University of Strathclyde

School of Education

What agency do students with Complex Additional Support Needs have in educational subject choice in Scotland and what are the factors that determine this?

By

Maggie Macaskill

A thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of Doctorate in Education

2021

This thesis is the result of the author's original research. It has been composed by the author and has not been previously submitted for examination which has led to the award of a degree.' 'The copyright of this thesis belongs to the author under the terms of the United Kingdom Copyright Acts as qualified by University of Strathclyde Regulation 3.50. Due acknowledgement must always be made of the use of any material contained in, or derived from, this thesis.

Signed: M.Macaskill

Date: 3/9/21

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have made it to completion without the unwavering support of certain key people. I would like to acknowledge firstly, my husband, Peter Gurney. Without his patience and commitment to looking after our young and neuro diverse family I would not have been able to find time to research and write. Thank you, Peter. I know you will be breathing a big sigh of relief as you hear me click ‘submit’ on this final copy!

Secondly, my senior supervisor Jane Essex. Long before I was allocated a second supervisor, she single-handedly gave me the confidence to carry on when I didn’t think I could. Her advice, support and camaraderie have seen me through my darkest times. I thank her for her patience during my voluntary suspensions when it all got too much, and my personal circumstances were overwhelming. I know also that working with my ADHD was very challenging at times, she probably wanted to give me a good shake but was supremely patient instead!

Finally, my second supervisor, Yuchen Wang. Yuchen’s academic advice and gentle nature have been invaluable in supporting me both as a writer and a person. I am in awe of your intelligence.

Thank you also to my viva examiners and chair, who provided excellent advice in order to allow me to proceed with this final version. Thank you for your time. To Inge, I really don’t think I could have continued without your moral support.

This cannot pass without a mention of my three children Finn, Sam and Tess. They’ve seen me grumpy; they’ve experienced my absence but they truly understand that it is important to get the voice of our most vulnerable learners out there and for that I am blessed.

To all of the young people who took part in this research and who continue to be marginalised due to lack of awareness in the wider education system, I will get your voices out there and we will move forward. This will continue to be my priority.

Abstract

Under the overarching concept of Additional Support Needs (ASN) there are many different categorisations of presentation. Students with Complex Additional Support Needs (CASN) are a small and exceptional group with multiple, overlapping and significant disabilities who are hard to characterise due to the heterogeneous nature of their presentation. Students with CASN have been noted to be marginalised in many ways including omission from policy, lack of research participation and restriction of access to certain educational subjects, as a result of restriction of agency. Attitudes of others have played a huge part in this restriction of agency because there has been a historical focus on remediating perceived deficits for this group, with adults often making decisions on behalf of pupils. My research aimed to uncover the factors that influence the educational experiences of pupils with CASN and illuminate ways forward in order to reduce marginalisation. The voices of these wonderful and unique learners are rarely heard in research and policy related to Scottish education. This research gives students a voice and proposes how exclusion and restriction of agency can begin to be rectified.

Six pupils from a large ASN school in Scotland took part in a semi-structured interview on their experiences. Significant consideration was given to ethical aspects of the study and communication supports were used. Ten teachers from the CASN department of the same school also took part in a semi-structured interview to uncover their views on the education of pupils with CASN. In addition to the interviews, 124 teachers with CASN experience took part in an online questionnaire about their views and experiences. Following transcription of data, thematic analysis was conducted which revealed key findings. The key findings from the study were that pupils' experiences are influenced by a variety of factors, including the attitudes of others. The ways that teachers think about education in the field of CASN can be hugely influential, this research found that most teachers had views that tallied with Social and Capability models of education. In addition, teachers' experience of and commitment to inclusive pedagogy where the learning is tailored to each pupil as an individual was clear. Lack of experienced staff in the field of CASN was an issue that teachers felt very strongly about. Newer staff benefitted from the expertise of more experienced staff, and little was available in terms of more formal training to meet the needs of this diverse group.

Teachers indicated that awareness raising around CASN and of the issues and challenges within the field must be carried out in order to improve pupils' experiences. In the school studied, pupils could make choices and a sense of agency was evident. However, this was based on their experiences in that particular setting hence, this research comes from a relativist position.

In conclusion, I found that there were many different factors that influenced pupils' experiences and impacted on their agency to make choices across the curriculum. However, awareness raising in the form of a professional learning package for all staff, specific inclusion in policy and a charter of 'educational rights' could serve to improve the picture of education in Scotland for pupils with CASN.

Contents

Abbreviations

ASL	Additional Support for Learning
ASN	Additional Support Needs
CASN	Complex Additional Support Needs
CFE	Curriculum for Excellence
CLPL	Career Long Professional Learning
GIRFEC	Getting it Right for Every Child
ICF	The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health
MFL	Modern Foreign Languages
PMLD	Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (English definition)
SERA	Scottish Educational Research Association
UNCRC	The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Tables and Figures

1. Introduction

Disability is, by its very nature, difficult to define. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) describes it as an evolving concept in which someone's physical or mental impairments interact with societal barriers and prevent equality of access to participation. In terms of Scottish education, the Additional Support for Learning Act (2004, amended 2009) introduced new terminology to describe students who required support to benefit from or access education. The term Additional Support Needs (ASN), unique to the Scottish context, replaced other wide-ranging terms such as 'special needs'. The ASL act offered a wider range of issues that might affect children and young people during their school years. These factors can be anything from a physical or mental disability to a variety of circumstances such as poverty or being accommodated outside the family home. This means that the classification of a pupil as ASN it is no longer contingent upon a clinical diagnosis. Additionally, a range of potentially intersecting characteristics are better accommodated. However, with the blanket application of ASN as a classification comes the risk of underestimating the needs of our most complex and unique young people, overlooking diversity.

In Scotland, there are 215,897 pupils (30.9% of all pupils) with a recorded additional support need (ASN). (Scottish Government, 2019b, p.16). The summary statistics census of 2019 identified that of 697,989 pupils in Scotland 7,132 were placed in one of approximately 149 local authority special schools in Scotland, 40 independent schools or 7 grant aided special schools (Scottish Government, 2019b). Such statistics do not identify numbers of pupils with CASN specifically but as can be seen, the issues which will be discussed in this thesis may affect a large number of young people.

The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act (2000) introduced the concept of the presumption of mainstreaming for all learners with additional needs, except where there were exceptional circumstances. The concept of 'exceptional circumstances' is often applied when a child has complex needs and requires highly specialised input. "While most children with additional support needs are educated in mainstream schools, some with complex or specific needs are educated in special schools" (Scottish Government, 2019b, p.5)

Inclusion has become a much-discussed concept in today's educational climate and is commonly understood to mean that students with differing needs and abilities will be educated in the same place. This research, however, examines the ways in which professionals think about education and whether subjects are accessible to all learners including those with complex needs. As a researcher who has significant experience of teaching in the ASN sector, I have developed a passion for working with young people who experience Complex Additional Support Needs.

These are a unique cohort of learners with exceptional presentation who the Riddell Committee (The Scottish Executive, 1999) identified as young people with severe low-incidence disabilities. These young people account for less than 0.1% of the total pupil population in Scotland. They require a higher level of support to ensure that their exceptional needs in daily life (including education) are met. These include, adaptation of the environment, individualised pedagogical approaches, increased adult support and specialist resources such as communication devices. These students are most commonly defined in Scottish education as having Complex Additional Support Needs (CASN). It appears that a concrete definition of what CASN encompasses has been elusive and others have suggested that this is because such students cannot be grouped in a homogeneous way as their needs are vastly different (Anastasiou & Kauffman, 2012). Changing attitudes towards the education of students with CASN will be examined during the literature review via the variety of ways that educators have viewed models of the education of students with ASN over time and the influence that this has had on educational experiences. The impact that this has had on students' educational experiences, particularly in relation to subject choice, will be illuminated via the presentation of the research.

The ways in which professionals think about ASN and learning can be significantly influential (Hamill and Boyd, 2002), not only their professional practice, but also on the experiences of their pupils. Staff may have different ways of thinking about the ways in which learners with CASN access education. Potentially subjective priorities, opinions or attitudes impact on how students identified as CASN access education and, in particular, have agency to make choices about their own education based on likes and motivations, as opposed to preconceived ways of working (Council for Disabled Children, 2013). To illuminate key issues, teachers' viewpoints must be uncovered to establish in what way they impact on the agency of students.

Binder (2019) refers to agency as the freedom reflect on one's own goals and act based on opportunities offered. To get at the heart of this, the experiences of students with CASN in the education system must also be understood in order to ascertain what opportunities to take part in different subjects are being offered to them by schools. If they are not being offered equal subject choice, it would be valuable to know what the factors preventing this are.

As can be seen, there are a huge number of children who issues such as barriers to learning and lack of agency may affect. Additionally, they may be excluded from educational policy by omission (Imray & Colley, 2018; Slee, 2018). Imray and Colley (ibid) noted that young people with more complex needs were often not mentioned in educational policy and a literature search of Scottish policy reveals a similar trend. Therefore, it is very difficult to assess via reading, what their situation is. This research hopes to get at the root of the issues that affect these huge numbers of our young people in the education system, specifically those identified as having CASN, who are harder not only to quantify due to the varied nature of presentation (Scottish Executive, 2006; Riddell & Weedon, 2010) but are also excluded by omission from both research (Boxall & Ralph, 2011) and policy. Although the language of 'all' is used in much of Scottish educational policy, it is important to examine this critically from the viewpoint of CASN as this often means, in reality, all except those with complex needs. In light of this, concepts such as ableism and othering will be woven into the discussion. In 2002, Hehir wrote that ableist assumptions 'pervade' the education of young people with disabilities. Ableism is a term that describes the ways in which attitudes (consciously or unconsciously) favour those without disabilities, hindering access. In the case of the policy discussed, the policy focus on 'all' contradicts the standardisation of pedagogies and approaches implemented in practice. This leads to those with CASN being seen as something 'other' (Mik-Meyer, 2016).

The study took place within the context of a large ASN school in Scotland. The school, having opened in 2016, is a relatively new facility which brought together three establishments to form the new, larger establishment. Within the school exist five departments for early years, primary, secondary, complex (medical/physical) and complex (behaviour support). Whilst I do not believe that the complex departments have been named in the most positive way, there is a presumed distinction between the cohort that attend each, in this respect. The school has recently implemented a subject-based curriculum within the secondary department.

This ties in with my own experience of teaching Spanish to secondary-aged pupils with CASN, which I have used to exemplify the situation for one subject in greater depth. Therefore, secondary-aged pupils from the complex departments attend subjects outside their base classes on a rotational basis, the subjects are led by secondary teachers and supported by staff from the CASN department who travel with the pupils. Within the participants there was a mix of teachers from both the secondary department and the CASN departments.

1.1 Aims/Focus

The focus of this research is to illuminate the experiences of pupils with complex needs and the factors that impact on their educational experiences. In particular, the relationship between attitudes of teachers and pupils' agency to make choices in school and across the curriculum was investigated.

A range of factors that impact on CASN pupils' agency will be illuminated and a way forward will be discussed.

1.2 Justification for Research

This huge, unaddressed population of exceptional young people with CASN will go on to become exceptional adults whose lives could be improved through increased recognition of their capacity and ability to make decisions. Illuminating ways in which young people with such disabilities experience education and access the curriculum would have the potential to improve teaching and learning as well as foster equality. Mietola et al. (2017, p.264) argue that 'It is thus reasonable to argue that people with PIMD (CASN) are probably the most marginal group of disabled people both in society and in research'. Nario-Redmond, Kemerling and Silverman (2019) argue that those with significant disabilities have been "failed" (p. 1179) because they have not always been recognised as a minority group who are subject to the same forms of discrimination as other groups, meaning that we do not know enough about how to change the way that society frames them. People with significant disabilities are often the only family member with a disability, and as a result, may grow up without the peer group or experience of culture to counteract forms of ableism or discrimination as they occur. (Nario-Redmond, Kemerling & Silverman, 2019)

I have been an ASN teacher for 20 years, the last five specialising in Complex ASN. My experience has led me to believe that Scotland does not really achieve equity of experience for all learners with exceptional health, physical and cognitive needs. I have observed through experience that equitable practices vary, not only between schools, but also between different professionals. For example, the majority of multi-agency meetings I have attended were not attended by the CASN pupil in question. Pupils' voices were eliminated from discussions, with adults tending to make decisions about what was best for the pupil. In school settings, subjects tended to be chosen for pupils with CASN by school leaders or teachers, again, according to what was deemed appropriate for that pupil. Additionally, as manager of a school department for pupils with complex needs, I experienced first-hand the lack of knowledge, experience and training on CASN available within the general body of teachers. Linked to this, I have experienced what will be described as the 'antiquated' (Skinner and Smith, 2011) belief that certain subjects are too challenging for students with CASN to take part in. This was brought to life for me in my previous role as a teacher of English and Modern Foreign Languages. Particularly in Modern Foreign Languages, I encountered objections to the inclusion of pupils with CASN in classes based on staff perceptions that the subject would be too challenging for such pupils. This led me to consider in greater depth, not only Modern Foreign Languages, but also the overarching concept of the agency to make choices across the curriculum, for these pupils. In this thesis Modern Foreign Languages will be used to exemplify this notion in a particular subject area, before considering the wider picture.

My research aims to examine the experiences of students with CASN, alongside the views, experiences and attitudes of teachers involved in their education. Seeking both sets of data will give a rounded view of the concepts under consideration. Factors that impact on the agency of students are sought, particularly in relation to subject choices. It is hoped that elucidation of the factors that influence the experiences and agency of young people with CASN will illuminate a way forward in improving the educational experiences of young people with CASN. In light of these intentions, the research questions for the study are listed below.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What are the experiences of students with CASN in relation to subject choices across the curriculum?
2. What are the views of teachers of students with CASN in relation to pupil choices across curricular subjects?
3. Do teachers' views on educating students with CASN affect the agency of those students when making curriculum choices?

1.4 Criteria for Reviewing the Literature

The following chapter of this thesis provides a review of literature surrounding the topics discussed. Prior to this, the information below gives an account of the inclusion and exclusion criteria which were used to assist in sourcing the most pertinent and valuable literature to inform the study. My research employed a semi-systematic or narrative approach towards reviewing the literature (Snyder, 2019; Braun & Clarke, 2006) which allows for the development of themes across the literature to emerge. The ways in which disability and the education of young people with CASN are conceptualised have changed over time and across research traditions, as will be illustrated in the section of the thesis on models.

An initial literature review was conducted. The review centred on books, policies and journal articles relating to ASN education and agency, models of thinking about disability and education and how these each allowed for agency of the individual. This was narrowed down to CASN, educational subjects and access to these, with a focus on teachers' views of students with CASN and their education. Whilst it is important that the complexity of the education of young people with CASN is captured, it is also necessary to ensure that only literature relevant to the study is included.

Peer reviewed articles were favoured within the literature review in order to increase validity of research questions. Research post the year 2005 was favoured, except in the case of seminal texts such as Bourdieu (1973). Due to the gap in research within this area, in some cases supporting research was used that pre-dated 2005, where pertinent. Limitations of the literature review included the sole focus on young people with CASN, the curriculum for young people with CASN in a special school and the experiences of young people with CASN as opposed to those who attend mainstream and do not experience CASN.

Following the initial literature review, an extension of the literature review focussed on the particular subject of Modern Foreign Languages as a subject-specific example. The scope of the literature review was to identify the key themes relating to young people with CASN, their agency and their experiences of education. Inclusion and exclusion criteria for the literature review are detailed in the table below.

Table 1: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria for Literature Review	**Exclusion Criteria for Literature Review**
Post 2005 (unless seminal) is favoured, however, it should be acknowledged that there is little available research around some of the key themes. In these cases, older research has been cited.	Articles older than 2005, unless strongly linked, supportive, or seminal when a theme has little available research.
Peer reviewed, pertinent 'grey' literature e.g. specialist research or reports by charities	Not peer reviewed
Focussed on inclusion for pupils with ASN	Relating to experiences of mainstream pupils
Policy specific to ASN and inclusion in Scotland	Policy from other countries, unless used to exemplify
Models of disability	
Discussions on agency	
Experiences of young people with ASN/CASN	Studies which do not elucidate experiences
The curriculum as experienced by young people with CASN	The curriculum experienced by mainstream pupils
Pedagogy for CASN	General pedagogical approaches
Inequality for CASN/ASN	
Examples of good practice/studies on subject specific inclusion	Studies which relate solely to practice for mainstream pupils
Subject specific inclusion for ASN/CASN	
MFL and ASN	MFL in mainstream education not pertaining to inclusion

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction to Literature Review Chapter

This literature review will begin by presenting a picture of these exceptional learners, whose situation is impacted on by tensions around the lack of clarity in defining what it means to have complex educational support needs and furthermore, the impact of such a label. Young people with ASN are often subject to restricted choices in many areas of life, including education (Wright, 2008; Stalker & Moscardini, 2012). This study will examine whether our most exceptional young people, those with complex needs, are empowered to make agentic choices across the curriculum or whether they are restricted by the attitudes of others. Therefore, the following section will consider agency as a concept and how it relates to learners with CASN. The lack of representation of the voice of these pupils across many areas will be illuminated. The way in which society perceives individuals with disabilities has been subject to change over time, influencing the degree of agency experienced. Scottish policy scaffolds which promote the idea that all learners will have equal access to all aspects of education, from setting to subject choice, will be examined in order to uncover what is professed to be in place to ensure equality for this group. It appears that very little is written in Scottish policy pertaining specifically to this group of individuals, in order to illuminate their circumstances. Subsequently, the argument that these young people are not fairly represented in educational policy, nor do they benefit from a research-based curriculum, will be discussed in light of the impact of this.

Furthermore, models of how disability is understood, which can assist with framing perceptions of conceptualising ASN, will be examined in light of the agency that they afford disabled individuals. The relationship between the conceptual models, agency and education will be examined. The importance of attitudes towards agency associated with different models of thinking about ASN will be highlighted as central in terms of analysing common perceptions about those with disabilities. Additionally, Maslow's (1943) hierarchy will be used to exemplify what each model might look like in practice as each model plays out in the education of young people with CASN and their capability to exercise choice. It appears that many Scottish developments stemmed from or occurred subsequently to developments in other parts of the UK, particularly in England. With that in mind, the historical element of this piece of research in relation to terminology will connect both in order to unify such developments.

Following the discussion on attitudes which may influence the educational experiences of young people with CASN, a discussion on subject choices will be developed. Research which elucidates examples of restricted access to subjects will be highlighted and pedagogical approaches which facilitate choice will be explicated. The links between staff attitude and responsive pedagogy will be discussed before narrowing the focus through a critical examination of Modern Foreign Languages education to allow deep consideration of the situation in one particular subject.

The literature review will conclude by presenting pedagogical approaches to facilitate agentic, active educational choices for these exceptional young people. The review of the literature aims to draw together the scant research available, elucidate issues and perhaps provide clarity in an area fraught with uncertainties for this unique cohort of learners. Key themes will then be highlighted and presented in a summative table to allow for the link between these and the proposed research to be elucidated.

2.2 Exceptional Individuals with CASN

2.2.1 Complex Additional Support Needs: definitions and dichotomies

The legislative framework provided by the ASL act (2004, amended 2009) applies to the education of all children with additional support needs in Scotland. Notions of equality and entitlement, as are of interest to this study, are scaffolded by seminal pieces of legislation such as The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014), The Equality Act (2010) and GIRFEC. However, for Scotland's learners with Complex Additional Support Needs there appears to be a disjunction between policy and government rhetoric on the inclusion of all where misunderstandings of inclusion as mainstreaming appear to be actioned. To distinguish between the terms, inclusion involves full belonging and participation, whereas mainstreaming may involve a child simply being present in the classroom. The way that this is played out in the lives of young people with CASN in the education system will be discussed in the section that follows. It will be argued that the actual picture looks questionably different to what has been set out in government policy due to omission of factors specific to CASN therein.

This section of the literature review will also discuss definitions of CASN in relation to the heterogeneous nature of this group. One of the issues that has been uncovered is that a

clear definition of CASN is lacking and this impacts on awareness, not only of this unique cohort, but of their representation in the education system.

As will be highlighted, there are tensions around whether or not labelling a child is helpful. Additionally, it will be argued that very little is written about the everyday lives, experiences and education of this group of young people. The theme that this is illustrative of the general representation of this group across policy, research and society will be argued and the impact of this on agency discussed.

2.2.2 Defining CASN- to label or not?

Many definitions given for CASN (often intertwined with the term PMLD) have emerged from the literature review, as illustrated below.

Children and adults with profound learning disability have extremely delayed intellectual and social functioning with little or no apparent understanding of verbal language and little or no symbolic interaction with objects.. (Samuel and Pritchard, 2001, p. 39)

Or

IQ under 20 (in adults, mental age below 3 years). Results in severe limitation in self-care, continence, communication and mobility (World Health Organisation, 2007).

Whilst it is not desirable to compartmentalise individuals, it is unfortunately the case that services can be accessed with greater ease when an individual is categorised in this way (Scottish Government, 2006). Ho (2004) discusses labelling related to diagnostics and points out the dilemma that many individuals face in that the label itself can ensure access to various services and entitlements yet can also lead to exclusion and stigmatisation, particularly in the case of more 'severe' medical needs. Ho argues that these dilemmas must be acknowledged and resolved before truly inclusive education can be realised. As highlighted, some believe that a more robust definition of what complex needs actually is would ensure that funding is allocated to students who require it the most (Rankin & Reagan, 2004). This is another example of the dichotomies that play out in the everyday lives of those affected by disability.

