X		X							2
	Magnifies difference	O									O		9
	- Primed to notice difference:												
a) General intolerance					X				X		X	3	
b) Drive to conform											X	1	
- Over-generalising differences/low expectations					X	X	X					X	4
- Sfl socially undesirable:													
a) Shame				X		X	X	X		X			4
b) Mark of inferiority		X	X		X	X							3
c) Exclusionary						X	X	X	X			X	5

MASTER THEMES	SUPERORDINATE THEMES	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	Incidence (out of 11)
2. DANGERS OF SfL <i>(continued)</i>	The Unknown: resentment, anxiety, confusion - Resentment: double standards - Anxiety: volatile behaviour by SfL peers - Confusion: unpredictable SfL teachers	O	X		X	X	X	O	X	O	X	X	8 6 2 2
	Students disempowered - Imposed on TD students: a) Excessive help b) Pairing up - Imposed on SfL peers: a) Unwanted support b) Unable to assert selves and refuse support - Learned helplessness: a) TD students b) SfL peers	O	O	X	X	X		O					X

Appendix 10a:

Extract of Master themes ('Struggling to Make Sense of SfL')

Key: MASTER THEMES; *Super-ordinate themes*

BARRIERS TO UNDERSTANDING SfL	Participant Quotes
- <i>Lack of teacher guidance</i>	<p>"I don't think we were ever introduced to the people who came in... They could have just said, 'This teacher is here for Support for Learning'" (P3);</p> <p>"Because we were <i>young</i>, I don't think teachers thought that we'd understand" (P4);</p> <p>"I used to have a girl from the year above in my Drama group, like she was just there one day. Like you don't get an explanation of why they're there or anything; it just <i>happens</i>" (P5);</p> <p>"Well no, it hasn't exactly been explained to us" (P8);</p> <p>"We've not been taught as much about the <i>mental</i> disabilities part of it" (P10)</p>
- <i>Hidden nature of disabilities</i>	<p>"For some people it is quite obvious, and then other people, like.. it's not" (P5);</p> <p>"You can't really <i>notice</i> it on someone.. It's not like it <i>marks</i> you" (P6);</p> <p>"It's sort of the type of person who you wouldn't really think would get it" (P7);</p> <p>"Like maybe anger issues, you can't like <i>see</i> that, it's not in their appearance" (P8);</p> <p>"I-I never knew he had a disability, probably because I couldn't <i>see</i> it, it was just a <i>mental</i> disability" (P8)</p>
- <i>Lack of interaction with SfL peers</i>	<p>"In primary four, you'd never see them" (P4);</p> <p>"Most of them either speak to people who are in Support for Learning, or they actually all have it" (P5);</p> <p>"I do <i>speak</i> to them, but I'm not friends with them" (P6);</p> <p>"Oh yeah yeah! Sorry, I'd forgotten about her! I just don't really speak to her a lot" (P8);</p> <p>"I used to hang out with them in primary, but not anymore. Cause I'm not really in most of their classes" (P11)</p>
- <i>Private, intimate issue</i>	<p>"Personally, I think that if we don't need it, and our learning is to the standards it should be at this age, it's not really got anything to do with us" (P2);</p> <p>"I don't think he wants to share it with me, cause it's not really my thing to know" (P9);</p> <p>"It's kind of not my business" (P9);</p> <p>"I speak to my friend about her dyslexia, and she doesn't mind speaking about it, cause we're quite close" (P9);</p> <p>"You wouldn't ask anyone that.. Because it's their business, and you don't really want to pry into their lives" (P10)</p>

Appendix 10b:

Extract of Master themes ('Benefits and Dangers of SfL')