Within education, changing or unclear terminology indicates that CASN is viewed as an issue to be defined. Aiming, perhaps in order to solve the 'problem' of how best to identify,

support and allocate resources towards students within the education system. Conversely, there may be tensions around removal of labels.

Ho (2004) examines research on parental attitude towards the removal of category labels for young people with ASN and points out that previous researchers have identified high levels of parental anxiety associated with this concept ,including the fear of access to support services being withdrawn. However, Ho argues that these categories of impairment could actually be withdrawn if educational establishments were more accepting of diversity, especially given that it is recognised (Ho, 2004) that the provision of recognised specialist support or withdrawal can lead to further stigmatisation. Additionally, authors such as Robinson and Goodey (2018) question why society needs or accepts fixed definitions and argue that these can further the notions of teachers that young people remain at all times within the confines of their diagnosis. Again, there are issues that would benefit from being brought to the forefront.

Many authors have argued that definitions of complex needs (also sometimes referred to as Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities or PMLD) typically focus on deficits within the individual. This presents difficulties in terms of the attitudes to CASN that this fosters. For example, Cologon (2022) argues that labelling in PMLD is plagued by tensions such as failure to recognise individual differences, discrimination and overly diverse use of terminology. Young people with CASN are each unique and exceptional, blanket definitions may lead to perceived homogeneity. Perhaps, as Soder (1989) argued, if we adhere to the stereotypes associated with labels then we risk employing ‘standardised routine treatment’ (p.120) with all young people labelled with CASN, regardless of individual differences, ignoring the strengths of individuals.

Additionally, Shifrer (2013) argues that “deficiency” (p. 465) is implied through a label which can therefore incur fewer costs to teachers’ responsibilities by shaping teachers’ expectations around achievement for certain pupils. Shifrer found that educational expectations of both teachers and parents were lower when a child was labelled with a learning difficulty. Therefore, Shifrer argues that the label itself can lead to the negative stereotype which then leads to lower expectations. Again, a self-fulfilling prophecy which may translate to lower achievement. Shifrer suggests that if we sought to understand the subjectivity associated with labelling, our expectations would be higher. Instead, we run the risk that labelling a young person “seals their fate”, (p. 476). Commenting on a series of

articles relating to the stigma of labelling, Livingston (2021) argues that stigma arising from labelling sustains social hierarchies which exclude certain groups.

Livingston makes reference to labelling theorists in the 1960s who brought the idea that the language we use plays a huge role in the creation and perpetuation of stigma. It shapes public attitude and enforces norms, justifying poor treatment such as low expectations, inaccessibility and exclusion. In relation to education, Cologon (2022), highlighted the issue that young people with labels such as 'severe' or profound' (p.395) impairments are at greater risk of educational segregation.

Coupled with the fact that that many definitions that do exist focus on what people with CASN 'cannot' do (Cologon, 2022), it can be assumed that this influences the degree of agency that people with CASN have. The deficit definition leads the focus towards the 'cannot'. Whether this results in limited opportunities for these young people to have agency will be examined. Additionally confounding is the lack of clarity in conceptualising definitions and adopting consistent terminology to appropriately define this set of circumstances. People with CASN are often described as having 'complex', 'severe', 'multiple' or 'profound' disabilities across different literature. In 2007 The Scottish Executive noted that 'there is a lack of consensus of definition and understanding of what is meant by 'multiple and complex needs' (Scottish Executive, 2006, p.12). This may impact on how individuals are treated, for example, Robinson and Goodey (2018) identify two types of teachers- those who treat children as individuals, regardless of diagnosis and those who adhere to the confines of labels (p. 428). The impact of this on young people's agency could be usefully elucidated. What is clear is that there are areas where clarity or awareness of exceptional individuals is lacking, there is a lack of consensus both of definition and of whether labelling is the best way to ensure that these unique individuals are accommodated for. However, perhaps it is not a definition that is needed *per se* but an elucidation of the unique position of those with CASN in society. The following section will examine the impact of lack of clarity on awareness of the unique attributes of this group, influencing the many areas where this group is misunderstood or under-represented.

2.2.3 CASN: an unconsidered minority?

In light of the previous discussions, whether the lack of clarity in defining this group is reflective of the lack of representation in many areas (or whether it contributes to it) is worth unpacking. For example, correct terminology is considered essential by some authors (Rankin & Regan,

2004) as it has a significant impact on policy and practice and can prevent services from fully understanding the connected nature of needs and their impact on each other.

This potentially means that when the needs of the individual are not fully understood then the needs of the individual cannot be fully met, even with policy in place which has the aim of ensuring that all bases are covered. Certainly, it is less likely that someone will have a degree of agency if people do not understand the supports that are necessary to make this happen. Those with the most complex and multiple needs are often at a disadvantage when it comes to accessing services (The Scottish Executive, 2006).

This may have impacted on understanding what it means to have CASN. The Scottish Government report (2019b) on the ten-year strategy for the education of those with complex needs highlights data from research responses from individuals involved in the education and support of students with CASN.

In addition to this, training and professional development for those who work in the field would enhance understanding of how to ensure needs were fully met. Indeed, some authors such as Anastasiou and Kauffman (2012) give credence this position by arguing that there is no common definition and that by attempting one we are disadvantaging such learners. Perhaps acceptance of individual differences is what is needed, as suggested by Florian (2015), who suggests that what is needed is a change of approach in order to accommodate and differentiate for a wide range of learners, within everyday classroom lessons. Anastasiou and Kauffman (2012) argue that this group cannot be seen as homogeneous due to their varying needs, and by using distinct terms such as ‘disability’ or CASN we risk oversimplifying as opposed to viewing students as individuals. Perhaps this means overlooking unique abilities and differences. The area of CASN appears to be fraught with uncertainties such as this.

There is a definite need for these learners to be acknowledged, otherwise their cohort will remain a cohort which the general population of teachers believe isn’t relevant to them. This group of children and young people require considerable support to access education. Current evidence suggests that students with ASN in general, are less likely to achieve expected Curriculum for Excellence Levels (Scottish Government, 2016) and a report by Enable in 2017 found that only 49% of students with ASN felt that they were achieving their potential at school. Previous researchers have found that students with CASN, in particular, do not always have equality of access to subjects within the curriculum including music,

modern foreign languages and PE (Wright , 2015; Mccoll, 2005; Stalker & Moscardini, 2012; Sullivan et al., 2014).

This is an example of social injustice for young people with CASN. Through this research I hope to suggest ways in which it can be remediated. The next section will consider overarching policy and the place of pupils with CASN therein. For example, there is a Scottish strategy report on the education of pupils with CASN (Scottish Government, 2019a) but still, as will be argued, pupils with CASN have not been adequately reflected in educational policy to account for their unique requirements.

2.2.4 Policy responses to a diverse learning population: the CASN gap

To get a full picture of how young people with CASN are positioned within the education system in Scotland it is important that underpinning policy and guidelines are considered. Certainly authors such as Imray et al. (2017) and Slee (2018) have pointed out that learners with complex needs are often not mentioned in policy. The full range of intersecting factors that create an individual's experience of disability are reflected in the fact that Scottish discourse encompasses social policy considerations. For example, Riddell and Weedon (2014) refer to Scottish social policy discourse in relation to children with ASN. They define Additional Support Needs as resulting from 'a range of factors including social, sensory, physical or cognitive difficulties' (Riddell & Weedon, 2014, p.364) and argue that these are factors which mean that they require support to benefit from education. The ASL Code of practice (Scottish Parliment, 2010) refers to a small number of children who will need more support in the form of a multi-agency Co-ordinated Support Plan, due to complex and multiple factors affecting their education. Educational guidance documents attempt to encompass provision for all learners. For example, documents produced by Education Scotland frequently refer to equality of access to education for all learners. It can be assumed that the implication of such phraseology is to ensure that all learners are considered as one group, including those with CASN. Depending on how one looks at it, this can be viewed as an 'anti-othering' agenda. Othering is a sociological concept whereby groups perceive those who are different from societal norms as unlike and even inferior to the rest of society (Mik-Meyer, 2016). Contrastingly, it could be viewed that by failing to mention these learners we are excluding or othering them, by failing to acknowledge how their exceptional needs can be fully met through educational policy. Certainly, Riddell and Weedon's (2014) reference to discourse indicates that pupils with ASN are considered in

educational policy but whether this encompasses adequately the circumstances of pupils with CASN is worth consideration. Is including them under the umbrella of ASN enough?

In terms of the curriculum, Stewart and Walker-Gleaves (2020) acknowledge widespread difficulty in adopting consistent approaches in this field due to disagreements on not only what purpose the curriculum serves for these learners, but also what the expected outcomes should be. This ties in with dilemmas associated with responding to individual differences, as noted by Florian (2015) who suggested that there was variability across schools and teachers. The existing generalised provisions do not raise awareness of what it means to have complex needs, it seems that these young people really are the unconsidered minority within the ASN population.

Individuals with CASN have a range of severe and complex disabilities that impact significantly on their day to day lives and experiences. In Scotland, the presumption of mainstreaming (Scottish Government, 2000) means that most students with ASN are educated in mainstream establishments. However, these students are most likely to be educated in specialist settings due to the complexity of their needs (Scottish Government, 2019). Much previous Scottish policy has indicated that the same rules with apply for all learners with ASN through the use of the language of ‘all’. The specific issues that affect pupils with CASN are lost in the wider ASN agenda. A gap in the research becomes evident at this point. If an entire cohort of learners is lost in the wider inclusion agenda, then it is possibly the case that aspects of their education are adversely affected by this omission. Perhaps omissions in policy occur when the needs of certain individuals are not fully understood by policy makers. It begs the question, do policy makers understand what CASN is? Further in this section, it will be argued that the lack of awareness in this area is consolidated by the paucity of research that has involved this group. If there is a lack of research, then policy cannot be research-based.

The reality for this group is that policies on education and inclusion in Scotland do not seem to cover their circumstances. In addition, a great deal of the research uncovered through the literature review process has been carried out on students defined as generally having ASN who are educated in mainstream establishments as opposed to specialist schools. This may contribute to a lack of understanding of what it means when policy writers consider what it means to have complex needs in the education system. Therefore, this could give credence to the notion that the issue has been largely overlooked in the main Scottish policies and guidance. In recent years Scotland has issued some assessment materials

(Education Scotland, 2018) in the form of milestones to base judgments about progress on. This, however, is guidance on educational attainment rather than an overarching policy document.

It separates young people with CASN out from the general education system without elucidating what their position within the general population of learners is through reinforcing policy. Giving credence to the notion that this is the case, Colley (2018) argues that the field has been largely overlooked within dialogue, inclusion policy and practice.

Building the Curriculum 3 states that 'Every child and young person is entitled to receive a broad general education' (The Scottish Government, 2008, p.14). However, young people with CASN have additional requirements which mean that significant adaptations will be needed, to allow for full participation in curricular subjects. If their requirements are not elucidated in curricular documentation, then it is difficult to envisage that those teachers less experienced in the field will be aware of them. It also means that their experiences could be dependent on how individual practitioners or school leaders interpret policy, as well as their attitudes towards children with particular labels. Indeed, despite the fact that the framework to ensure that students with additional needs are able to access the whole curriculum is purported to be in place, as predicted, some researchers have found that there are issues preventing this from happening for all students with ASN (McColl, 2005; Imray & Colley, 2018). This is particularly apparent for those with more complex needs. In Scotland, teachers of pupils with CASN are expected to follow the curriculum with little guidance on how to meet their requirements. Shipton and O'Nions (2019) interviewed PMLD teachers in England and found that many staff felt helpless when it came to teaching complex learners, factors that contributed to this were how education might look and lack of clarity around what a good PMLD provision or teacher might entail. Lack of clarity around, curriculum, expected outcomes and accessibility were also cited. As noted in MFL, for example, teachers demonstrated antiquated attitudes around the importance of vocabulary recall (Skinner and Smith, 2011). Whilst it is not desirable to marginalise pupils with CASN further via a separate curriculum, policy makers must understand that there is potentially a disjunction between their expectations and the reality of pupils with CASN. Policy appears to be far less understood than government rhetoric would expect, particularly in relation to complex learners. For example, Imray and Colley, refer to 'exclusion clauses' (Imray & Colley, 2018, p.20) in policy and claims that they almost always refer to students with complex needs. Slee (2018) gives credence to this by referring to the "yawning interpretive chasm", of caveats within legislation into which many children with disabilities fall (p. 25). For example,

we often refer to the presumption of mainstreaming brought about by the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act (2000) with the caveat except in exceptional circumstances.

It begs the question, what does education look like for these exceptional young people and are they justifiably included in the blanket 'every child and young person'? In 2012 Peter Doran (Doran, 2012) reported on educational provision in CASN and subsequently, the Scottish Government produced a ten year strategy to improve learning provision for students with complex needs (Scottish Government, 2019a). The document details strategies for issues like attainment for students with CASN. It sets objectives and strategies to make these things 'better' for students with complex needs. Although claiming to take pupil views into account, there is very little reference specifically to pupil voice. Arguably, additional guidance is needed to make the situation of students with CASN explicit. However, separate documents may reinforce the notion that these students are marginalised which is another of the challenges that those working in the field are presented with. This section has highlighted some of the dichotomies that exist within the field of CASN. Firstly, the lack of clear definition and whether, in fact, a definition or label may contribute to negative attitude. Secondly, whether this lack of clarity contributes to omission from policy due to lack of awareness.

2.2.5 Research gaps

Upon conducting this literature review it became apparent that there were several gaps in the research, a literature search returns scant results. In addition, a great deal of the larger-scaled peer reviewed research which was returned focused on deficit language, categorised presentation and used generalisation rather than looking at the unique and positive attributes of people with CASN. For example, a study by Petry and Maes (2006) looks at expressions of pleasure and displeasure in individuals with complex disabilities using terminology such as 'non-ambulatory', 'behavioural categories' and 'critical incidents'. This arguably depersonalised and scientific style of investigation into areas around the concept of CASN feels bereft of the voice of the participant. The sense that participants have little agency in such a process comes through strongly me, as a reader who has enjoyed and benefitted from days spent with these wonderful young people. This seems almost at odds with their lived experience and the experiences of many of those who support them.

Research which examines the lived experience of individuals with CASN is rarer. However, upon examining the literature related to this there is a noticeable difference in the language used.

For example, a study by Brigg, Schuitema and Vorhaus in 2016 looking at laughter in four individuals with complex needs, described their participants using phrases such as '*Above all, Murilo is a sociable boy who likes to interact with others; although he has no more than a handful of words, he communicates with familiar adults by pointing, signing and vocalising and by means of facial expressions.'* P.1182. These authors had studied a smaller group of participants in depth, getting to know them as individuals. Here, more of a sense of the young person's agency comes through. Larger studies may omit the individualised nature of presentation, which is fundamental to this group, therefore failing to acknowledge or recognise unique capabilities. This is another challenge for researchers working in the field. Researchers have extolled the value in researching the experiences of disabled children (De Haas et al., 2022), although some (Mietola et al., 2017) suggest that disability research for individuals with CASN has been conducted "'on' them, not 'for' them" (p.1), ignoring the unique contribution that they have to make. They are marginalised by being less featured in key pieces of research, in addition to the point noted earlier when the notion of exclusion by omission in key educational policy was introduced. In addition, very little current research focuses solely on this group within a Scottish context.

Therefore, it is difficult to escape the fact that little is written about this group of unique individuals who collectively come under the blanket term CASN. Further research could heighten awareness of what it means to have CASN and prove beneficial in terms of awareness raising, so that CASN effectively becomes something that people 'know about'.It stands to reason that lack of research in this field leads to further exclusion of this group in terms of everyday awareness. This, in turn, contributes to lack of agency. If this group are not 'known about', how can adults facilitate or respect children's agency? A group can only be given agency if they are afforded the means to do so, this can only be done by people who know what they need to achieve it. To illuminate the situation further detail, the concept of agency in this study will be examined in relation to educational choices. This will begin by examining the concepts that underpin agency, such as voice and involvement.

2.2.6 The importance of the voice of those with CASN

Historically, the voices of young people with complex needs on matters that affect them in schools have been under-represented. The VIPER report (Council for Disabled Children, 2013) found a historical lack of consultation with students with complex additional support needs in special schools on matters not thought relevant to them such as sexual health and employment.

However, the report argued that when the correct methods are used to facilitate participation it can be very successful at ensuring that pupils are afforded the same agency as non-disabled peers. It has been difficult to locate more current research that illuminates these issues.

This study is concerned with pupil agency to make choices across the curriculum. Where previous research had found little evidence of agency, Cooper et al. (2000) listed important factors to consider when providing children with ASN an educational experience that was valuable to them. These included being valued, involvement, being listened to and 'power to influence things' (p.193) as discussed in relation to agency. Indeed a report by the Council for Disabled Children entitled the VIPER (Voice, Inclusion, Participation, Empowerment and Research) Report, in 2013, found that children with the most complex Additional Support Needs were often excluded from participation in decisions and choices within services such as education, health and even the voluntary sector (Council for Disabled Children, 2013). Reasons given by research participants for these types of exclusions ranged from lack of wheelchair access to students requiring a high level of support with communication.

Stalker et al. (2015) argued that there are factors such as cuts in public funding for those with disabilities are undermining the agency of disabled children. These cuts are at risk of affecting disabled individuals more severely due to the fact that there is a link between disability and low income. Many disabled people and their families are reliant on welfare benefits (Stalker et al., 2015). Cuts in funding may also affect disabled students' experiences of education. For example The Doran Review (Doran, 2012) found that cuts in funding for initial teacher training meant that there was a reduction in ASN specialist lecturers on initial teacher training courses. This means that teachers may be less equipped to deal with the needs of students with CASN, a factor which could impact on the experience of a students with a disability significantly if ways to afford them agency are not understood. Giving credence to this, Shipton and O'Nions (2019) found that only the most experienced teachers had the confidence to adopt creative and bold approaches to adapting the curriculum to make it accessible for leaners with CASN. Whilst those with less experience felt less

confident. These exceptional young people require experienced staff, or at the very least, staff who are aware of their existence as learners. Recognition within training would ensure that there is no excuse for these learners not to access their right to have their views heard. This lack of available expertise may compound the situation where young people with CASN are unconsidered in curricular documentation.

This means that only a small pocket of 'experts' know about their requirements and that their experiences are heavily influenced by the way things are done by individuals. In order to have their voices heard they must be given the adaptations necessary to meet their requirements in terms of communication, wellbeing and agency.

The issues addressed give credence to research by (Kelly & Byrne, 2015) who present the editorial for a special edition of Child Care in Practice. This edition of the peer-reviewed journal highlights the importance of research which illuminates the experiences and voices of children with disabilities. In their editorial Kelly and Byrne summarise some of the positive legislation and policy involving disabled children and their position as rights holders including the UNCRC (1992) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (2006). Additionally, they acknowledge that there have been significant developments in research involving disabled children but also state that the area remains 'under-theorised' (Kelly & Byrne, 2015, p.2) and would benefit from additional research, particularly that which comes from a critical perspective within fields such as education, health and psychology. In addition, the bank of research on specialist settings specifically is limited (Cleary, et al., 2019; Cleary et al., 2014).

What is clear is that this group is beset by a 'lack' of representation in many areas such as research, policy, curriculum, general knowledge. Therefore, if true agency for these unique individuals is to be realised, this must change. The following section will examine the concept of agency with specific reference to promoting agency for unique individuals with CASN.

2.3 Agency

2.3.1 Agency for exceptional learners

In order to make choices across the curriculum and have greater ownership of their learning, pupils require a degree of agency. Wright (2008) argues that the appropriate curricular balance for these exceptional learners is crucial and that those with the most valid opinions

on whether this has been achieved are the pupils with CASN themselves. Wright also gives credence to the idea that choices can be limited for this group.

Agency is a foundation of choice realisation (Terzi, 2008) and therefore, whether this group has agency is crucial to establish as part of the process of investigating curricular choices. Without agency, pupils may not experience equality of opportunity to make choices across the curriculum. Curricular choices for these pupils may not be straightforward, for example young people with Complex Additional Support Needs frequently require support with communication as part of, or in addition to their presentation. Some have argued that this number is as high as 90% (Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists, 2013). Difficulties can range from speech and language impairments which can be supported by a range of teaching approaches and therapies, to a complete absence of verbal communication which may require the use of communication aids and supports as appropriate. Therefore, staff not only need to be committed to viewing young people as agentic but also skilled in supporting their communication to enable choice making. De Haas et al. (2022) state that to foster a sense of belonging, different forms of communication should be valued and supported.

This section of the literature review will examine agency as a concept, discuss some of the possible influences on the agency of young people with CASN, going on to focus on staff attitude. Students with CASN are often reliant on staff for their everyday needs, so it stands to reason that staff attitude to the affordance of agency will be hugely influential, for example Davis and Watson (2000) identified situations where staff were actively constraining the agency of pupils by presuming that young people lacked to competency to make choices or participate in activities. Further on in the literature review a discussion on reduced access to Modern Foreign Language education for pupils with ASN will illuminate the ways in which this may play out through reduced curricular access. Staff attitude will be illuminated via different models of thinking about disability that have evolved over time. The impact that each way of thinking has on pupil agency will be highlighted and related to educational choices.

2.3.2 What is agency?

Agency is a term that can have many meanings, depending on the context of the literature or field in which it is being discussed. Where scientific fields have historically attributed agency to all types of objects, plants and creatures without distinguishing its different forms, Gruber et al. (2015) argue that psychologists' understanding has evolved to consider agency

as attributed to “self” (p.24) and the way people (not brains or bodies) act on all forms of power.

Terzi (2008) defines agency as “Actively choosing one’s own broader goals, and of achieving them” (P.140) whilst Sen (1992) acknowledges agency as one of the important aspects in allowing individuals the freedom to make life choices that are valuable to them. Agency can be expressed on an individual or collective basis and as a broad term in relation to individuals, refers to expressions of the power of the individual through their thoughts and actions. Likewise, Gruber et al. (2015) link agency with the power of self-direction in humans or organisations and argue that it has become an important concept when considering moral and political issues, particularly when the agency of a group or individual is constrained in some way. Therefore, the group of young people whose experiences of curricular choice are illuminated by this research may be constrained by the way that others perceive their ability to make choices and be active agents in their own learning. Binder (2019) links agency with the freedom that individuals have to make choices from the opportunities offered to them. Sociological perspectives look at the relationships between context, time and individual agency, recognising that agency is not static across situations (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). Moreover, agency is influenced by a variety of factors, particularly the structures that can constrain or facilitate agency. Sociological perspectives take the view that the extent to which the individual can act on their environment will depend on the interplay between such factors. This research will use the sociological concept of agency to illuminate the agency of young people with CASN in a specialist setting to make choices across the curriculum and the factors that influence this. When agency is constrained, an individual may have limited ability to make choices.

I have experienced this within the subject of Modern Foreign Languages, therefore MFL will be used as a case example to probe the issues which may impact on equality of curricular access. Such issues are particularly complex, as often, students with CASN require adult input to realise or communicate their agency (De Haas et al., 2022). Therefore, the way that the adult views disability is likely to impact on the extent of the agency afforded to the young person. This can have ramifications for the extent that young people are given a voice to make choices within their education. As was highlighted by the Council for Disabled Children in 2013, there is a history of young people with disabilities having less agency that their peers when it comes to participating in decision making. Additionally, research has also highlighted the influence of attitude displayed by supporting adults when it comes to including young people in decision making (Davis & Watson, 2000), with some children not

listened to. For young people with CASN, it is important that ongoing issues are uncovered in order to better understand how agency can be achieved.

2.3.3 Agency and this study

In light of the influence of adult input highlighted above, in addition to the link between agency and structure, the extent to which learners are afforded agency in the special school setting is examined. Additionally, an important part of the research process was to establish whether students with CASN are being offered the opportunity to choose to take part in all curricular areas. Previous researchers have indicated that students with CASN (often termed Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities, in England) are often assumed not to have the capacity for meaningful agency. Mercieca, Gilmer and Wieseman (2013) ask:

> *But how does one write about agency, when very often this concept is not even considered an issue in students with PMLD? Or have we a limited understanding of agency when it comes to these students, where the narrative of students with PMLD is missed out as it is assumed that such children cannot tell their own story?* (Mercieca, Gilmer, & Wieseman, 2013, p.5)

Giving credence to the quote above, Davis and Watson (2000) argued that disabled children are often denied the opportunity to be seen as competent to take part in decision making. In the case of MFL, Wight (2015) found that MFL as a subject was often deemed unsuitable for students with more complex needs due to the language demands of the subject. Approaches such as this compound the difficulty in the realisation of agency for these young people. If students are deemed to lack the capacity to participate in subjects or decisions regarding their education, then this lack of perceived capacity equates to lack of agency. Giving credence to this, Adams (1998) investigated pedagogy in special schools and found that students had little agency to make choices because a great deal of behaviourist style rote learning took place. Adams found that students were highly controlled due to behavioural issues (p.182) and their experiences were bland. However, as Davis and Watson (2000) suggest, if adults are proactive in their approaches to children's communication, take power relations into account and question their own assumptions about children's capacity to make choices then this could transform the picture. An influential theorist who recognised the importance of the context in which a child is situated was Bronfenbrenner (1979). In Bronfenbrenner's theory of child development there is a reciprocal relationship between the child, the teacher and the school environment, all influence each other and impact on the development of the child.

Bronfenbrennner viewed these interactions as crucial to the development of the child but crucially, viewed the child as agentic in the interactions in terms of the ability to exert their own influence on their immediate environment, which he called the 'microsystem'. Writing on ableism, Holt (2007) argues that, very often, children are expected to change rather than the systems and practices around them. Indeed, I argue that with the right environment, and supportive adults who strive to recognise and facilitate agency young people with CASN should be able to make choices across the curriculum. A useful outcome from this study will be the elucidation of the current picture of this in a specialist setting, in 2020. For these pupils, adults' views on their capacity may be bound up with the realisation of their agency. For example, some authors have argued that some children may not be able to accurately assess and make decisions about what is best for them (Soar et al., 2005) requiring adults to make decisions on behalf of the child. The following section examines the link between views on capacity and agency.

The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) (World Health Organisation, 2002) defines capacity as one of the components of functioning and disability. Capacity is graded on a scale of severity from 'no problem' to 'complete problem' and indicates the highest level of functioning a person may reach in a standard environment when considering ability to perform a task or action. Harris and Riddell (2011) argue that the concept of competence of the child to participate is seen as 'crucial' (p.16) to legal professionals. Interestingly, agency has been referred to as the 'capacity to act' (Taylor, 1985, p.27) which shows the entwined nature of the two concepts. The ICF defines capacity as 'an individual's ability to execute a task or an action' (World Health Organisation, 2002, p.15). If an individual is deemed not to have capacity to make decisions, then it is common practice to have someone who knows them well to interpret their views or make decisions on their behalf. In the case of pupils with CASN, this can often be a parent or a staff member (McKay, 2014). Despite the classification of capacity by the WHO (2002), it appears that capacity is not only influenced by the pupil but also by adults' perceptions of them. In this respect, capacity cannot be something that is fixed. There are many factors that influence judgements about capacity, dependent on the interaction between the pupil, staff, and the setting in which the judgement takes place. The role of adults or staff working with young people with CASN has played a role in the capacity of young people with CASN (Harris and Ridell, 2011), as will be discussed in the following paragraph.

Adults are often perceived as the ‘voice’ of children with complex needs (Harris & Riddell, 2011) when it is judged that a child does not have capacity to make decisions. Using subject choice as an example, parents may have input into their child’s subject choices, following liaison with staff. A study by Hartveit Lie (2020) gave credence to this by seeking the views of pupils who took part in subject choice meetings with staff and parents, finding that pupils often felt unheard. Some teachers were noted to have made an effort to address pupils as well as parents, however, the majority spoke to parents and left pupils themselves feeling dissociated from the subject choice process (Hartveit Lie, 2020) This concept is also reflected in research into power structures in education (Olli et al., 2012) indicating that this imbalanced power hierarchy is not solely reserved for parents but also for teachers. Adults’ priorities, therefore, have the potential to overtake the young person’s wishes. Subsequently, it stands to reason that if school staff deem a pupil to lack capacity to make decisions or participate in certain subjects, they effectively become the ‘gatekeepers’ of the young person’s experiences. Giving credence to this, Tisdall (2012) argued that disabled children’s opinions were often undermined by adults’ judgements about their facility to have clear views. Indeed, this has been highlighted in research on access to curricular subjects. Studies In MFL, music and physical education found that young people with ASN have been excluded from taking part due to adults’ views that the subject would not be suitable for them (Wright , 2015; Mccoll, 2005; Stalker & Moscardini, 2012; Sullivan et al., 2014).

In addition to this Davis and Watson (2000) discuss adults’ judgements around children with CASN, and competency. They argue that children’s competency is not only judged against fixed, normative standards but also that it is constantly reviewed by adults who work with them. Shifrer (2013) argues that formal labels associated with learning difficulties are a source of stigma because they alter our perceptions, and indeed, the self-perception of the individual who is labelled, leading to self-fulfilling prophecies around educational expectations. Soder (1989) wrote about labelling theory and argued that the person to whom the label is applied may internalise the image that is socially portrayed around the label, again, leading to pre-determined self-perception. This set of circumstances can lead to pervasive perceptions of ‘dependency, incompetence and inequality’ (Soder, 1989, p.120), potentially resulting in staff perceptions of incapacity.

Questions arise from the points raised in the previous paragraphs about who holds the power in decision making about a child’s level of capacity. Additionally, who decides that what a child contributes is not in their best interests? The fact that others make these decisions again highlights the relative powerlessness of the young person with additional

support needs. Tisdall (2012) argued that disabled children's capacities have not always been recognised and in addition, that they have been deemed insufficiently competent to contribute their views. Article five of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (1992) decrees that adults should give appropriate guidance, allowing the child's own capacity to be exercised. Despite these provisions, a well -documented point in relation to disability research in general is that the provisions made by various legislations are weakened by the fact that despite being 'allowed' to participate, their participation is moderated by the decisions of adults (Soar, 2005) and is therefore not a 'right' in the truest sense. Previous studies (Lansdown, 2005) propose that a difficulty with the assessment of an individual child's capacity lies in the lack of accurate definition of what capacity or competence to act entails, particularly as many previous definitions have arisen from medical fields such as consent to treatment. Lansdown (2005) also argues that attitudes and deeply held assumptions about the capacities of children mean that radical changes in thinking across all levels of society, including education, are required before the process can begin. This is particularly true for more complex learners. Doran (2012) found that the lack of consultation and participation in decisions of students with the most complex needs mean that they were often unaware of what decisions had been made about their futures. "Several young people we met in June of 2012 did not know what was happening for them when they left school at the end of that month." (Doran, 2012, p.14). This may be indicative of a disparity of consultation between these young people and mainstream peers, which therefore needs to be addressed (Davis & Watson, 2000). The need for CASN pupils to be more actively involved in decision-making is clear. In order to ensure that their agency is no longer constrained in the ways that have been suggested by the research presented above, ways to achieve this must be highlighted. There are multiple factors that interact in the special school setting that may serve to constrain agency. The following section will examine the concept of agency across the curriculum. Concepts covered will include historical curricular practices and way in which the facilitation of agency to make curricular choices can be facilitated.

2.4 Educational Choices

2.4.1 What has previously happened with educational choices?

Nind et al. (2005) argue that there is not enough evidence to suggest that students with special needs actually require a curriculum that is different from everyone else. They also

argue that the curriculum for students with ASN has been problematised somewhat and that different individuals have different opinions about what it should entail. They cite Mittler (2000) who maintains that pedagogy for students with special needs is not an extra element added on to existing pedagogy, that existing pedagogy should be high quality enough to ensure that the needs of all students are met in the first place, a view also shared by Imray et al. (2017). Arguably, policy produced needs to be more explicit on this matter and teacher training on meeting the needs of all learners must be provided as a matter of course. For example, Slee (2018) argues that segregated provision is exclusionary and puts young people at a disadvantage, however, perhaps a mainstream class where children are assimilated but not supported to be fully included would be equally disadvantageous. As the literature review comes together what becomes clear is that these young people are marginalised as a group, often referred to in policy as 'others' and misunderstood by teaching staff who have not been provided with the knowledge and experience to meet their needs. In addition, Stewart and Walker-Gleaves (2020) discuss the concept previously highlighted in this literature review relating to the lack of research into curricular provision for pupils with complex needs. They argue that this area is under researched, meaning that a curriculum for pupils with complex needs cannot, therefore, be research based. This has ramifications, not only for quality, but for understanding of the key principles for engaging this unique cohort of young people in an education that is based on responding to their unique attributes. However, where previous curriculums could have been more constraining on classroom practice, Curriculum for Excellence aims to provide the constructivist principles that allow for teacher creativity to emerge (The Scottish Government, 2008). The curriculum documents frequently mention pupil choice so it 'should' allow for more agency. Nevertheless, this in turn is dependent on teacher skills and confidence to move away from the long traditions of behaviourist approaches in ASN, which, in line with psychomedical models, bases tasks on perceived deficits to be remediated (Adams, 1998). If the notions of choice, creativity and relationship building posited by the curricular documentation which supplements curriculum for excellence are thoroughly embedded in practice, then this could have significant impact on the agency of pupils with CASN. However, teachers must be aware not only of this unique cohort but also of the pedagogical approaches which foster choice and agency.

Essential in addressing this is the promotion of a 'responsive pedagogy' advocated by Daniels (1996) which provides the freedom to respond to individual needs of pupils and the sharing of good practice in this respect, developing teacher confidence. In today's

educational environment it is essential that teachers are prepared and trained to teach a variety of different students, employing their theoretical knowledge and creativity to do so, even within a specialist setting. Compounding the perseverance of traditional approaches to the education of students with ASN is the lack of confidence to break away from them and try new approaches. Mittler (2000) argued that teachers were greatly lacking in confidence when it came to their own competence (p.133). This is particularly relevant if teachers are unused to the complexity of the young people in question. Another reason why representation in policy and education for teachers is crucial.

The concept of curricular choice is enshrined within documentation relating to the curriculum in Scotland. For example, the framework document, Building the Curriculum 3 (The Scottish Government, 2008) states that choice in learning should be available to all. It suggests that for children with ASN, this can be supported through multidisciplinary working and regular discussion with young people. Particularly important to the education of learners with CASN, are the concepts of “interpretation” (p.17) of the curriculum to meet needs and “enrichment” (p.17) of learning as opposed to hierarchical progression for some learners. The document states:

To ensure that Curriculum for Excellence is a curriculum for all children and young people, it is essential that support is provided to remove barriers that might restrict their access to the curriculum because of their circumstances or short or longer term needs

(The Scottish Government, 2008, p.17)

However, as discussed, it is often difficult for students with Complex Additional Support Needs to have agency to influence decisions about themselves within educational settings. The complexities of their needs mean that they are often dependent on adults in a variety of ways including for physical movement and communication. Policy development is therefore required to ensure that CASN learners are also included. Additionally, the government need to reframe thinking about ASN or learners in general to include a more diverse range of needs. Teachers must also be familiar with the notions of entitlement at the heart of the policy, it is after all, a document that one needs to refer to on a regular basis for professional reflection.

In terms of agency, the Building the Curriculum 3 also states the importance of opportunities for children to exercise choice in their learning through activities, planning and assessment. Traditionally where behaviourist approaches (Adams, 1998) have been favoured in many

ASN settings it can be seen that in a system geared towards the acquisition of new behaviour, decided by an adult, moderated by rewards and sanctions there is very little opportunity for a student to exercise choice. This, therefore, impacts on agency. In light of the evidence gained from the constructivist thinking behind the curriculum (Scottish Government, 2008) it is firstly, pertinent to unpack whether restriction in agency that impacts on access to certain educational experiences is attributable in some part to teachers' beliefs about the education of students with complex additional support needs. The following sections will examine previous research on subject access for pupils with ASN and the ways in which the pedagogical approaches employed can contribute to a more equitable experience.

2.4.2 Subject Access for Students with ASN

Research into subject access across the curriculum has been carried out in several subjects. For example, Moscardini, Barron and Wilson (2012) conducted research into musical instrument instruction and found that despite legislative frameworks such as the ASL Act (2004) and Building the Curriculum 3, students with ASN were under-represented in the total number of students receiving instruction within a school setting. Moscardini et al. (2012) argue that the types of attitudinal barriers that prevent access to different areas of the curriculum must be considered. Building the Curriculum 3 states that barriers to learning must be removed as necessary, to ensure equality of access to the curriculum. However, it remains to be seen whether the concept of choice is working for all. Barriers such as teachers' understanding of inclusion and inclusive pedagogy remain in place (Moscardini et al.,2012). Similar findings were observed by Maher (2017) in PE who argued that the attendance of pupils with ASN was problematised and that teachers were not trained to meet the needs of a range of learners. As argued, little research is available to elucidate the picture for CASN pupils but if this is the position of those with general ASN, it is possible that the position for those with CASN is even bleaker. This is a social justice issue which could potentially be remediated through awareness raising and consistency of practice. The notion of some pupils being 'allowed' based on teacher attitude is an example of inequality in its truest sense.

In order to examine what is required to ensure equality of access to a balanced curriculum with agency to make choices across a broad subject range, underpinning approaches to pedagogy to facilitate this will be examined. As Imray and Colley (2018) argue, it is not a

matter of some ‘expert teachers’ (p.2) getting it right whilst others struggle with the concept, it should be recognised that appropriate pedagogy needs to be employed to ensure that students with CASN are achieving their potential, included in lessons and can exercise agency in the process. Perhaps, if this were to be the case then Slee’s (2018) views on inclusive education for all, without segregation, could be realised. As Slee argues ‘If our schools aren’t idealistic, we are doomed’, (p.29). In the section that follows, educational choice and pedagogy will be examined to give a clearer picture. Ideally, all students would have the agency to make choices, regardless of the beliefs of others. For this to be a possibility, some general pedagogical principles highlighted by other researchers must be made use of. Some of these are exemplified in the following section.

2.4.3 Pedagogy for students with ASN

This section examines some of the general principles of pedagogies and accommodations that can be utilised to ensure that learners with ASN are successfully included in all subjects. Imray & Colley (2018) highlight the “systematic educational failure” (p.1) of students with complex needs and argue that this is because pedagogy is not given as much importance as it should be. For our most complex learners, responsive pedagogy is key (Stewart and Walker-Gleaves, 2020). Responding to the individual abilities of learners (e.g. a sound or a movement) allows for recognition of their own agency and is more inclusive for these learners. This type of responsive pedagogy bases the choice on what pupils can do, rather than ‘fixing’ some type of deficit, as in deficit-based models. Here, one of the strategies that can be used to ensure that communication from young people is responded to and developed is through the use of ‘Intensive Interaction’. Interaction is a two-way communication strategy to build on and develop communication skills in those with CASN. Indeed, it was first developed by a group of educators who wanted to move away from the use of behaviourist principles in the education of those with CASN (Hewett, 2014). Intensive interaction practitioners recognise that all communication is meaningful, the close relationship between the communicator and their partner allows for communication attempts to be recognised and built on. The relevance of this in terms of this piece of research is that all individuals are recognised and treated as capable communicators and, as such, can make simple choices with the aid of a skilled communication partner who knows them well.

In terms of subject choices this might involve choosing between two objects, each associated with a subject. This type of deep understanding or communicative relationship between partners is what is needed to facilitate choice for our most complex young people.

Undoubtedly, where significant learning difficulties occur, then aspects of a programme may need to be adapted. Storey (2007) described ableist attitudes to pedagogy where a setting (or teacher) may enforce the idea that it is better to do things the same way as everyone else. However, research and case study evidence suggests that appropriate teaching strategies can and should be put in place to meet the needs of the CASN learner. Skinner and Smith (2011) argue that with accommodations, teaching and learning can cater for ASN students without affecting difficulty level or challenge. For learners with CASN, typical accommodations may include symbolised resources, alternative methods of communication such as objects to represent concepts, Makaton or simplified language. What is clear is that pedagogy needs to be adapted to the individual learner. In addition to this, Imray and Colley (2018) argue that pedagogy can't be "universal between subjects" (p.48) and this is also true between learners. An example of how pedagogy has been applied through a particular subject may illuminate any relevant issues, my own experience of MFL has illuminated some of the key issues and has led to the use of MFL as a probe, later in this review. In order to illuminate the factors that may impact on a member of staff's attitude towards ensuring that young people with CASN are included across the curriculum in this way, the following section will examine the ways in which attitudes may influence staff practices.

2.5 Influence and Perceptions

2.5.1 The influence of staff perceptions of disability

To further enhance our understanding of some of the patterns of perception that may present in staff working with CASN pupils, some conceptual models will be used as a way to frame ideas about adult attitude towards exercising choice. Prior to this, the importance of staff skill and knowledge will be discussed. Previous research has highlighted the role that the attitudes of adults may play (Davis & Watson, 2000) in the educational experiences of a young person with CASN. Inclusion is underpinned by notions of social justice such as the challenge towards negative assumptions about people with disabilities and facilitating social inclusion (Ainscow & Miles, 2008). However, in order to empower young people with CASN, a staff member not only needs to demonstrate a proactive attitude but also have a sound knowledge base about how to best support these exceptional young people.

Much research has found that teachers do not always have the skills or confidence to facilitate full inclusion for young people with CASN and that there should be a solid programme of training to support this development (Davis and Watson, 2000). Previous research has indeed suggested that there is a link between degree of complexity and negative attitude. For example, in Imray and Colley's (2018) recount of research by Avramidis and Norwich (2002), the researchers noted a correlation between teachers' negative attitude towards inclusion and severity of complex need. The tendency was that the more 'complex' the need of the young person, the more negative the attitude of the teacher. Consideration of attitudes towards medical needs is of growing importance because researchers (Carpenter, 2015) have noted that medical advances have contributed to increasing numbers of individuals with complex needs in society, due to healthcare advances such as improved foetal survival. If this is the case, the population of young people with complex needs is increasing.

As Doran (2012) identified, training on meeting the needs of a diverse learning population is also essential. It is plausible, therefore, that lack of knowledge or experience is also influential in teachers' attitudes- as previously discussed. Research has identified that teachers do not feel confident in supporting all learners with ASN (Pijl & Frisson. 2009; Rix, Simmons, Nind & Sheehy. eds. 2005). Hamill and Boyd (2002) found that 75% of 2000 teachers that were questioned by survey on the matter did not fully understand what was involved or necessary to ensure that students with ASN were included equally in educational experiences. However, it is unclear whether Scottish teachers show similar attitude profiles when it comes to meeting the needs of a diverse learning population, further research is needed. Moreover, if teachers do not feel confident in facilitating agency then this will, in turn, impact on pupil experience. Elucidating the experiences of teachers who work with young people with CASN will help to uncover whether a lack of training contributes to the ability to facilitate agency for them. However, the perception of disability and relationships between adult perception and realisation of agency are at the heart of this study. The sections that follow will examine these in greater depth, using conceptual models as a frameworks to aid understanding. Children's experience of agency is contingent upon the multiple ways that, not only society, but individuals who work with them perceive disability. Are they truly afforded their human rights as agentic beings, as in approaches such as Reggio Emilia where the power of the child is recognised (Mitchiner et al, 2018), or are they viewed as passive and incapable of agency? Whether young people with CASN are truly afforded their rights must be investigated.