Key: MASTER THEMES; Super-ordinate themes

STUDENTS DISEMPOWERED	Participant Quotes
<p>- SfL imposed on and unwanted by TD students:</p>	<p>"I think we've come to em, <i>deal</i> with it more, now that we've been around it for a year" (P3);</p> <p>"It's like.. the Learning Support teacher's brain, not the pupil's. Cause like, we're..not actually getting to use our own heads.. Like, she just gives <i>massive</i> hints, then.. you feel a bit.. angry, and wish you could do it by yourself.. But you don't really want to <i>say</i> anything, so you just sit there, and put as much as you can forward before they get a chance to <i>ruin</i> your train of thought" (P3)</p> <p>"People have kind of coped with being in classes with people with disabilities and learning disabilities" (P4);</p> <p>"I think that teachers don't really think that it's important to explain, because they just think that we'll <i>know</i>, and that we'll just understand it, and be fine with it" (P5)</p> <p>"She was complaining that she didn't want to be put in the bottom class because she was already good at PE anyway, but she had to be put in a SfL class" (P11)</p>
<p>- SfL imposed on and unwanted by SfL peers:</p>	<p>"The boy that's in my Science class.. he's..quite clever, like, you'll hear him saying, like, scientificy stuff. But when the teacher comes, he just <i>sits</i> there" (P3);</p> <p>"I think she'd want it to be a <i>choice</i>. Like she doesn't want to be so far behind.. if she does eventually go back, she's got, like, a year or two years of catching up to do, which isn't really very fair on her" (P5);</p> <p>"He doesn't really feel like he <i>needs</i> that extra help, but em, all the rest of teachers think that he is needing that help... You can see he doesn't <i>like</i> it, but he just deals with it when it happens... Or sometimes he just walks out of class" (P7);</p> <p>"He says he doesn't think he needs it in certain subjects. He thinks he needs just a little bit of extra help in certain subjects, but he doesn't need it in other ones... It's sort of gotten better through the years, cause he's learned how to deal with it.... But sometimes they feel like they don't need it, but then, they're <i>scared</i>, because they're not social, so they're scared to tell the teacher that they don't need it" (P9)</p>
<p>- Learned helplessness:</p>	<p>"It's not good and it's not bad, it's just kind of <i>there</i>" (P3);</p> <p>"It's not something that, em, I'm really <i>bothered</i> about" (P4)</p> <p>"Whenever the teacher does finally get around to you it's a bit better, because you know what you're doing and then they'll go back to them, so...it's , em, fine" (P4);</p> <p>"It's kind of, just.. <i>there</i>, and it is what it is" (P5)</p> <p>"Well, everyone will get used to <i>something</i>" (P10)</p>

Appendix 11:

Author Guidelines for 'Disability and Rehabilitation' (relevant extracts)



Disability and Rehabilitation

Instructions for Authors

Disability and Rehabilitation is an international interdisciplinary journal and particularly welcomes contributions from a wide range of professional groups, including medical practitioners, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech and language therapists, clinical psychologists and those involved in nursing, education and engineering.

Disability and Rehabilitation is organised into sections: Reviews; Research Papers; Case Studies; Perspectives on Rehabilitation; reports on Rehabilitation in Practice, Education and Training and Correspondence.

Word Limit

There is no stated word limit to papers submitted to *Disability and Rehabilitation*. It should however be noted that space is at a premium and therefore succinct and well-constructed papers are more likely to be reviewed positively. However, the key to evaluating a paper will be the quality of the work along with the methodology adopted particularly for qualitative studies which do tend to be longer.

Abstracts

Structured abstracts are required for all papers, and should be submitted as detailed below, following the title page, preceding the main text.

Purpose State the main aims and objectives of the paper.

Method Describe the design, and methodological procedures adopted.

Results Present the main results.

Conclusions State the conclusions that have been drawn and their relevance to the study of disability and rehabilitation.

The abstract should not exceed 200 words.

References

References should follow the Council of Science Editors (CSE) Citation & Sequence format. Only works actually cited in the text should be included in the references. Indicate in the text with Arabic numbers inside square brackets. Spelling in the reference list should follow the original. References should then be listed in numerical order at the end of the article. Further examples and information can be found in *The CSE Manual for Authors, Editors, and Publishers, Seventh Edition*. Periodical abbreviations should follow the style given by Index Medicus.