Models are used in the following section, not aiming to be reductionist, but aiming to frame the different ways of thinking in relation to agency to give a clearer and more structured picture of the influence of staff attitude. In addition, it is hoped that unhelpful ways of thinking can be harnessed in this way, using Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs to exemplify what attitudes may look like in practice. Subsequently, steps can be suggested in order to begin to improve the situation for pupils who are bound by these attitudes. Maslow's Hierarchy will be outlined initially, in order to illustrate its use within the sections on models which follow.

2.5.2 Maslow as an exemplification

Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs provides a useful, introductory model for furthering thinking about links between disability, staff attitude and the opportunities that students have for the expression of agency. Whilst some authors have criticised Maslow's model for being too linear or reductionist (Henwood, et al., 2015), here, in conjunction with models, it can serve as a way of framing what each attitude may mean in practice for a young person with CASN. Additionally, I have found it to be a useful, one page, way of explaining to staff the importance of postural care and ensuring comfort before learning can take place. Imray and Hinchcliffe (2014) refer to this as 'the essential teaching truth' (p.109) when working in the CASN classroom, where issues of children's wellness are paramount. Further to this, as a middle manager responsible for a complex needs department, I have also found it a useful representation of the idea that we want our pupils to progress beyond the first level. That their experiences should be more than just care based. The critiques of Maslow's model must be acknowledged, however and the model used with a cautionary caveat. Neher (1991) argued that Maslow over-stated his case in order to stand out from other reductionist theories at the time, such as those stemming from the principles of behaviourism which do not take the role of culture, environment or social circumstances into account. Therefore, perhaps, showing staff the diagram of Maslow's hierarchy serves only the purpose of reinforcing the needs that must be met in order for a child to be ready to learn. The higher rungs must come with the caveat with the right support'. It could be that without that caveat, the hierarchy actually serves to reduce a child with CASN's potential because the concepts at the top of the hierarchy are very much dependent on the environment for these young people. So, whilst a useful way of showing the needs that require to be met before learners can take the next steps, the higher order rungs are not always realised for learners with complex needs due to the fact that they are not accessible without the right support.

Trigg (2004) argues that Maslow ignores the social and cultural context of the individual, focussing on what is innate within that person. For our young people with CASN, the top rungs of the hierarchy would be difficult to achieve without the social and cultural context due to dependence on physical and environmental adaptations. What we do not want, is for those supporting young people with CASN to stop once the most basic levels are achieved, the knowledge that there is more to be achieved must be implicit. The theory's popularity has been ascribed to its simplicity, the ease with which it can be taught or explained, and its intuitive pitch (Dye et al. 2005; Soper et al. 1995). In summary, it is my belief that other models may not account for the whole spectrum of needs and abilities that CASN children may present with. For example, Blooms Taxonomy (1956) is often used to exemplify the process of acquisition of higher order thinking and learning skills (Agarwal, 2019) but does not consider the physical aspects of young people with CASN and the need for physical comfort, before adequate learning can take place. Maslow's framework has proved exceptionally useful to me in practice when explaining both the need to have care needs met prior to learning and also the requirement, indeed the right of young people, to travel beyond the basic needs towards their own expression of self-actualisation.

In light of this, the figure below illustrates the progressive needs that Maslow theorised every human requires to reach self-actualisation (shown at the top of the pyramid), the highest level of human 'being' and achieving capabilities. In his theory on human motivation Maslow proposed that each set of needs required meeting before progression onto the next set. When thinking about young people with complex additional support needs and their care needs (in relation to the first two sections of the pyramid below) it is clear that many of these young people will need adult assistance to ensure that these needs are met. However, if adults stop there, seeing these care tasks only as their role, and pupils as passive recipients there will be little option to progress onto the next levels if staff do not go on to facilitate choice. Slee (2018) highlights the danger of discourse changing from that of 'aspiration', in the mainstream classroom to one of "care and treatment", in the specialist setting (p. 68). In order to progress to the higher levels, staff need to support and build on their relationships with students in order to facilitate agency through recognition of their capacity to make choices. Conversely, if the adult doesn't understand the need for a young person to have care needs met or be safe and supported in body posture then the young person is not ready to move onto the next level or to learn.

Relating this to the ways that staff think about CASN, for example, staff adhering to a focus on medical conditions or care requirements may fulfil basic needs but not understand or promote the need for relationships, belonging, respect, confidence and achievement from the later sections of the hierarchy. There will be little opportunity for the young person to have their capacity acknowledged. Pupils may not be considered agentic and may be more likely to be considered as passive. There may be a link between students' experiences of agency to make curricular choices and the attitudes of the staff that work with them in this respect. Progressing onto the next level will depend on adult attitude. Attitudes will be discussed in more depth in the sections that follow.

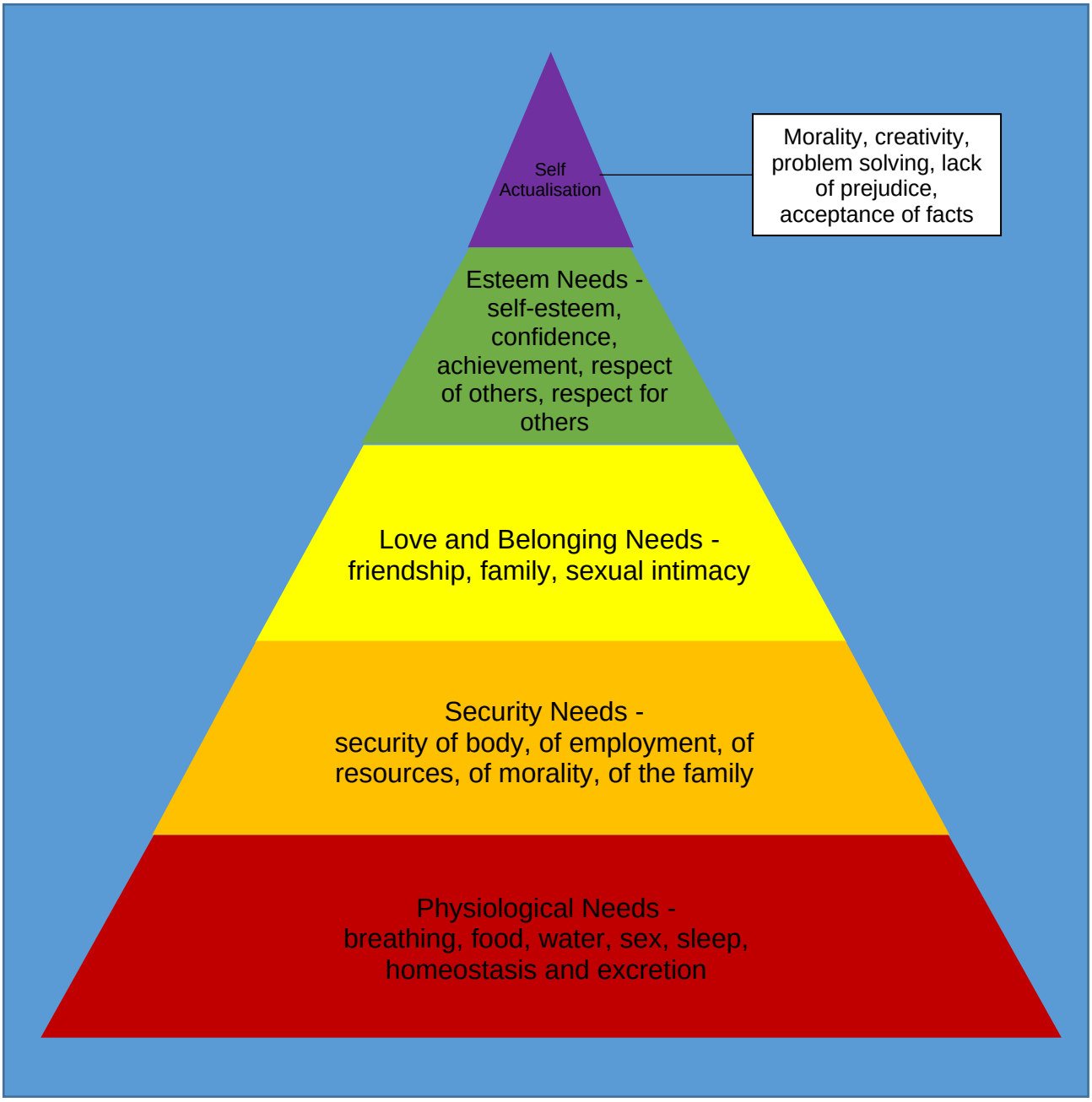


Figure 1: Adapted from Maslow (1943)

To further understanding by considering this progression more deeply, the evolution of models of thinking about disability will be outlined and analysed using Maslow's hierarchy. I have previously found this model useful in simply explaining concepts around the relationship between education and care -for those with CASN, to less experienced staff. Conceptual models that have evolved over time will be used as a way of developing understanding and thinking about agency. The development of thinking from the early 'psychomedical model' to the more recent 'capability model' will be outlined, related to Maslow in order to frame understanding and related to the agency of young people with CASN. As a summary, the table below briefly encapsulates each model that will be discussed, in relation to some of the key concepts related to the discussion on agency.

Table 2: Models of thinking about disability

Model	Agency	Capacity	Voice	Power	Attitude
Psychomedical	Dependent on adults making decisions	Deemed not to have capacity due to medical deficits	Voice of adult/ supporter replaces the young person	Adults/ carers hold the power in decision making and activities	May think that young person has no capacity for agency and is a passive recipient of care/intervention
Social	Dependent on society making changes to accommodate those with disabilities	Given the right conditions those with disabilities can participate	Groups of people can come together to facilitate change but only if conditions are right	If conditions are right then adults will recognise when a pupil wants/enjoys something and act on it	Disability is a 'problem' caused by barriers in society and when these barriers are removed young people can have more agency
Capability	The capabilities of people with disabilities are recognised	Young people given opportunity for capacity regardless of disability	Young people are deemed to have capacity to have their voices heard	All are deemed to have capabilities which are recognised and used	Positive towards the capability of young people with CASN , focus on strengths , rather than barriers

2.5.3 Psychomedical Model

The psychomedical model located the ‘problem’ of disability firmly within the young person and their associated conditions. Historically, people with multiple and complex needs may have been housed in a hospital environment.

In Scotland the passing of the 1974 Education (Mentally Handicapped Children) (Scotland) Act sought to provide a way forward, moving away from hospital to educational provision , beginning to shift away from the idea that these children were purely categorised by medical deficits and incapable of being educated. In 1978 The Warnock Report was published. Often highlighted as seminal in terms of ways of thinking about the education of children with ASN (Lamb, 2019) , Warnock introduced the idea of a continuum of learning difficulties, taking account of a wider range of children and potentially reducing stigma by moving away from a medical or deficit model where children are described by their disabilities. The Warnock committee were appointed by the secretaries of state for England, Scotland and Wales to review educational provision for children “handicapped by disabilities of body and mind“ (p.1). The committee noted differences in terminologies across the three countries presented a difficulty. This literature review finds that this discrepancy continues today and in turn, exacerbates the already existing lack of clarity which denotes continued confusion around diversity. Children’s difficulties were defined in the report not by type but by severity of need. The terminology of ‘need’ is synonymous with the medical model, where children are categorised by deficit. Warnock had categorised these needs as mild, moderate or severe “learning difficulties” (p.43).

The 1981 Education (Scotland) Act abolished previous handicap categories and replaced them with the term ‘special needs’. Special needs were defined by their relationship to the average functioning and educational performance of other children in general of the same age as the affected child. In this model, the ‘problem’ of disability was located firmly within the child who was defined by their deficits. The move away from hospital to education was pivotal. However, children’s choice was not considered, and decisions continued to be ‘done to’, rather than ‘done with’ children affected. Very little agency is given to the person with a disability in this model. The most complex learners are classed as passive beneficiaries of education and care, with adults deciding what is best for them as in Maslow’s (1943) hierarchy, described above, development of skills beyond the bottom level will be hampered**.** If adults in schools today continue to view young people as lacking capacity for agency, then this type of thinking hasn’t really moved on.

For example, if adults focus on what young people can't do e.g., he can't walk, he needs tube fed they focus on what young people can't do as the barriers to education. Illuminating the ways of thinking around how adults working with young people view them may help thinking to move on. Pertaining to the curriculum, for example, some authors have cited reasoning behind lack of CASN representation in MFL as the language demands being too heavy (Skinner and Smith, 2011; Wight, 2015) due to differences in communication. As will be discussed, when children with CASN are given the opportunity to participate in MFL education, in an accommodating environment, they can enjoy a meaningful and positive experience (SCILT, 2015).

The move away from the deficits of the medical model towards societal exclusion at the heart of the issue placed a moral responsibility on society to challenge such structural and attitudinal barriers (Shakespeare, 2006). The following section examines how thinking evolved away from a medical/deficit based model towards more rights-based approaches in which those with disabilities began to have more agency.

2.5.4 Social Model

Considered seminal by some researchers (Shakespeare & Watson, 1997) The Social Model of Disability places the onus on social structures to respond or change practice, as opposed to the health of the individual, to ensure equality of access to all aspects of society for those with a disability. Defined as a social movement (Shakespeare and Watson, 1997; Shakespeare, 2006) the model started to evolve in the 1980s when people with disabilities and others declared the ineffectiveness of previous medical or psychological models in relation to their own reality as disabled people. Inclusion Scotland (2015) argue for barriers to be removed in order for equality to exist and diversity to be celebrated. They also argue for accountability and monitoring for effectiveness. Supporters of the social model of disability argue that barriers to inclusion come from the environment or society and attitudes of others rather than from the disability itself, where the previous medical model viewed the health of the individual as the main barrier.

The social model of disability locates the concept of disability within the current social, political and environmental context. Arguably, although the social model continues to problematise disability, it replaces the medical model's location of the issue as within the individual and focuses on ways that people with disabilities are oppressed by these aspects of society. Not only the physical environment but also by a society whose beliefs, values and behaviours restrict them.

The model views disability as socially constructed, activities that individuals wish to take part in are restricted by society's response to disability. Stalker and Moscardini (2012) argue that "The disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a contemporary social organisation which takes no or little account of people who have physical, [sensory or mental] impairments and thus excludes them from the mainstream of social activities" (Stalker & Moscardini, 2012, p.1). However, the physical and care needs of those with complex medical needs are not constructed by society; students with certain disabilities will always require some specialist support that is different from a typical student. An example of this is personal care, whilst other students can visit the toilet independently, those with complex physical needs may need assistance. In this respect, aspects of the social model, such as social construction of barriers may not account for all issues that affect our most complex young people. Therefore, the attitude of staff will be key. Thinking about Maslow's hierarchy, if the adults in a school are committed to making even the more abstract levels of the hierarchy accessible then the conditions will be right for someone with CASN to have more agency.

2.5.5 The Concept of Ableism

A discussion on ableism can further illustrate some nuance around discrimination which may be influential here. Campbell (2009) argues that research should examine the ableist narratives which maintain exclusionary practices. Ableist attitudes perpetuate the notion that those with disabilities are flawed or a problem that requires rectification and can present at all levels. For example, Castanneda and Peters (2000) define ableist levels as individual, cultural and societal. Therefore, ableist attitudes may be evident in schools at various levels, from individual staff members to the entire institution- a concept described by Lalvani and Broderick in 2013 as 'institutional ableism', during a discussion on the harmful effects of one off 'disability awareness', days in schools. These, they argue, can lead to further marginalisation and lack of acceptance. These types of attitudes serve to oppress, stigmatise and exclude people with disabilities. This resonates with the notion of 'othering', where people with disabilities are marginalised through presumptions of 'typicalness'. Storey (2007) describes this as 'the belief that it is better or superior not to have a disability than to have one and that it is better to do things in the way that nondisabled people do' (Storey, 2007, p.56). This may present in education as lack of accommodation for disabilities within pedagogical approaches.

For example, staff trying to teach someone with a disability to stop behaviours related to that disability or, what is referred to as ‘benevolent ableism’- where staff view pupils as vulnerable and in need of fixing.

Described in a study by Nario- Redmond, Kemerling and Silverman (2019) by someone with multiple disabilities as a ‘pity party’ (p.726), where unwanted help, infantilisation and privacy invasions are most commonly experienced by those with visible disabilities. ‘ Narratives of tragedy’ (Nario-Redmond, Kemerling & Silverman, 2019) are generated in everyday assumptions about complex disabilities because people with CASN usually grow up as the only member of a family with a disability, meaning that there is no peer group to bond together and counter narratives of ableism. Similarly, low numbers of individuals who experience complex needs may mean that society is not experienced in interacting and accommodating those with complex needs, making them something ‘other’ and compounding the narrative as something negatively exceptional. Slee (2018) also argues that segregated educational provision for young people with disabilities can be a form of ‘benevolant inclusion’, based on deficit models and used as a form of cultural control (p.11), resulting in the mobilisation of exclusion where young people are concealed ‘for their own good’ (p.66).

D’Souza (2019) argues that the culture within education can be ‘disablist’ (p.1180), leading to disablement. D’souza argues that disablement is the effect, not the cause, of exclusion and that this discriminatory culture within education, leads to ableist discrimination within schools and exclusion from mainstream settings. For example, research by Coutsocostas and Alborz (2010) found that as severity of disability increased, so did the perceived favour of staff towards segregated settings for those young people. Holt (2007) highlights the point that adults may fail to recognise the disabling effects of an unsatisfactory environment around the child, resulting in the problem becoming located within the child. Additionally, Slee (2018) argues that the foundations of common knowledge within education are ableist and that structural ableism must be dismantled before truly inclusive education can be achieved. For example, as the picture in the subject of MFL is elucidated as a probe, it will be seen that often it is the adults who make decisions about which children can take part. Reasons for not being able to take part are frequently cited as the cognitive demands of MFL learning (Skinner and Smith, 2011).

2.5.6 Representation of CASN within the Social Model

The social model has been deemed by some authors (Shakespeare, 2016) to over-simplify concepts related to disability. Available research is limited by the small number of authors involved in the field, also by the fact that academic validity is questioned because authors have previously come from a narrow range of disabilities and experiences. It must be questioned whether much of the research posited by the social model of disability is a true representation of the views and issues faced by children and young people with complex needs.

For example, some researchers have developed the narrative of the social model to encompass additional aspects such as health, which may also be relevant for young people with CASN. For example, Qu (2020) argues that the social model cannot ignore bodies or brains (p.8) and that disability should not be considered an entirely social construction. Qu's argument is that to ignore the medical is to negate the contribution of modern medicinal developments that can improve accessibility for those with complex needs e.g. cochlear implants. The issue, Qu (2020) argues, is that our practices in relation to the medical needs to which young people with CASN are entitled to have met, needs to be more socially aware. Therefore, there is a need to recognise that disability is a multifaceted experience, encompassing biological, psychological and social elements.

Lawson and Beckett (2020) highlight the evolution of the social model of disability towards the realisation of the protection of human rights for all, regardless of severity of need. Lawson and Beckett argue that human rights models of disability have been developed to counteract the segregation of those with higher needs, ensuring that they have equality of opportunity and that their dignity in enacting this is protected. Therefore, society should also accommodate these medical needs which are a protected right. The use of more rights-based language in terms of individual differences has also been noted in development and discussion around the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), in dialogue around its implementation. A discussion on language used featured in the comments noted by an ad hoc committee which was established to examine this and drew one of many conclusions that further training in the language of human rights was necessary (Lawson and Beckett, 2020) to ensure that entitlements to medical needs were met and moreover, did not impact on access to any aspect of society. Therefore, in practice, staff working with young people with CASN should be cognisant of the right to have health care needs met, without detriment to the educational experience. Some criticisms of the social

model that it perhaps does not pay attention to individual differences between disabled people (Anatstasiou & Kaufmann, 2011; Lawson and Beckett, 2020; Qu, 2020). Gallacher, Connor and Ferri (2014) argue for a more nuanced understanding of social models of disability, rather than a rejection, with accounts that can compensate for this. As with the medical model, the reduction of disability to purely social barriers is not representative of the many issues that overlap to produce a young person's lived experience of disability within the educational setting, particularly when health needs are considered.

2.5.7 Educational Settings for Young People with CASN

Many disabled people have shown the meaningful impact of their own agency. As Wright (2008) argues, who more valid to speak about their own lives and experiences than those with a disability themselves. The role of adults cannot be completely overlooked however, as large groups of young people with very complex needs may not have the ability to come together independently to share experiences and effect change without adult facilitation. In this way, the social model could be seen to exclude young people and further restrict their agency due to their dependence on adult support. It is interesting to note that Tom Shakespeare (Shakespeare, 2012; Shakespeare & Watson, 1997; Vehmas & Shakespeare, 2014) himself is disabled and has used his writing and research to change the way that people think about disability and society. However, Wright (2008) also argues that those with the most severe disabilities are often denied the ability to exert influence over their lives. This also applies to decisions around the setting in which education takes place.

The strong focus on inclusion being the best option for most children is illustrated in many government publications such as this quote "For the majority of children with special educational needs the fullest integration into mainstream education, with appropriate support, will be in their best interests. The needs of others will be best met partly or wholly in a specialist setting" (Scottish Office Education & Industry Department (SOEID), 1998, p. 4). How much agency young people have in inputting to this decision remains to be seen. It can be assumed that the 'others' referred to above are those whose needs are complex The need for segregated education has also been refuted. Slee (2018) argues that segregation is a 'relic of a bygone era' (p.49) and that the 'comfortable' co-existence of special and mainstream education has silenced the objectives of inclusive education through systems such as ASN units within mainstream schools, meaning that justice is diminished. Imray and Colley (2018) argue that students with CASN will achieve at their best level when they are

educated in ways that are particular to them, rather than settings, using pedagogy to meet their individual needs. This is known as inclusive or responsive pedagogy. Stewart and Walker-Gleaves (2020) argue that inclusivity and responsive pedagogy intersect. Additionally, a body of research in this area focuses on ways in which children with additional needs are excluded from having agency during mainstream education or activities (Stalker & Moscardini, 2012). Some studies have highlighted the fact that there remains a “culture of faith” (Stewart & Walker-Gleaves,2020, p.353) that schools will make the best arrangements for pupils with CASN. Again, it appears that practice is not standard. This gives credence to the importance of educating teachers, not only on responsive pedagogy but also in order to reframe their thinking on the capabilities of pupils with CASN.

Arguably, educational research that focuses on a specialist educational setting may illuminate issues further, where accommodations are readily available and staff may be more aware of the issues that affect students with disabilities. Are these young people afforded more agency in curricular choices? Further evolution of language and thinking occurred with the development of approaches related to the capabilities and capacities of people with disabilities to make informed decisions about matters that affect them. These approaches are discussed below.

2.5.8 Capability Model

Negative terminology used in previous models has led to a general perception that those with disabilities are low status. Giving credence to this, D’Souza (2019) argues that classrooms must change their cultures and beliefs about disability in order to move away from ableist discrimination against those with CASN (p.1180). Approaches such as the capability approach have been developed which draw attention away from such negative perceptions towards more positive ways of thinking about the capabilities of disabled people. Interestingly, economists Amartya Sen (1985) and Martha Nussbaum (1995) are most often credited with the development of the capability approach. Their theories surmised that traditional models of economics did not consider human capabilities, perhaps beginning to think about economics in more of a human or moral way, rather than just purely resource driven. Latterly other theorists have enhanced their views in relation to disability and education (Terzi, 2008), recognising that those with a disability do not have the same freedoms to exercise their capabilities as those without. The capability approach addresses agency by looking at the interactions of many factors in an individual’s life, both social and individual, and introduces the concept of the capability to function under their individual

circumstances. Nussbaum (1995) added the idea of core human capabilities needed to function, to the approach. Nussbaum's capabilities include 'life', 'bodily health' and 'emotions'. However, not everyone may have the same ability to achieve these capabilities without some form of assistance. Indeed, the fact remains that many pupils with CASN require support to fully achieve their capabilities, therefore, adults' attitudes are crucial.

As an example, someone who is verbal may be able to freely state their wishes, whereas someone who relies on a supporter's interpretation of their communication may not have the same capability to use their resources due to misinterpretation. This exemplifies the need for awareness raising to ensure that all forms of communication are valued, validated and responded to. Thinking of MFL, for example, what is valued within that subject requires consideration. Competing views may be apparent here, for example, is the need to memorise vocabulary or the desire to have a fulfilling experience more valuable? SCILT (2015) cite a case study around a school for pupils with CASN being recognised at the Scottish Education Awards. Staff here had used the communication systems of pupils to design a programme of MFL that was meaningful and stimulating for the young people, viewing them as capable communicators. This is at odds with previous research which has highlighted that young people with ASN are often deemed not capable of retaining the required vocabulary for MFL education (McColl, 2005). Therefore, when staff viewed young people as capable of learning a second language those young people made excellent progress. This illustrates the impact of a change of viewpoint from deficit to capability.

Arguably, aspects of this approach require some development prior to application as there is a need to balance capacity or capability against individual vulnerability. Historically (Tomlinson,1982) students in special education have experienced powerlessness, with fewer opportunities to make suggestions, choices or complaints in regard to their education. Staff that understand 'how' to assist these young people to make these are crucial, as are staff that view them as agentic. For example, linking back to Maslow. If a young person is assisted to utilise their capability of communication, it may increase self- esteem and begin to develop higher-order skills such as problem solving, agency will be increased. If young people are not encouraged to develop any capabilities and are viewed as passive recipients of care, then they will remain at the bottom levels of Maslow's hierarchy. The way that adults view young people is therefore pivotal, capability development is hinged on the views and approaches of the adult.

One of the key developments that came about under the ASL Act (2004, amended 2009) was that parents and children were to be afforded further rights to have a say in educational decisions. In relation to the Capability Model this would mean that their capability to contribute to decisions was acknowledged. Although, for those with CASN, if those around them view them as no more capable than the first of second rung of Maslow's hierarchy then there will be no option to contribute.

Indeed, it often remains the case that children continue to be seen as secondary in comparison to parents because they are deemed to lack capacity to participate in decisions or understand potential consequences of choices (Harris & Riddell, 2011, p. 105). Their capabilities in this respect, often go unrecognised. Despite the existing provision under the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act (2000) that children be given a right to education and the Supporting Children's Learning: Code of Practice (Scottish Government, 2010) that they have a right to have their views heard in relation to this, Harris and Riddell argue that (particularly in the area of dispute resolution) children play only a 'small' role in decisions (p.106). Parents may not always be fully aware of their children's wishes and there is a strong argument for hearing the direct views of the child (Harris & Riddell, 2011). This is somewhat hampered by the notion of capacity to participate in such decisions and in particular, adult views on the capacity of the young person in question. The little-explored Article 5 of the UNCRC (1992) develops the notion of 'the evolving capacity of the child' whereby ability to exercise rights should not be based on age but 'capacity' to participate. The reasons behind this may be rooted in medical models in line with the notions of passivity and dependency perpetuated by them. In relation to the need for development of this approach, it is pertinent to consider the requirements of each individual when making adjustments. As discussed, pupils with CASN have unique and individual characteristic. Therefore, to achieve agency, a variety of supports will be needed accordingly. In line with this, Sen (1985) considered resources and their division in relation to poverty and inequality. Sen argued that resources should not be divided equally between everyone but should be divided according to the capability that each individual has to achieve wellbeing through making choices. For example, someone with CASN could effectively be competing for resources against someone with mild dyslexia. What is equitable needs to be measured up against what is discriminatory. Individual circumstances must be considered. Giving credence to this, Terzi (2010) argues that it the links between disability, impairment and disadvantage must be recognised in order to achieve equality. People with CASN are

unique, they cannot be considered heterogeneous and packages of support could be put into place on an individual basis.

Pupils with CASN will undoubtedly need some forms of support to achieve their capability to make educational choices. Terzi (2008) asserts that in relation to someone with a disability it must be considered whether that individual has the freedom to achieve what they want in the same way that someone with no disability would. Pupils with complex needs may have physical, communication or health considerations which impact on this freedom.

Terzi argues that education is critically important to the capability approach. For example, the capability to be educated has an impact on other personal capabilities and therefore opportunities available to the individual. Staff support is needed to facilitate this for our young people with CASN. In this respect it is essential that staff attitudes and the relationship they bear to agency are illuminated further. Participation as an equal member of society can be enhanced by education. In relation to education, however, Norwich (2014) argues that capability is more complex. He presents the position that someone might very well have educational capability but actively choose not to use it, despite the potential. Therefore, consideration must be given to whether staff that support young people with CASN are skilled and passionate about the development of capabilities in order to ensure that each young person is given equality of opportunity.

Later in the review, the notion of pedagogy will be considered and whether the 'right' education for students with CASN is exemplified in current practice. Imray and Colley (2018) argue that students with CASN will perform to the best of their capabilities when the right educational context is considered. If Maslow's (1943) hierarchy is considered, for example, pupils can progress onto the higher levels of the hierarchy if adults do not simply view them as requiring care and comfort but as actively participating and making decisions. Specifically in relation to special education, Norwich (2014) argues that the capability approach is intended to replace traditional discourse based on 'needs' (p.6) with discourse based on capabilities. Norwich considers the term 'Special Educational Needs' (SEN) and argues that whilst it was originally intended to bring about positive change in relation to those with disabilities having equality of access to education, it has in fact come to be used increasingly negatively over time.

The usefulness of the capability approach in part stems from its focus on positivity and opportunities, where previous medical models had focused on disabilities in terms of deficits and limitations and the Social Model of Disability focussed on barriers. In terms of Maslow's

Hierarchy, staff who conceptualise disability along the lines of this approach may be committed to ensuring a move past the focus on physical needs toward the higher levels of respect, creativity and problem solving. However, Norwich (2014) suggests that caution be applied when evaluating what the approach has to offer, by arguing that it should be merged with additional approaches and theories in order to be more comprehensive. For young people with CASN there are many facets to education and agency, capabilities may not be achieved independently. Therefore, for these pupils, the merging of approaches that balance their unique attributes with their capabilities will indeed be necessary.

Doran (2012) gives credence to positive ways of thinking and talking about students with Complex Additional Support Needs by stating that the strengths, skills and resources of students must a key focus for professionals involved in making decisions with them. A key finding of the VIPER report research carried out by the Council for Children with Disabilities (2013) was that when children and young people with more complex needs were presented with accessible and relevant choices, they were able to make decisions. Indeed, that those involved with them tended to underestimate their capabilities. As will be discussed, this has played out in MFL education where, despite negative attitudes (McColl, 2005), there is evidence of success for pupils with CASN where attitudes based on capabilities are evident (SCILT, 2015). The capability approach is certainly favourable when thinking about opportunities to make curricular choices, however, it must be made very clear that in order to be equitable curricular options should not be forced upon young people. They should not take part because that is what everyone else is doing, in a misguided attempt to ensure equality. What it is important to acknowledge is that the preferable approach is to recognise and support the capability to make choices. Consequently, if a young person has the capability to make choices (albeit with support) then they must be given the opportunity to choose to participate in the relevant subject should they desire. It would be inequitable to assume that a young person wants to attend a subject and make that choice for them. The capability to choose is what must be supported. Hedge and MacKenzie (2012) argue that if a young person is refused access to certain subjects due to their own circumstances, in relation to school norms, then they are being unfairly stripped of their right to use their capability of choice.

There are several approaches based on notions of capability that emphasise the point that there is no ‘right’ way to communicate and that adults should tune in to pupils, deem them capable in expression of their knowledge and opinion. Mitchiner et al. (2018) cite Malaguzzi’s (1993) development of the Reggio Emilia approach to early education which

focuses on the young child's capability to enquire and have agency in their world. The approach centres on the way that adults facilitate this through shared understanding of young children's capabilities. For example, if the school setting is considered then positive, supportive relationships will have a positive effect on the development of the child, the child will reciprocate in a positive way and the cycle will continue. In relation to the Capability approach, for example, Hedge and MacKenzie (2012) argue that inclusion needs to be 'context sensitive' (p.334), students should not be forced to undertake subjects that they do not want to, where the outcomes do not promote their capabilities and promote their dignity.

Relating this to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943), a student is able to progress to the higher stages of the sequence when the environment is right. For example, this would take them from beyond just sitting comfortably to the ability to have influence, be responded to and to achieve. Under this model, education is tasked with promoting a student's capabilities and ensuring that they are afforded the freedom to use them, in synthesis with the environment in which they are situated. To effectively force choices upon young people is to diminish their capabilities. Imray et al. (2017) give credence to the capability approach and argue that pupils should be given the chance to maximise their potential and achieve in the best way that they can, regardless of any disability. This will be individual for all young people, individuality is arguably necessary for true equality in order to account for varying capabilities.

The three models discussed above have been hugely influential in the development of teaching and learning approaches for those with ASN. Each model views agency differently for example, the medical model ascribes to the idea that medical deficits need to be remediated before agency can occur whilst those who ascribe to the social model believe that agency is restricted by societal barriers. The Capability Approach uses positive terminology to focus on the strengths that those with disabilities have, rather than barriers that problematise disability as a concept. As has been discussed, each model has weaknesses that need to be addressed, particularly for students with CASN. The medical, social and capability models can help to harness thinking around those young people but there are wider issues to be examined relating to the restriction of agency in young people with CASN in across the curriculum. Perhaps the ways in which teachers interpret policy are relevant here, this will be considered in the following section.

2.6 Teachers' interpretations of policy

Children's right to have a voice in matters concerning them in Scotland is framed within a well-publicised policy context. The UNCRC (1992) sets out the right to have voice and this aspect in particular has recently been fully embedded into Scottish law. Complementing this, curricular documentation states clearly that all children in Scotland have the right to broad general education, characterised by personalisation and choice (Scottish Government, 2008). It is pertinent then, to investigate whether all staff adhere to these principles for all pupils. There are, after all, precedents of caveats such as 'except in exceptional circumstances' (Scottish Government, 2000) in Scottish educational policy.

To uncover how teachers' interpretations of policy, in practice, play out in the lives of pupils with CASN will give an insight into a potential issue that may prevent agency from being realised. Does policy make the inclusion of students with CASN explicit in all respects?

It remains the fact that these young people exceptional by their needs (Riddell Committee, 1999) and perhaps require more explicit acknowledgement than is given in everyday policy or curricular documentation currently. Rather than using the language of 'all' to refer to all young people with ASN, questions need to be asked about why they are competing for resources and support with others whose additional needs are fewer, this is arguably not equitable. It is hoped that one of the outcomes of this piece of research will be to illuminate a clearer way forward in respect of overarching educational policy. In order to facilitate agency, we must first understand the profile of these learners and what factors impact on their agency. It is desirable that change is made to ensure that all young people in Scotland with CASN are realising their equality of entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum. For example, historically, those pupils with ASN have not always received their entitlement to Modern Foreign Language Education (McColl, 2005). This will now be examined in greater depth considering ways in which a discussion on the particular subject of Modern Foreign Languages can probe some of the key issues which have presented in a subject specific light.

2.7 The Lens of Modern Foreign Languages

Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) have been used as an example to probe issues around subject inclusion because I have previous experience of including students with CASN in Spanish classes, and have experienced the negative attitudes previously discussed. Languages are often an area where students with ASN are excluded, despite the fact that

young people are entitled to learn at least one other foreign language as part of their schooling (European Commission, 2005). This is set out in the Scottish Parliamentary policy (2012) into the 1+2 approach. There are further studies which acknowledge that past attitudes tended to be discouraging towards students with ASN learning a second language (Edgin et al.,2011; De Valenzuela et al., 2016) who argued that staff concerns included the idea that too much pressure would be put on the cognitive resources of learners who were already struggling. Pedagogical accessibility is therefore key.

We must strategically plan for pupils with CASN to receive their entitlement to a broad and balanced education and ensure that their voices are heard in the process. Being included is so much more than being present in a classroom or during a lesson. It is taking part and having resources that allow you to participate effectively accessible to you. (SCILT, 2015). By denying learners the ability or chance to have the choice to participate we deny them so much more. Therefore, this research will consider agency within subject choice, using my experience of MFL as a lens.

2.8 Conclusion of Literature Review chapter

This literature review has highlighted some of the key themes that have emerged from a deep and lengthy period of examination. The table below summarises the key themes which have emerged from this literature review:

Table 3: Key Themes Emerging from Literature Review

Key Theme	Why This Theme Is Identified
There is ambiguity around definitions of CASN, there are debates around the value of such labels	This is a foundational area where uncertainty prevails and can have widespread implications for the way in which we understand and work with young people. For example, whether we see them as individuals. This is important because it impacts on our practice and ultimately, the education of young people with CASN.
There appears to be a lack of awareness of CASN across education. Policy doesn't adequately encapsulate the situation of young people with CASN. There is a lack of research to underpin pupils' educational experiences. There is a lack of representation of the voice of young people with CASN across research.	Teachers are charged with providing a meaningful education to all young people but cannot do this if awareness of exceptional individuals is not raised. Policy underpins young people's entitlements and systematic situation, so should reflect their circumstances. The curriculum cannot be research based if there is not research to underpin it. Different voices could be usefully heard and valued.
In many areas, young people with CASN have not always experienced agency to make choices. Adult views on capacity and what staff view as important may influence this. Choices across the curriculum have often been subject to staff attitude.	It is an issue of social justice- (one of many) but can be used to exemplify the way in which young people may be excluded, through the lens of curricular choice.
There may be a lack of clarity around educational provision. Inclusive and responsive pedagogy is influential, however, lack of teacher confidence, training and awareness can have an impact on pupils' experiences.	Staff attitude towards subject access can serve to aid or restrict choice, therefore, appropriate pedagogical approaches may facilitate choice. Raising awareness of individualised meaningful communication may be impactful.
Staff attitude towards pupils with CASN and their resultant priorities can be influential. Staff may have different views on what the aim of education is for pupils with CASN, some may view education from more of a care perspective, for example.	This is important because it may determine how YP will be treated or what subjects they will have access to. Different models of thinking can determine whether staff look to remediate perceived deficits, rather than promote capabilities. Some staff may stop at simple care and this needs to be moved on, to improve access to different parts of the curriculum.

Key Theme	Why This Theme Is Identified
Research has highlighted examples of exclusion across the curriculum. MFL is an example of such an area, however pedagogical approaches can facilitate inclusion. Pockets of good practice have been identified. The aim would be for this to be universal.	This may exemplify the links between subject exclusion and attitude. This theme will highlight that we can adapt accommodate and value all types of learning and communication. The idea that a lack of information as to whether young people are accessing their curricular entitlements highlights the need for further research.

Initially, features of CASN were discussed and the lack of clarity in defining what it means to have CASN was posited as another area in which this group may be disadvantaged in society. Some of the tensions around labelling were highlighted. This lack of clarity of definition may contribute to the underrepresentation of this group in policy. It appears reflective of a general lack of awareness of these exceptional individuals and their circumstances within the education system, which is cemented by the fact that the language of 'all' in educational documentation may not cover their exceptional circumstances. These young people require significant support to access education and exceptional, skilled support to move beyond bare access towards active and agentic experience. What this looks like, indeed what the curriculum looks like for young people with CASN is fraught with uncertainties.

The review of literature then examined agency as a concept and discussed how it can play out in the education of pupils with CASN. For example, agency is often defined as the ability to make choices and have them acted upon. However, for young people with CASN, this process is not always straightforward. Historically there has been a lack of consultation during decision making processes for these young people, with outcomes very dependent of staff attitudes or the way things are done in certain settings (Davis & Watson, 2000). It is also the case that some adults may deem young people with CASN to lack capacity for agentic decision making and effectively make decisions on the young person's behalf. This has been observed not only in wider decision making (Doran, 2012) but also in curricular decision making (Hartveit Lie, 2020.). Therefore, the extent to which young people are afforded agency in curricular choice is very dependent on staff attitudes. In light of this, models of thinking about disability and the likely impact on agency of each were considered.

Where staff coming from a medical model standpoint may assume limited capacity and the students as passive recipients of care to meet medical needs, a member of staff coming from a capability approach may proactively encourage students to use their capability to make choices. However, adult support may continue to be required to facilitate this. Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs was used as a conceptual framework to illuminate the conditions necessary to achieve agency, this was again, strongly tied in with staff beliefs about what the purpose of education is for these learners. In summary, some development of conceptual frameworks is required to ensure that the way agency for these unique learners is conceptualised reflects their situation. For example, approaches which focus on environmental conditions could be utilised to develop frameworks further.

In light of this, pedagogies that can facilitate the best experience for young people with CASN were discussed. Again, research has found that their access to certain curricular subjects can be less equitable than that of 'typical peers'. In order to investigate this further, MFL was used as a probe. Despite the fact that the virtues of learning a second language have been widely extolled, MFL is one of the areas that has been noted by previous researchers to be seen as less accessible for learners with ASN. Adults, in some cases, have been the 'gatekeepers' of the curriculum for young people with CASN and past attitudes have included ideas that the language demands of the subject may be too much for certain students. These low expectations and lack of sources of support for the development of appropriate pedagogy may undermine the agency of the young person with CASN to choose to take part in the subject of they wish to. However, cases in which schools had developed supportive and accessible pedagogy for MFL were highlighted and it was argued that when teachers use appropriate pedagogy and have the expectation that pupils 'can' participate then all subjects can be accessible to every learner.

In summary, this literature review has examined the concepts that underpin agency to make choices across the curriculum for pupils with CASN. The area appears to be characterised by notable challenges, uncertainties and absences of research that result in disparity of provision for pupils with CASN. This research aims now to investigate whether this is an accurate reflection of the experiences of young people in the special school setting today or whether there are other factors that have an influence on this concept. At the end of the data collection chapter a summary is given in the form of a multiple cause diagram. A multiple cause diagram gives a pictorial representation of factors that influence an event or concept. In this case, a summary of factors that influence the agency of pupils with CASN will be presented following the data analysis process by which they are identified.

A large gap in research, policy and practice has been identified which it is hoped that this research will begin to create a way to move forward through, in order to better develop support and facilitation of agency. As highlighted, barriers to agency encountered tend to be heavily influenced by adult belief, attitude and experience reinforcing the relative powerlessness of pupils with CASN (Tomlinson, 2015) in a system where their voices are not always the most dominant. If young people with CASN are going to make choices across the curriculum they need to be afforded the agency to do so. It is the job of education to facilitate that agency and ensure that these exceptional young people have equality of access to a broad and balanced curriculum.

3. Methodologies and Methods

3.1 Design of study and outline of chapter

This chapter explores the rationale for the methodology of this study on the experiences of students with complex additional support needs (CASN) and the agency they have when it comes to making educational choices. The design of the study falls within the paradigm of Relativist Practitioner Research and the recruitment of participants, ethical considerations, procedures and data analysis are defined. The data generated through this study will be interpreted through a lens of criticality, using thematic analyses to gain insights into the factors that influence pupils' experiences. Teachers' interview and questionnaire accounts of their experiences in the CASN sector will be used to illuminate additional influential factors. Structural factors such as resourcing and power will be considered alongside agentic factors such as the curriculum and assessment to give a rounded interpretation of the data.

3.2 Research Design

3.2.1 Methodology

This study comes from a relativist approach and looks at the experiences of young people with CASN within the context of the education system. The most common relativist methodologies are qualitative or interpretivist in design and these are the preferred methodologies used here. Although consideration was given to positivist approaches and methods, these were rejected as they would not yield the rich, experiential data required to answer the research questions. For this piece of research, positivism may risk overlooking the participants' ability to construct meaning from their own experiences and interpret the world around them. The outcomes of purely data -based positivistic research may be less meaningful to those for whom they were intended for e.g. teachers because oversimplification may lead to outcomes of research that are reduced to very basic levels in terms of richness. In the case of this study, it is not the type of research that is carried out which discounts positivism as a just method for investigating the experiences of young people with CASN, but the lens through which it is investigated. Perhaps a positivist paradigm presents a greater risk of viewing disabled people through an ableist lens. An ableist lens would ensure that being disabled is viewed as something 'other'.

There are examples of studies which come from a positivist paradigm that employ such ableist and arguably, reductionist approaches, such as the study by Atkin and Lorch (2016) which measures the non-symbolic signalling interactions between individuals with PMLD and their primary caregivers and appear to almost dehumanise the individuals involved. Phrases such as 'Many individuals with PMLD are unable to produce any clear and consistent signals contingent upon an ongoing real-time interactional situation', (p.211) arguably demonstrate a reductionist and deficit approach to the notion of affective communication in young people with PMLD. This type of ableist lens assumes one correct answer, arguably, that alternative communication is less valued. My study aims to reflect on the experiences of students who may have been marginalised in this way, whilst assigning equal validity to diverse experiences and positions. I aim to hear the voices and experiences of those who may be categorised under 'exceptional circumstances' (Scottish Government, 2000).

A positivist framework, coming from this type of deficit perspective, contradicts the way in which disability is understood in the context of this study. Some examples of positivist research that have taken place in the field of inclusion of children with ASN in education have focussed on specific deficits within the individual child, with a scientific or medical model being employed to inform practice. Studies have often measured the effects of various intervention, parallel to the notion of educational interventions to remediate deficits within the previously discussed medical model King-Sears (2008). However, not all examples of positivist research into disability take a deficit approach or use an ableist lens. For example, research which seeks to measure positive changes following various interventions aimed at improving aspects of life for those with disabilities can be impactful. For example, research by Cecchetti, Last, Lynch and Linehan in 2021 measured longitudinal changes in the attitudes of medics towards those with disabilities in order to improve aspects of healthcare such as empathy, following a targeted intervention. The researchers were clear about making a lasting, positive change in the attitudes of medical professional and call for this to be universal. Additionally, many studies have used statistics to emphasise a need for positive change (Lamichhane and Okubo, 2014). Therefore, positivist research can make contributions to the field when not approached from a deficit or ableist lens but simply does not generate the type of rich, experiential data required for this study. These methods do not give an insight into the experiences of others, thus do not provide the rich data that this study hopes to gather. Positivist research does not give a meaningful account of the

experiences of those involved in the system and in fact may negate their agency because their experiences are not fully heard from their perspective.

There are researchers who argue against the long-standing belief that positivist research does not reflect the complex social world. For example, Hasan (2014) points out the benefits of using some common positivist quantitative methodologies such as large-scale social surveys for investigating social phenomena and states that there is a place for both positivist and interpretive research within the domain of social research. However, this research employs a critical perspective to illuminate issues of power. Critical theorists may challenge the assumptions made by positivist theorists. To exemplify, positivists may argue for the hypothesis that learning is hierarchical, with the focus on next steps and the same trajectory for all. However, learners with CASN are not homogenous and often learn or make progress in a non-linear fashion. In critical research questions are raised about the simplistic nature of such thinking. Each individual is influenced by where they were born and the opportunities that were presented to them.

SERA highlight Article 3 of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (1992) and the Education Scotland Act (1995) and stipulate that any research carried out must be beneficial to those involved. Research which improves the situation, rather than remediating proposed deficits through interventions which may or may not then be considered in education, would be more beneficial to this group. For example, if teachers are asked to think more about subject choices for students with CASN and consider their attitudes around this, it may lead to new ways of thinking about equality of access for these learners. In line with the Hawthorne (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 2003) effect, also known as the Pygmalion Effect, previous research has indicated that when teachers' expectations of students are positive, students' outcomes improve. In light of this, an alternative perspective is discussed below.

A relativist position places greater importance on the experiences of children with Complex Additional Support Needs in terms of their schooling. Here, different or diverse experiences are valued equally. Relativist researchers look at issues within their social context but use qualitative methods used by many interpretivist researchers. Methods will focus on social, rather than scientific forms of interpretation. The methods and forms of interpretation used in this research are qualitative from a relativistic position. The research will use a critical perspective to illuminate power structures and inequalities then argue for a new, entitlement-based, model of inclusion.

In contrast to positivist approaches, interpretivist research aims to be inductive in its investigation into the experiences of learners with CASN whilst proposing why this might be the case.

Researchers who use interpretive, qualitative methods hope to gain insights into different phenomena in order to begin theorising about them. Meaning is sought from patterns that are observed through data collection in real life contexts. However, inductive methods do not aim to seek proof, they aim to offer one possible explanation for patterns that have been observed or that have appeared in the data gathered. Leko (2014) asserts that qualitative methodologies place the voices of the participants at the forefront of the research, in addition, the open-ended or less structured methods used allow for ideas that may not have been previously considered to be explored. This opens up possibility for the investigation of new phenomena. In developing this further, this research fits more comfortably into a relativist approach where the experiences of learners have meaning in relation to the educational context. Relativism is concerned with what constitutes reality for individuals. Given that the views of the young people that the study is concerned with may be harder to obtain because of issues such as ethics and communication, and may be harder to corroborate with research questions, then relativism is appropriate in this context. Here, the notion of agency is confined to the context of education, that is to say it is 'relative to' (Drummond, 2005, p.1) education and in particular educational subject choices.

Relativist researchers would argue that the social world is equally important and that problems, or areas for study cannot be taken out of their context and into a researcher's laboratory. In line with the social model of disability the importance of the role that context plays in participants' experiences is key. (O'Brien et al., 2014) state that the purpose of qualitative research is to understand perspectives and experiences within the situated context of the individual participants. There are many facets to the social world and they are immersed in or relative to context. They would argue that issues are best explored by looking at how participants interpret and make meaning from their lives and the world around them. Qualitative research can make a contribution to literature across many disciplines by examining natural situations to generate new theories on the social world (O'Brien et al., 2014). Employing this approach could be very useful in informing practice, the aim being to bring about positive change and improve opportunities for young people with complex ASN to have agency in matters concerning them, specifically in the context of educational subject choices. This study will examine the experiences of students through a critical lens to illuminate the factors that influence their experiences. Much of the critical research into

inclusion is based around the Social Model of disability and therefore, this is a foundational underpinning of the current piece of research.

The existing body of research focuses on ways in which children with additional needs are excluded from mainstream education or activities. For example, Stalker and Moscardini (2012) conducted a critical review of research into children's experiences of disability and inclusion and identified some common themes therein. These included that children felt that they would like more access to social and leisure activities and peers and that they had different levels of experience in relation to bullying and harassment. Kelly and Byrne (2015) claim that childhood disability studies remain "under theorised" (p.2) and would benefit from further research employing a critical perspective, across many domains, including education.

Positivists may argue that qualitative methodologies do not ensure the same rigour as quantitative as they are open to the interpretation of the researcher. However, O'Brien et al., (2014) highlight the importance of high quality reporting in qualitative research to ensure standards for methodological rigour are met (p.1245). They cite The American Empirical Research Association (2006), who proposed standards for reporting on social science research, ensuring that the design of the research makes the logic for the enquiry completely clear, demostrating how and why particular methods and procedures were used. Ryan-Nicholls and Will (2009) argue that rigour can be achieved in qualitative research by ensuring that it is grounded in the experiences of the participants, shows clearly how the study findings fit the data gathered and overarchingly, is embedded in the researcher's broader understanding of the principles of qualitative research.

In addition, a potential danger of empolying positivist methodologies during such research is that the agency of the participant is overlooked altogether Griffiths (1998) argues that meaning in educational research is made from the experiences and actions of participants themselves, not a set of preconcieved conditions. This form of research is compatible with the capability model, in a way in which positivist models are not compatible with it due to potential lack of agency on the part of the participant. Whether teachers' views on the education of students with ASN impact on their access to subjects could be illuminated by this type of research. In turn, this could impact on opportunities for students by revealing the roots of any barriers that learners face when accessing different educational subjects, ways in which their agency is restricted. Beck (1979) discusses social science research and claims that the purpose of it is to understand social reality as individuals experience it, and

to show how their views can influence that reality. My methodological choices were influenced by my desire to have the voices of young people with complex needs heard.

Furthermore, this research employs a critical perspective, which draws attention to inequalities in power and resources and challenges the structures that maintain inequality Griffiths (1998). Uncovering the barriers in place that prevent students from potentially accessing educational subjects and where they are coming from will potentially illuminate a way forward. The previously discussed Social Model of Disability argues that culture and context are the primary barriers to inclusion for children with additional needs. The relativist approach is much more suited to understanding the interface of individual student and school environment. Researchers in the critical field question whose interests' different situations are primarily serving, and what power relations are in place to ensure this. In addition, critical researchers believe that we are too ready to accept the outcomes of social research without questioning these points. Those coming from a social perspective might argue that it is the environment alone that needs to be adapted to allow the child access, with a strong focus on social justice for these children. However, adapting teaching approaches, based on knowledge gained during qualitative, context-based research is a form of adapting the environment. There is a linguistic and cultural shift that needs to take place in the way that students' rights to education are viewed. This can only be discerned by examining the views of teachers and the experiences of students. Relativists believe that reality is socially constructed and furthermore, that what counts as valuable knowledge is often decided by those who hold the most agency or power in society (Dreyfus & Taylor, 2015; Griffiths, 1998). Giving credence to this, the critical standpoint asserts that society is too accepting of the outcomes of social research, without question. This will be discussed in the following section.

3.3 Critical Approaches

Critical enquiry questions the values, norms and power relations in society with an often-cited aim of achieving social justice. Critical researchers do not only want to investigate the world but to change it. Researchers in this field often argue that inequality exists due to oppressive influences from those with greater power. This critical approach seeks to move away from an ableist view. Gray (2014) states that critical researchers also seek to look at the relationship between what is presented as fact by the ideologies of powerful or dominant groups in society. He argues that critical researchers believe that mainstream research

unconsciously reinforces these means of oppressing society by reinforcing “race and gender oppression” (Gray, 2014, p. 27).

Critical researchers may argue that all research should adopt a critical viewpoint when considering issues in society. Some of the most well-known critical research centres around issues such as critical disability studies, feminism and postmodernism. One way of understanding power relationships such as these is to consider the notion of ‘capital’ which will be examined in the next paragraph.

The role of ‘cultural capital’ (Bourdieu, 1973) or traits that are seen as positive when determining what happens in society is of terrific importance to critical researchers. Cultural capital refers to advantages that certain people or groups have, such as money for example, that lead to them obtaining positions of power in society. In the context of this research the power of the adult over the young person may be an example of cultural capital. Having these sources of cultural capital leads to advantages for some and disadvantages for those who do not possess them. In terms of cultural capital in schools, one of the most commonly researched areas is the relationship between poverty and educational attainment. There is a bulk of research in this area including seminal pieces such as Jackson and Marsden’s (1962) book, *Education and the Working Class,* which was revolutionary in terms of changing thinking about social policy in particular. Studies on the relationship between educational outcomes and disabilities have mirrored these findings (Hurwitz et al., 2019) by drawing attention to the negative relationship between disability or special needs and attainment. This relationship has been well documented in previous research (Chatzitheochari & Platt, 2018) which shows that children with disabilities are generally placed behind their peers in terms of educational attainment (Parsons & Platt, 2017).

Researchers coming from a critical perspective begin their research with their own sets of beliefs and values that determine what they choose to research. As Griffiths (1998) put it, they “take sides*”* (Griffiths, 1998, p.3) in order to bring about educational change. Griffiths believes that acknowledging the researchers’ position improves the research. Many theorists have cited the benefits of critical research into social phenomena. Writing about critical research in education, Hinchey (1998) argues that critical theory gives a different perspective than other paradigms. She states that it helps society to understand that things are not always as we have assumed them to be. We make certain assumptions about the way things are in our society and don’t see alternatives to these because we are so immersed in our own culture and accepting of practices that take place there. As discussed,

other researchers have found that pupils with ASN are excluded from certain subjects, if this is the way things have always been then it is likely that without new ways of working and thinking this is the way it will continue.

This study brings a critical perspective to bear on the educational experiences of students with complex needs with the intent of examining whether their experiences are equal to that of their peers. Hinchey argues that critical perspectives can open the mind to new possibilities and different ways of thinking about whose goals are the most commonly achieved in society, through the choices we make and why that is. Quoting Sizer (1984) “Perhaps in sum, the unchallenging mindlessness of so much of the status quo is truly acceptable: it doesn’t make waves” (Sizer, as cited by Hinchey, 1998, p.28)

In relation to education then, critical theory asks questions about who holds the power and how that comes about. It looks at how the actions of the powerful in education affect those less powerful and what can be done to bring about change. In this study the interest is the experiences of pupils with CASN and the factors that influence them. The attitudes of teachers around what subjects students with CASN can undertake, may influence their experiences. Teachers may hold the power to make these decisions if their students are not deemed to have capacity.

Methodologies used in critical research can include both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Griffiths (1998) gives the example of Ball’s (1997) study on school organisation which was an analysis of school micropolitics based on categories critically important to social justice such as power, age and gender and suggested school democracy as a way forward. In fact, some researchers have argued against the division of methods and research, into qualitative and quantitative methodologies.as data needs to be fit for the purposes of research. In this case, some descriptive statistics will enhance the themed interview transcripts to provide richer data and examine the relationship between teachers’ views on disability and agency in education.

Critical research related to education aims to understand the ways in which educational issues are related to power and social divisions. Methodologies in critical research are not as clean-cut as the two perspectives described previously. Within the field many different methodologies and viewpoints exist. Griffiths (1998) describes the boundaries between individual theorists and methodologies as ‘fuzzy’ meaning that they can feed into each other in a variety of ways. There appears to be greater complexity within the field of critical research and many overlaps between theory and methodology.

Despite much research and discourse on inclusive education, this group of students may have been unable to fully access a wide range of curricular subjects.

This study uses practitioner enquiry to identify what the particular factors are that may contribute to this and through the discussion section, proposes some possible solutions. The next section will explore ways in which critical research into lesser-highlighted aspects of inclusion can be carried out in order to contribute to knowledge and practice

3.4 The context of the study

3.4.1 Practitioner Research

This study lends itself to action research because I aim to "effect positive educational change" (Mills, 2011, p.3). There is a narrower field of action research, termed practitioner research. Here, I am immersed in the setting I study and hope to bring about informative data to effect change on my own practice. Fox, Martin & Green (2007) explain that the practitioner researcher is different to the academic researcher in that they can embed research into their own practice and use the results in a way that an academic researcher cannot. They talk about the "synergy between research and practice" (Fox, Martin & Green, 2007, p.2) and argue that the impact of this is that it makes both research and practice more effective. Hill-Campbell (2013, p. 4) states that practitioner research first involves discovering questions perhaps through experience or professional reading then gathering data to answer them. Hill-Campbell describes practitioner research as being able to enlighten teachers on "discrepancies between what was intended and what occurred" (p.4). Inclusive education for all in the intention of modern-day Scottish education, whether this has occurred in relation to subject choice is a matter for enquiry.

Practitioner research, using a qualitative approach which allows for student's voices in this matter to be heard, would seem to be a useful option to progress the issue. It may generate further ideas on what educational choice looks like for this group of students and how this relates to teachers' views. This type of research allows for investigation of student's experiences in relation to educational choices and results will inform future practice. Given that action research is a cyclical process, this allows for reflection and feedback which will be used to inform any adaptations made. This is very important if the aim is to effect real change, which has a positive and long-lasting impact. Indeed, this is mirrored in the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education report titled 'Teacher Education for Inclusion' (2011) which calls for student teachers to be reflective and ask "why"

questions (p.23) in order to adapt their practice to meet the needs of diverse learners. Reflecting and developing one's practice in light of these reflections can only improve it.

In practitioner enquiry, a researcher is immersed in the context of the enquiry, participants also have a voice and are able to contribute to the study. Researchers use the data gained to inform their practice and the practice of others. Researchers are informed by their prior knowledge and experience when making inferences or drawing conclusions. Writing on action research, Higgins (Higgins, 2016) introduces the notion of 'Schwab's Challenge', (Schwab, 1959, as cited in Higgins, 2016) asserted that teachers must also be learners. Inquiry and teaching should be synonymous with each other and be a firm part of education. Higgins argues that action research in itself has been "fossilized into a banner or method" (p.235) but that if teachers take up inquiry it will allow them to become intellectuals, able to converse and share knowledge across a variety of contexts. Crucial to this are notions of reflection, experiment and revision (Higgins, 2016). In interpretivist research, the researcher cannot claim to be neutral and must declare their own biases and experiences, which may influence the way that they conduct the research and interpret data. Jooton et al. (2008) suggest that an account of researcher reflexivity should be included within academic research write up as a matter of course. Further to this, they argue that reflexivity should be one of the "pillars of critical qualitative research" (p.42). In this research I have acknowledged my position throughout in order to consider the impact that this has had on the research.

In this case I have been an educator in the ASN sector for 21 years, with the greater part of that period spent in middle management. Over the course of the last five years, I have been involved in teaching and managing classes for students with Complex Additional Support Needs. The students within these classes have a range of medical, physical and cognitive disabilities and many are non-verbal. I feel very passionate about the need to include these learners in general educational policy and the capacity of these learners to communicate, perhaps not conventionally but in ways that are relevant and meaningful.

As Mills (2011) argued, positive educational change can be brought about through practitioner research. The study lent itself to practitioner enquiry as the benefits for students who may have restricted agency due to the nature of their needs could be significant. However, my previous experience and knowledge cannot be ignored, it is important to be reflexive whilst analysing results and writing up findings. In this case, because I work in the setting where students' experiences are being examined, it will be important to analyse whether my feelings about the setting had a bearing on the results and critically examine

the data to ensure as much neutrality as possible. In light of this, I have undertaken deep reflection on my own positionality within the research, as outlined below.

3.4.2 Account of Researcher Positionality

3.4.2.1 Reflexivity and Positionality

Within qualitative research, the researcher is responsible for the process of data collection and data interpretation. Therefore, it is important to be transparent about the researcher's own experiences and position within the subject under research. Potential variables that may affect the research include a researcher's own experiences, beliefs and attitudes. Reflexivity can be viewed as the operationalised concept of positionality of the researcher within the research context (Secules, et al., 2021). This reflexive positionality serves to elucidate bias, with the purposeful intent of the researcher to be transparent about their own potential bias, attitude and influence on power relations within the research context. This will serve to minimise the potential for biased research outcomes. Whilst the importance of objectivity is clear, one's own potential for subjectivity must be transparent. Historically, many researchers have linked the concept of positionality with the binary notion of being an insider or an outsider (Edmonds-Cady, 2012; Obasi, 2014). This refers to being a member of the group being researched (insider) or not (outsider). Arguably, no one can truly be an insider to another's experiences. This view is also shared by Johnson-Bailey (2004) who acknowledges subjectivities but describes them as fluid and intertwined with the power held by the researcher to decide on the topic under research. Therefore, as Holmes (2020) argues, my positionality cannot be reduced to a binary concept, it is fluid. Secules et al., (2021) conducted a review of reflexivity in qualitative research and identified three categories of reflexivity that could be employed by researchers. The category that resonates with me, in terms of my position is that of "establishing a transparency of self-attributes" (Secules et al., 2021, p. 22). Here, researchers elucidate information about themselves to increase trustworthiness and quality and address potential sources of bias. As will be seen in the following account, I have been excluded and I have a disability, I have also been the teacher and the witness to the exclusion of others.

3.4.2.2 Personal Account

Following a period of deep reflection on my positionality within this research, I came to think about my own experiences of schooling. My passion for this group of young people and their

life experience is exceptional in its determination to improve educational equality for them. However, I came to realise that I must acknowledge that my own experiences may have accounted for the inclusion of MFL as a curricular probe.

As a young teenager, I myself, was permanently excluded from MFL education by a teacher who could not tolerate my impulsive and distractible behaviour. This would come, in adulthood, to be diagnosed as combined type ADHD. MFL became intertwined with CASN for me when I began to work at a school for pupils with CASN and was asked to teach Spanish. Therefore, although I do not experience CASN, I do have some awareness of what it is like to be excluded due to having an additional support need. This, perhaps, added fuel to my passion for making sure that it does not happen to my students. In addition to this, I have been a teacher of young people with CASN and share some of the practical experiences of the teachers. I am very interested in finding out their views on curricular access and agency. However, I feel strongly that it is coming to know so many exceptional young people with CASN, and the barriers that they face, which is the main driver of my research. Flores (2018) argues that positionality cannot simply be viewed as being an 'insider' or an 'outsider' in relation to the participants in research. In my research, there are no fixed boundaries such as this. There are aspects of the teachers' and the young people's experiences that resonate with my own, and others that do not. To see my pupils have equality of experience would be the ultimate achievement of my career and is what I hope to begin to facilitate through this thesis. However, my desire for society to break down attitudinal barriers is underpinned by the knowledge that a wealth of information gleaned through my literature review indicates that these barriers are many and longstanding.

My position as a principal teacher in the school studied gave me access to interview participants and subsequent data but it also meant that I approached the topic under study with a bank of knowledge around some of the issues that young people with CASN may experience within an educational setting.

In relation to the teachers, I have shared their lived experiences. I too have been a class teacher in the CASN sectors, as well as both a less and more experienced member of staff over time. I clearly remember my own feelings of worry that I wouldn't know how to teach or interact with young people experiencing such complexity.

Berger (2013) argues that such experience may cause some blurring of the lines between researcher experience and participants' responses. Therefore, as Valentine (2007)

suggests, I must carefully and dynamically self-reflect during interviews to ensure that I am not focussing too much on responses which conform to my pre-assumptions.

In order to make my own positionality clear, I have identified key dimensions of my own positionality and their impacts on research. These are tabled below.

Table 4: Dimensions of Positionality

Dimension of Positionality	My Experience	Impact on Research	Protective measures taken
Choice of research topic	I have extensive experience in the field of ASN, I have worked in CASN for the last five years. I currently work as a manager in a CASN department. I have previously been excluded from MFL. Additionally, my experience as a MFL teacher of pupils with CASN has been influential in my subject choice.	I am immersed in the field of research and have current knowledge of what the experiences of children within the setting of this school are. I am writing about an area that I have some knowledge of, I have experienced, observed and read about inequalities with subject access and this has motivated me to focus my research on this matter.	I need to be careful that my literature review is balanced in terms of the multiple views and experiences that differ from my own. I must ensure that I consider a variety of epistemological sources of research evidence to add to this balance.
Methodological choices	I have prior experience of interviewing, I am skilled at communicating with young people with CASN. I know many of the participants.	The pre-existing relationship between researcher and participants means that responses can be interpreted and the rich additional data such as gesture and symbol selection can also be identified. Materials produced are designed to suit the range of communication	In order to prevent preconceived themes emerging, triangulation must be considered to ensure that evidence comes from a source other that purely the interviews.

Dimension of Positionality	My Experience	Impact on Research	Protective measures taken
		styles of participants, allowing greater ease and depth of communication.	
Relationship to participants	I have known and worked with many young people with CASN closely over the last number of years. I have managed the CASN department in the school for the last three years. I know all of the interviewed participants in the study. I am passionately invested in the wellbeing and equality of young people with complex needs.	Participants who are being interviewed may say what they think I want to hear, in order to please me. I may be unintentionally inclined to focus on responses that build on what I think the outcomes of the study will be. I may be overly focussed on responses which give credence to my own passionate beliefs.	I must consider carefully ethical issues of coercion but must also ensure that the interviews are genuinely eliciting participants' own views. I must ensure that participants feel comfortable, the build up to the key questions must be friendly and open. All responses must be shown value, equally. I must be aware of the influence of my own passion for the subject both when interviewing teachers and analysing the data thematically. Participants must be aware of the right to withdraw.
Communication of the research	My prior experience at first seems too analogical to elucidate due to my previous psychology background. However, I come to realise that this elucidation is critically important in	I may be inclined to adopt an overly-scientific and more detached approach to my positionality within the research due to the intertwined relationship between myself and the participants in	I must acknowledge my position within the context of the research in order to show my own connection to and lived experience of the topic in hand. This will, in fact, increase trustworthiness.

Dimension of Positionality	My Experience	Impact on Research	Protective measures taken
	qualitative research such as this.	an attempt to increase trustworthiness.	

It would be unrealistic to assume that this research is devoid of my voice and my experiences, these are interwoven with those of the pupils and teachers interviewed because I developed the research. I conducted the interviews, and I analysed the data. However, the themes were identified as repeated themes which emerged through multiple accounts from individual pupils and teachers. In this way, I attempted to give voice to the participants, by focussing on repeated themes that occurred in their own accounts. Additionally, I focussed on unpacking my own positionality.

I considered the findings of McMillan, McConnell and O'Sullivan (2016), who investigated teachers' motivations for undertaking higher levels of professional study and suggested that factors such as career advancement, support within their establishment and credence from peers were highly featured in teachers' accounts of the benefits of it. However, I found a lack of resonance with my own thinking around why my own motivations and benefits. I was strongly motivated to undertake this level of study by my own perception of myself as a learner, as someone who left school with few qualifications, due to behavioural issues. I felt that this would be the ultimate achievement. I have deep rooted doubts about my own level of capability. Interestingly, a study by Leonard, Becker and Coate (2005), found that the perception of 'capability' is often mentioned within the accounts of those undertaking doctoral level study. This is, of course, formed by my experience of living with combined ADHD and the perception that inability to concentrate, impulsive behaviour and lack of organisation equate to lack of ability. The process has been arduous, at times, soul destroying. Additionally, my own levels of concentration and ability to persevere are not always compatible with the bias towards writing as a valuable form of communication in academia, which feels like an elitist world that I can't quite break into. This sense of ableism in academia has been noted by other researchers such as Brown and Leigh (2020). Indeed, I have experienced it first-hand and considered whether this was the correct path for someone like me. My current supervisors have helped me to break down those anxiety-related barriers and proceed. Subsequently, a potential benefit for me is the notion that I might be capable of demonstrating that, under the quirky exterior, is someone who is able to access this level of academic study, the title of 'doctor' will be 'self-affirming. The benefits of doctoral level study, for me, are both

personal and professional. The next section will examine what literature was used to inform the study. An initial literature review was conducted in order to illuminate current research and illuminate any gaps or issues in the field of research.

3.4.2.3 Multiple Cause Diagram

At the end of the data collection chapter a summary is given in the form of a multiple cause diagram. A multiple cause diagram gives a pictorial representation of factors that influence an event or concept. In this case, a summary of factors that influenced the agency of pupils with CASN was presented following the data analysis process by which they were identified. It was desirable to fully elucidate the chains of cause and effect which impact on the outcomes for young people with CASN. As can be seen, there is no single cause of restriction of agency for these young people, there are many, complicated factors that affect how they experience the education system. As Morrison (2012) argues, if we assume linear relationships between concepts then we overlook the interconnected nature of factors, all of which have a bearing on each other. A multiple cause diagram is therefore a more fitting representation of the complex nature of pupils' experiences.

3.5 Methods

3.5.1 Empirical study

The study was conducted in two parts, one in the form of an online survey of teachers' views and the other in a series of face-to-face interviews with teachers, and students with CASN in a large special school. The following sections give details on recruitment of participants, followed by specific information on the ethical considerations of the study. Following this the methods, tools and data collection techniques employed will be outlined.

3.5.2 Participants and recruitment of participants

The participants for the interview part of the study were six students aged 10-16 with complex additional support needs and seven teachers who teach at least one student with complex additional support needs. Cleary et al. (2014) state the importance of the selection process being purposefully related to the research questions under investigation. In this case the study was related to the experiences of pupils with CASN and the influences on these.

I work in a large ASN school and have access to participants, so recruited students. The guardians of students known to me as having complex additional support needs were approached via letter, followed up by a telephone conversation should they indicate a willingness for their child to take part.

The phone call ascertained whether the guardian fully understood the reasons for and nature of the research so that they could give informed consent for consent to be sought from their child. Following this, a face-to-face conversation, supported by a familiar adult took place with each student. This was supported by alternative and augmentative communication as relevant. An example of supporting symbols is in included (appendices 5 and 6) I then agreed a time to come back and interview each student. Students were then asked for informed consent at the interview, bearing in mind the relevant ethical issues which will be discussed in the next section. The timing of these requests almost coincided with the onset of the Covid-19 country-wide lockdown, students were interviewed in the week prior to the shutting of educational establishments across Scotland. As a result, only six pupils were interviewed, which was a smaller sample than initially hoped for. Cleary et al. (2014) assert that participants should be chosen with the research question in mind. This also applies to smaller numbers of participants. Here, they reiterate that if the recruitment of participants aligns closely with the research questions, then a smaller number can be studied more intently.

Potential teacher interview participants were listed in code form based on their experience of teaching students with CASN. A range of experience was decided to provide the picture most relevant to the research, but all teachers has experience of teaching at least one student with CASN. Teachers were then approached to gauge willingness to participate. All teachers approached, bar one who felt that they didn't have enough experience (despite reassurance that their contributions were still relevant), were willing to participate in the interview process and were given all the relevant consent paperwork to read, sign and return. I waited until paperwork was returned in order to allow teachers to have more time to consider their consent. Following the return of paperwork, a time for interview was arranged. Prior to interview consent to being interviewed and recorded was sought again, verbally.

3.5.3 Demographic information on participants

Information on the pupils, using pseudonyms, who were interviewed is as follows:

Helen is a 13-year-old pupil who uses a mixture of symbols and Makaton signs to communicate. She is a happy and sociable girl who appeared very happy to participate in this research. Helen has a diagnosis of fragile-x syndrome and complex cognitive needs.

Ryan is a 12-year-old boy who uses a mixture of symbols to eye point to and some basic Makaton signs that staff who know him well can interpret. He is a sociable boy who is determined, alert and full of fun. Ryan has quadriplegic cerebral palsy.

Olivia is a 15-year-old girl. She is strong and determined, she vocalises well and has a good vocabulary which she uses to have her wants and needs met, as well as to socialise. Olivia is on the Autistic Spectrum and also experiences Pathological Demand Avoidance and Oppositional Defiant Disorder, leading to a complex behavioural presentation.

Matthew is a 13-year-old boy who uses a mixture of symbol boards and eye gaze technology to communicate. He is alert and aware of everything that is going on in his space, he is determined and has made huge progress with his eye gaze. Matthew has quadriplegic cerebral palsy.

Leo is a 16-year-old boy, he is able to vocalise well and thrives on having a role as a helper around the school. Leo has complex cognitive needs.

James is a 13-year-old boy. He is very sociable and communicates through noises and symbols, as well as using his friends and staff by directing them to what he wants. James has albinism and complex cognitive needs.

Information on the teachers, using pseudonyms, who were interviewed is as follows:

Cathy is a secondary qualified PE teacher who has been working in the ASN sector for nearly ten years. She currently works in the secondary department of the school and has recently begun to lead sessions for the pupils from the CASN departments. Cathy has little prior experience of working with pupils with complex needs.

David is a secondary-qualified art teacher who teaches both art and maths within the secondary department of the school. He has recently begun to teach maths to some of the pupils from the CASN department. David has worked at the school for just over a year after gaining supply work. This is David's first experience in an ASN school and he has previously had no experience on teaching pupils with complex needs.

John is a primary-qualified teacher who teaches one of the secondary-aged classes within the CASN (medical/physical) department of the school. John has vast experience in the field, having moved into it after his probationary teaching period in 2008.

Laura is a primary-qualified teacher, in a promoted post, who teaches both science and ICT within the secondary department of the school. She has recently begun to teach science to some of the pupils from the CASN department. Laura has over ten years of teaching experience within the ASN sector although has previously had little contact with pupils with CASN.

Melanie is a depute head who has responsibility for both complex departments within the school. Melanie has over five years of experience of working with pupils with CASN and currently covers classes when short-staffed as well as regularly coming into class to liaise with staff and pupils.

Nicola is a primary-qualified teacher who has nearly ten years of experience of working with pupils with complex needs. She currently working in a mixed primary/secondary aged class within the complex department (medical/physical) of the school.

Karen is a primary-qualified teacher who has recently moved to the school on supply, following a range of temporary contracts within different primary schools. This is Karen's first experience of complex needs and she has a secondary-aged class within the complex department (behavioural and physical). She has been the class teacher for seven months.

For the questionnaire part of the process, a wider group of teacher participants was recruited via Facebook pages for a questionnaire. Facebook was chosen because I am a member of many ASN teaching groups and it was considered a quick way to reach a large number of appropriate participants. However, a disadvantage of this may have been that teachers who were not active on social media were omitted. The target number of participants was 35. Fogli and Herkenhoff (2018) state that the sample must be large enough to accurately represent the spread of views across the population under consideration. 35 was considered an appropriate number to give a range of perspectives, and also realistic due to the small number of specialist provisions in Scotland. The final number of survey participants was 124. Many teachers wanted to undertake the survey, indicating that this is an area which professionals in the field want to discuss. The questionnaire had consent paperwork attached for teachers to sign electronically.

3.5.4 Ethical considerations

This study gained ethical approval from the University of Strathclyde. All educational research is underpinned by comprehensive guidelines issued by the Scottish Educational Research Association (2005) which protects research participants from harm.

In considering the design for this research ethicality was extremely important because of the nature of the participants, particularly the pupil group studied. Cameron and Murphy (2007) set out ideals for gaining informed consent from people with ASN and providing accessible information. This was a fundamental element of the research as informed consent is harder to ensure from those who are most vulnerable to coercion. Additionally, as a result of the scrutiny by the ethics committee the ethical structure was deemed to require a letter of consent from the head teacher of the school to conduct research on the premises. In order to ensure that identity was fully protected no demographic information about participants was included in the written-up thesis.

An unexpected ethical issue that developed over the course of the consent gaining and interview process was the emergence of Covid-19 and the impending country-wide lock down. At the time of the interviews, very little was known about the implications and safety concerns that this would bring about. However, to ensure that the risk of transmission was minimised, I seated myself at an appropriate distance from participants. Had this occurred later in our journey towards awareness of the Covid-19 virus and how it is transmitted, further measures such as hand sanitiser and facemasks or e-interviews would have been put in place.

3.5.4.1 Students

All research in education is bound by guidelines issued to ensure the safety of all involved, issued by the Scottish Educational Research Association. The SERA (2005) ethical guidelines were adhered to in the formulation of the study and its methods. In addition, due to the vulnerabilities of the participants, the research had to be scrutinised by the University Ethics Committee as opposed to a departmental committee. This ensured that all ethical considerations were adhered to with rigour. This particular group of participants are a very vulnerable group. Not only are they under the age of 18 but they have ASN and are being approached in the school setting where elements of power and authority may affect the recruitment process.

It is well documented that those with CASN are not afforded the same opportunities as others. This also applies to participation in research. Boxall & Ralph (2011) stated that “although there is increasing interest in service user involvement in research, such involvement rarely extends to people with profound and multiple learning disabilities” (p.173). It could be that the same factors discussed in the literature review affect the rate of participation for young people with complex needs in research.

Often, they have differences with communication and perhaps researchers do not have the skills, and experience to be able to adapt materials to meet their needs. This also extends to the responses that students with CASN are able to give which may be through the use of alternative or augmentative communication strategies such as Makaton, symbols or communication aids (Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists, 2013). These strategies may generate less narrative data for analysis than a typical conversation. Lewis (2010) makes the point that if difficulties obtaining authentic pupil voice are “underplayed then conceptual or procedural limitations are not addressed” (Lewis, 2010, p.16) therefore, it is very important that the communication abilities of these exceptional learners are addressed and accounted for to obtain an authentic account of their experiences. As previously discussed, these young people may not be deemed to have the capacity to participate in research with full understanding of what the implications are. I have had to be very careful that all ethical implications were accounted for via the materials used and different forms of consent given. There is no doubt that this process involves a degree of specialist knowledge of what is and is not accessible to the young people involved. It can be more challenging to obtain the views of those with complex needs, however, with creative thinking around methodologies this is perfectly possible, particularly when the researcher knows the communication style of the individual taking part.

In terms of ethical considerations, children with CASN are a vulnerable group and, those with CASN may not be able to fully understand processes during research and reasons for doing it. Boxall and Ralph (2011) argue that awareness of methods to help those with CASN is heightening, and strategies to include them in a research in meaningful and accessible ways are more readily available. These may include using photographs instead of written words, for example. Boxall and Ralph (2011) suggest that although ethics committees are obligated to consider the potential harm that can be caused by vulnerable individuals participating in research, they should also consider the potential benefits. This is particularly relevant if the group is already significantly underrepresented in research, because through research the population of young people with CASN is given a voice. It is extremely important that these are outlined in an accessible way, so that informed consent from children (and their parents) can be given.

This is a vulnerable group; they are aged under 18 and also have complex additional support needs. Prior to the study, informed consent was gained from parents, if they gave their consent, students were asked for their consent in joining the study.

The SERA ethical guidelines highlight informed consent as one of the key underpinnings of any piece of research in educational settings. Cameron and Murphy (2007) argue that in order to obtain informed consent from people with additional support needs, the information provided to them must be in a format that is accessible to them. Other authors have given credence to this. For example, Begley, as cited by Lewis (2005), conducted research into inclusion from the perspective of children with additional support needs but highlighted the lack of representation within that research of young people with PMLD because the researcher did not feel confident in communicating with them or assessing their views. Boxall and Ralph (2011) note a lack of the perspectives of those with PMLD within research which can be attributed, in part, to researchers being unsure of how to communicate with such exceptional individuals. Inevitably, the process of gaining consent requires explicit communication from the researcher, in order to ascertain that the person involved in the research understanding the consent and withdrawal processes. Furthermore, this requires specific knowledge on the part of the researcher in order to make this process accessible for the individual.

With this particular group, ensuring that the students understood was key. I am experienced at scaffolding their understanding with the use of appropriate language and with visual supports as necessary. Purposes and methods were explicitly outlined, in accessible language with visual supports as necessary. This was done in a quiet room where pupils could concentrate. Relevant symbols were available to all students (appendix 5) and they were encouraged to use them to express their answers.

In addition to this, there are some ethical and methodological issues which must be considered when interviewing children with disabilities. Bedoin and Scelles (2015) highlight some of the complex issues at play during such interviews. Particularly in relation to children with communication difficulties it is important that rights are always protected. The right to understanding and being understood is critical here. Therefore, researchers assert (Bedoin & Scelles, 2015) that any researcher must get to know participants well prior to conducting any research with them. This will allow for a comfortable atmosphere and more importantly for both child and researcher to better understand each other. Kellett and Nind (2005) state the importance of interaction with participants who have severe learning disabilities being conducted by someone who knows the young person well, can read when they are upset or uncomfortable, cares about them and can understand when consent is withdrawn. With these exceptional young people, this cannot be ensured through dialogue alone. Good relationships must be forged with the young people, well-known adults engaged in dialogue about the process and interpersonal communication between researcher and participant developed.

With this in mind, I built up to the interview through sessions providing information on consent and fun clapping games. This allowed for participants to feel comfortable with me.

It is fundamental that a researcher understands the communication method and style of the child participant. Kellett and Nind (2005) also argue that both questions and tools used must be adapted to ensure that children can fully access them. In this study, as researcher, I am very experienced in working with children with communication difficulties and is familiar with alternative communication strategies. Several tools, such as the consent form were adapted to meet communication needs of learners (appendices 5 and 6). In order to gain ethical consent from pupils I ascertained their preferred method of communication, using my prior knowledge and discussion with class staff. I then met with each young person individually and explained, using communication supports, that I would like to talk to them about what they thought about school. Urbach and Banerjee (2019), suggest that supportive props can reduce power imbalances. With this in mind, supportive materials were introduced which allowed children to communicate at their level and also offered a method for the expression of dissent which was available throughout the interview. At all times, I reinforced what I was saying with symbols, gesture and very clear language. Using these supports, pupils were then asked whether they would agree to talk to me about school. At this stage, it should be noted that most pupils agreed very enthusiastically, however, following this initial discussion process the young people were given some time to reflect and process the information and this conversation was picked up again prior to the interview process when the consent process was revised again, and the symbolised consent form shown. The concept of processing time is an important point, previous research has shown that people with PMLD benefit from being given additional processing time in order to interact more equally and experience some control over any interactions in which they are involved (CCEA, 2014).

The issue of capacity to consent has been discussed in a previous study by McDonald and Kidney (2012) who argue that researchers must be able to assess a potential participant's capacity to consent if they present with an "intellectual disability" (p.34) . Suggested strategies include working with the potential participant's family or asking support providers for an assessment of capacity. In this research, parents were asked to consent to me approaching their children in line with section 4.3.7 of the university's Ethics Code of Practice. Which states that when an individual aged 16-18 may not have full capacity to understand the implications of taking part in research, parents can also be consulted. Others

have argued that capacity to consent is emergent throughout the course of a study or research process (Cameron & Murphy, 2006).

In this case, I already knew each participant and consulted the families of each student participant prior to seeking consent to participate using accessible methodologies. It was made clear that students can leave the study at any time and an accessible symbol for this was available for students to access throughout (appendix 5). Additionally, throughout the interview process, I continually looked for signs of discomfort or dissent and had a 'stop' symbol available. It was explained to the pupils that they could use this symbol to stop the interview at any time.

Lewis (2004) states the importance of researchers' reflections on the integrity of their research, the rights of participants to agree or disagree should be made explicit and the consent process should be ongoing. In terms of ethics and quality assurance Urbach and Banerjee (2019) suggest that when interviewing young people with ASN, researchers should continually look for non-verbal cues of dissent. They suggest that the signs may be subtle, such as reduced engagement or ignoring. As an experienced communicator and also someone who is familiar with the children being interviewed, I feel that I was very cognisant of young people's communication throughout the interview process.

Following interviews, students were able to freely discuss any concerns with me when I checked if they had any questions and reminded them of the right to withdraw. This fulfilled the need to demonstrate to students that there was a choice over both their involvement and how their responses would be used.

3.5.4.2 Teachers

One of the ethical considerations of this study in relation to teacher participants was to ensure that there was no pressure or coercion. Due to the fact that I work in a promoted post in an ASN school, there was a risk that participants could feel pressurised to take part in the study. It was extremely important that the letter and face to face conversations relating to consent emphasised the fact that there was no pressure to take part. In addition, teachers could withdraw from the study at any time. Teachers were given a week to consider whether to participate.

Privacy was also a consideration, as with the students, all teachers had the right to have privacy, autonomy and dignity protected in line with the university's Ethics Code of Practice.

In light of this, only I had access to the participants' real names and all data related to participants was kept on Strathcloud. Strathcloud is the university's online secure storage platform, which will be cleared following the study and the assessment of it. Consent forms bearing signatures will be kept in a locked drawer with the key held only by me. Data will be kept for a period of two years.

3.6 Methods and data collection

3.6.1 Interviews

The main means of data collection for this study was a series of personal, semi-structured, face to face interviews. The student interviews lasted 20-30 minutes and centred on students' experiences of choice in education in line with research question one. The teachers' interviews lasted 30-45 minutes and centred around teachers' experiences of teaching students with CASN in order to gain data for research questions two and three. Interviews have long been cited as a way to connect with a participant on a face to face level. Not only can one elicit spoken responses but also get a feel for body language and nuance. Heron, (1981, cited in Seidman, 2006, p.8) argues that the most basic and original method, between humans, of finding something out is to talk and ask questions about it.

> *The use of language, itself, . . . contains within it the paradigm of cooperative inquiry; and since language is the primary tool whose use enables human construing and intending to occur, it is difficult to see how there can be any more fundamental mode of inquiry for human beings into the human condition.*
>
> (Heron, 1981, as cited in Seidman, 2006, p. 26)

Some authors have been critical of interviewing as a main form of data collection in qualitative research due to it being a default (King & Hugh-Jones, 2019) method that all qualitative researchers use and pass down to their students. However, it is more likely that interviewing has endured because it is a way to engage meaningfully with another person and get an insight into how they make meaning of their world. An interviewer can respond to material shared during an interview to glean further insights, in a way that a questionnaire or survey cannot. This aim is at the heart of qualitative research. In terms of the interviews with the young people I ensured that they were conducted using the child's preferred method of communication. Barker and Weller (2003) argue that this assists in the process of

redressing the power-balance between adult and child during the interview process and that techniques such as decontextualized surveys would not allow for a child-centred approach.

My research interest in this study is concerned with students' experiences of agency. Interviews, therefore, were a way of giving agency to the pupils whose experiences were of interest. If the pupils' voices were not given a place within the research on their agency, then the research would have failed in its most fundamental aim.

Interviewing has been used historically as a means of gaining information about particular subjects. Seidman (2006) argues that social organisations such as schools are best understood by finding out about the experiences of individuals within them. The use of interviewing emphasises the importance of the participant/ researcher interaction for gaining data, moving away from viewing people as 'subjects' who generate data, towards making meaning from what they say about their experiences. Additionally, interviews have the added benefit of responsiveness. As the interview proceeds, researchers can ask participants to expand on what they say, for example. Therefore, interviews can elicit deeper information about the experiences of different groups. In this way, participants co-construct the progress of the interview alongside the interviewer, who is not a passive recipient of information but instead uses their skills and responsiveness to conduct the interview in this fluid way (Lingard & Kennedy, 2010).

Whilst here, the research considers the experiences of teachers within the field of CASN it also attempts to give a voice to a group which has historically been under-represented in research in the elicitation of experiences of students. Reeves et al. (2015) consider interviews as key in giving a voice to minorities previously under-represented in research. However, although authors like Seidman (2006) advocate for the benefit of interviewing as a method of enquiry, most concede that although interviewing yields rich data about people and their experiences it is not enough to use interviews alone during research. Seidman states that "interviewing provides a necessary, if not always completely sufficient, avenue of inquiry" (Seidman 2006, p.11)

In addition, researchers need to remain reflective and reflexive over their role in any interview situation (King & Hugh-Jones, 2019) the way that the social interaction that is the interview progresses will be key to what participants choose to say. A researcher must reflect on this and also on the impact of this during the data analysis process. In addition, a researcher must be aware that the way an interview progresses may influence what the

interviewee says or how they answer questions. This exemplifies the need not only for triangulation but for careful reflection on all of these issues on the part of the researcher.

Compiling the interview questions must be done with the participant at the heart of the process, in order to gain as much meaningful data as possible and also to protect them from unintentional harm. Questions need to be meaningful to the research and they also need to be answerable by the participant. I hoped to generate longer answers and in light of this it was important that questions were framed to encourage this. For example, rather than asking “Do you have experience of teaching learners with CASN?” questions were left more open ended such as “What is your experience of teaching learners with CASN?” or “How do you feel about the education of students with CASN?”. King and Hugh-Jones, (2019) argue that spending time preparing interview questions in this way can generate much more useful data and description of participants’ “lived world” (p.134). During the compilation of the interview schedule I also considered the possibility that participants may not choose or feel able to give a response as lengthy as desired. In this case I would prompt them by referring back to points they had previously made or use a standard phrase such as “can you tell me more about that?” or “Can you give me an example of that?”.

Bell (2007) highlights the increasing understanding of the valuable contribution that children can make to social research. Bell states that children have important and unique perspectives but qualifies this by making the need to design appropriate materials and formats for them. Bell gives suggestions such as simplicity and clarity of language, visual supports, avoiding negative questions and thinking about the setting in which the questionnaire will be administered. She suggests having a familiar adult with the student who is completing the research to avoid the researcher/participant power dynamic that can affect answers. In the case of this piece of research, the interview was administered in a familiar room with a well-known adult present at all times. In addition to these accommodations, I monitored for any non-verbal indications of feelings and responded to these based on her sound knowledge of how behaviour is often used to convey feelings in young people with CASN.

In this study, as researcher, I am very experienced in working with children with communication difficulties and is familiar with alternative communication strategies. However, I spent sessions getting to know each participant prior to research to assess what method they used and how best to adapt resources to meet their needs. I am very experienced in the creation of resources which meet the needs of students with

communication difficulties therefore questions were be simplified and augmented with visuals as necessary.

3.6.1.1 Conducting the student interviews

Prior informed consent was gained from both students and their parents. I then had a casual conversation with each student by visiting their classroom and speaking to them about whether they were still happy to take part in the research and ascertaining that they remembered. Following this, a time that suited the schedule of the class was arranged with the student and they were told that I would come back for them at this time. All students approached were very positive about taking part in the research and appeared happy about this.

Each student was taken out of class with their consent, during the school day, into a quiet and comfortable room within their school building. The ethical implications of withdrawing students from class were considered. For example, Felzman (2009) considers ethical issues in school-based research. In relation to withdrawing children from class, there are risks such as the embarrassment of being singled out which can impact on children, socially and are difficult to predict. However, Felzman argues that as long as a positive risk-benefit ratio is achieved then ethically, withdrawing children for research where all risks are minimised as far as possible, can be justified in terms of the contribution it may make to current knowledge. For example, although not immediately beneficial, this type of research may go on to provide knowledge which informs policy, providing ultimate benefits. The cost of taking young people out of their classroom environment was judged to be less than the benefit, in fact, students were used to this process as they were often involved in assessment and therapies outside the class.

Furthermore, in my experience, a typical ASN classroom is very busy with many different tasks or activities running, as well as many different students. To foster concentration, I felt that withdrawal was the most appropriate method. Clark (2010) acknowledges the importance of the setting in which an interview takes place as it can impact on what children will talk about, Clark suggests a less formal or familiar environment but also acknowledges the importance of considering whether a child will contribute best in a group or 1-1 setting. In the case of young people with CASN it is acknowledged by some researchers that a quiet, more focussed environment can reduce over-stimulation and lead to improved experiences for the young person (Imray, 2008; McAllister, Rantala, & Jónsdóttir, 2019). In this case, where a young person has to focus on responding to questions, a quiet environment was considered more effective.

In line with previous studies, where noise levels have been considered to be impactful on the development of young people's communication (McAllister, Rantala, & Jónsdóttir, 2019) and my experience thereof, I decided that a quiet environment would allow for the deep concentration and processing time required. Impacting also on the ongoing development of my rapport with the young people. Imray (2008) cites several examples of children with PMLD becoming over stimulated by too much noise in the environment, the risk that this could impact negatively on the research by not allowing young people to get their views across was considered greater than the risk to the young people of withdrawing them from class, a process they were already used to from work with various therapists.

The room was well known to the students as an additional learning space used by classes on a regular basis. Students were accompanied by a member of staff that knew them well. The interview situation was designed to be as relaxed as possible. With an initial informal clapping syllables in names game as an ice breaker. However, all students appeared comfortable and relaxed throughout the interview.

Students were again asked whether they consented to participate for a short, semi-structured interview. Bedoin and Scelles (2015) argue that this format is more suited to those with communication difficulties as opposed to closed questions, which may result in one-word answers. Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Scribing of interviews aims to yield the rich data that is required for this type of interpretivist research. A symbolised pupil consent form was used, and I went through each question individually with each student. Although each student consented, they were reminded of their right to withdraw at any point in the procedure.

I used an interview schedule (Appendix 1). Interviews were recorded on a phone to achieve exactness during the transcription process (Denscombe,2009). Interviews were transcribed. In order to preserve data confidentiality, recordings were made on a mobile phone using encryption software.

Accessible symbols (Appendix 5) to support understanding and answers as well as clear language were used to outline the purpose of the interview in finding out about students' experiences of studying different subjects at school. Symbols were necessary as most of the students interviewed used alternative methods of communication and were non-verbal.

Following the interview students were thanked and praised for answering the questions so well. They were again reminded of the right to withdraw, asked if they had any questions and reminded that if they wanted to ask anything at another time I was available.

3.6.1.2 Conducting the teacher interviews

As with the pupil interviews, consent was gained prior to interview. The teacher interviews also followed a semi-structured format (appendix 2) and were held in a familiar, comfortable room in order to help the participant to feel as relaxed as possible. Teachers were asked where they wanted to be interviewed Most teachers chose to be interviewed in their own classrooms which were empty at the end of the school day. Interviews were conducted at the end of the school day in order to ensure that teachers were not distracted by tasks that had to be carried out. Teachers chose where to sit in the classroom with me either opposite or beside them, depending on their choice of seating arrangement. Interviews were recorded on an encrypted mobile phone application, as described above. Teachers were reminded of this and asked again whether they felt comfortable being recorded. All agreed to the recording, although were reminded that it could be destroyed at any time, should they reconsider. I then reminded teachers of the right to withdraw at any time without prejudice.

The purpose of the interview in gaining understanding of the experiences and beliefs of those involved in the process of educating students with CASN was explained and the interview was structured towards the discussion of teachers' beliefs about the education of students with CASN. Interviews followed the semi structured format attached in appendix 2. I used a semi-structured format to allow participants to tell and describe their experiences in their own words as naturally as possible. This was particularly important for research question three where the research focussed on exploring links between teachers' views and the agency of students in making choices. However, the first part of the interview schedule contained some demographic questions, such as age and how long teachers had been working with CASN students. Following the interview participants were again reminded of the right to withdraw at any time. In addition, they were assured that data would remain confidential and that they would not be identifiable from data used. Teacher participants were asked if they had any questions and assured that if they wanted to ask later, I would be available.

3.6.2 Questionnaires

As mentioned, questionnaire data was used to supplement interview data (Appendix 3). This was not only important for triangulation purposes, but also from the point of view of the asymmetry between researcher and participant that may lead to anxiety on the part of the participant (Bedoin & Scelles, 2015). This anxiety may lead to inhibition of responses. Where every effort was made to ensure a climate of confidence and comfort during the interview situation, this additional method of data collection allowed for responses that may not have come to light during the interview situation. Online questionnaires were used to increase the validity of responses via anonymity.

A 50% return rate is considered good and some researchers (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011) suggest that administrators of questionnaires should be satisfied if they receive this level. Many more teachers than expected completed the online questionnaire, an effect similar to what was found by Weiss et al. (2013) when they administered a questionnaire on teachers' health. They suggest that the extra uptake was representative of the need for teachers to communicate something about a topic that was important to them.

The first three questions on the online questionnaire sought anonymised demographical data. This included the sector in which teachers taught, whether they had experience of teaching students with CASN and if so, how many students with CASN they had taught. The following three questions used a seven point Likert Scale to gauge the extent to which teachers agreed with statements about the education of students with CASN. Each statement was related to one of the models described. For example ''I believe that students have the capability to make decisions about their own education and should be able to contribute to this." was related to the Capability model. Following the statements about each model, there was an opportunity for teachers to say anything else that they wanted to contribute in an 'additional comments' box. This was particularly useful when thinking about research question three as each statement was linked to a model and the extended comments throughout the questionnaire could then be analysed by participant to ascertain whether the model indicated was represented in extended comments. As Bradburn, Sudmore and Wansink (2004) argue *"*ask what you want to know, not something else*"* p. 3. Therefore I asked the information needed to get the data from teachers that would assist in the illumination of issues identified in the literature review and subsequent research questions. Language used in questionnaires must be contextualized and clear to achieve this and avoid miscommunication.

Attitude was another important aspect of the research. Likert scales are most commonly used to measure attitude (Hurst & Bird, 2013) therefore this measure was deemed most appropriate in meeting the aim of uncovering the relationship between teachers' attitudes towards disability and the educational subject choices of students with CASN. Some authors have criticized the use of Likert scales (Safrudiannur, 2020) due to the fact that they can be taken as out of context without scope for further elaboration or relevance. However, additional, richer data was sought via comments in an 'other' box to elaborate on each Likert-type question. The next section of the questionnaire focused on subject choices for students with CASN. Teachers were first asked whether they felt students with CASN had access to a full range of educational subjects, using a yes/no/don't know or 'other' selection. The other selection was complemented by a text box to allow for elaboration.

Following this, teachers were asked to select factors which hindered or helped students to access subjects in school. All selections featured an 'other' choice with a text box for elaboration. Finally, teachers were asked whether they had additional comments and these were annotated in a text box if desired. It was felt important to allow the 'other' selection with a text box for most of the questions so that teachers would not feel coerced into a selection and the most natural responses would be provided. Indeed, most of the richest data was gained from the additional comments made in the 'other' boxes.

Following the construction of the questionnaire the questions were analysed for content validity by both me and my two supervisors. This ensured that the questions were set appropriately to measure the aims of the research. Hurst and Bird (2013) argue that in order to design an effective questionnaire, expert opinion must be sought and the questionnaire revised accordingly to ensure that questions gather data that addresses the main aims and research questions of the study. In addition, ensuring that the questionnaire was piloted and analysed by supervisors prior to general release allowed me to feel confident in validity in order to analyse data effectively.

3.6.3 Tools

3.6.3.1 Students

Each pupil was be taken out of class, during the school day, into a quiet room. They were asked to participate for a short, semi-structured interview. I used an interview schedule (Appendix 1).

Interviews were recorded to achieve ‘exactness’ during the transcription process (Denscombe, 2009). Interviews were transcribed. In order to preserve data confidentiality, recordings were made on a mobile phone using encryption software.

Many communication supports were used to assist students with consent, withdrawal and answers (appendices 5 and 6). These included yes/no symbols that were widely used across the school and familiar to the pupils, as well as a range of emotion and subject related symbols from the same symbol programme that was used across the school. Students were directed to symbol sets before and during interviews and many actively sought them out to answer questions. Some students communicated only by using the symbols so these were critical to the research tools used. These can be found in appendices 5 and 6.

3.6.3.2 Teachers

Teachers were interviewed in a familiar room, using the interview schedule in (appendix 2). Like students, teachers were recorded on a mobile phone using encryption software.

The teacher survey was designed using the Qualtrics programme which can be accessed online and consisted of some multiple-choice questions related to demographic data such as how long a teacher had been teaching in ASN and what their experience of complex was. This was supplemented by some extended text boxes for other questions where teachers could write more detailed responses. I could log in to Qualtrics at any time to check the ongoing progress of data collection. A paper copy of the survey can be found in Appendix 3.

3.6.4 Data collection

Interview data was transcribed verbatim and analysed from a qualitative perspective, using thematic analysis. Nowell, et al. (2017) suggest that thematic analysis is an ‘apt’ (p.1) method for analysing large sets of data such as those gathered here in the interview transcripts and survey text responses. This approach was chosen because I sought to understand the experience of the children. Coming from a positivist or quantitative perspective may not have yielded the rich, experiential data that it is hoped will add to information that is already available.

3.6.5 Data protection and organisation

During interviews and questionnaires, no identifying data was sought.

In line with Data Protection Legislation, any data from consent forms was kept in a locked drawer only accessible to me. In addition to this, transcriptions were done with the first initial of the participant only. Interview data was transferred from the mobile phone to Strathcloud immediately and deleted from the phone. The data will be deleted in two years.

3.6.6 Data analysis

Questionnaire and interview data were transcribed verbatim and analysed from an interpretive perspective, using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying patterns (themes) in data according to the main interests produced by it in line with the study. One of the benefits of thematic analysis is that themes may emerge that highlight other points of interest in relation to the study not previously considered. Tuckett (2014) describes this as a process of storytelling related to a topic of interest. The data used was the transcribed interview recordings and some of the lengthier additional text from the surveys that participants had chosen to complete. King and Horrocks (2010) state that themes are a recurring product of our attempts to interpret the data and should be as distinct from one another as possible to avoid overlap. Thematic analysis allows data to be more manageable, with separate sections or ideas being examined in more detail to give richness and depth to the research. Thematic analysis is purely a way of organising data and does not make any theoretical assumptions, this makes it flexible in order to suit the needs of a particular study. Other researchers have given credence to the value of thematic analysis as a method of data analysis in qualitative research (Dahan-Oliel, 2011) because of the way that it captures common themes. However, it does mean that researchers need to make clear the theoretical approaches from which they are coming.

Some descriptive statistics from the questionnaires were used to give credence to particular points. Gibson (2009) refers to the fact that additional numerical data can be ‘entirely complementary’ to qualitative data (p.9). This approach was chosen because I sought to understand the experience of students and teachers. There were three stages to the thematic analysis. These were descriptive coding, interpretive coding and determining the overarching themes.

In determining what counts as a theme, I used my own choice and judgement. In light of this, it should be noted that this process could be slightly subjective and that another researcher may choose or see completely different themes emerging. King and Horrocks (2010), suggest that themes are 'Recurrent and distinctive features of participants' accounts...which the researcher sees as relevant to the research question' (King & Horrocks, 2010, p.150)

The thematic analysis occurred in three stages, using the transcriptions of observations and interviews.

1. Descriptive coding- the data was read through and any points of interest noted and highlighted. Descriptions were attached to each highlighted statement.

2. Interpretive coding- the descriptive codes generated above were gathered into themes and related to the research questions (themes were determined if they occurred more than once).

3. Overarching themes- themes were gathered into broader, overarching themes, which were shown in diagram form. (An example of this is shown in the tables presented below).

The formation of initial descriptive codes is crucial to the process of thematic analysis and Clarke and Braune (2013) describe these codes as the "building blocks of analysis" (p.207). As with all qualitative research, the nature of the themes will vary between researchers and I have reflected later in the section on my role in the research. However, the data has been analysed and coded in a rigorous manner, following the principles for thematic analysis. In addition, all transcripts were read and revised for additional codes several times to ensure that no potential codes had been missed.

Following initial coding, the codes were then grouped together into themes when they related to one another in particular ways. Below are two segments of raw data where common themes emerged around the importance of experience with teaching this group as an example of how raw data was analysed:

Cathy: "Emm, I think that it's been quite varied, obviously we've moved from where we were to where we are now, um, I've got access to children with more complex needs so that's been a bit of a learning curve."

Maggie: "And what about then, going onto more complex needs, what's your experience of the more complex children?"

Cathy: " Well this is kind of the first year with really complex learners em so, I've taken a lot of advice from people that have more experience that me about what children have done in the past and what's been successful for them."

Maggie: "Perfect, ok, and what about, how do you feel about your experiences around teaching these more complex learners. How did you feel when you first started and how do you feel now?"

Cathy: "Em, I think at first, I think, for example, I was doing stretching programmes with the young people and I didn't want to get around"

Teacher Interviewee Cathy

Laura: "em, I love it, it's a challenge. I wouldn't work anywhere else and I wouldn't consider mainstream because I feel that I can make such a difference in the field that I'm working in just now.

Maggie: "What's your experiences pf teaching children with complex additional support needs? Behaviour or physical, it doesn't have to be just physical."

Laura: "I think just now it's been a huge learning curve for me, this side of it. How do the learners present? Em, partially sighted, peg fed, em, a lot of hand on hand you know, real full engagement from staff."

Maggie: "Um and what do you feel about it? If this has been a big learning curve how do you feel about it?"

Laura: " I'm beginning to get more comfortable with it at the moment and I think because, I was so inexperienced in that field, but I've got great colleagues, such as yourself, to pull from."

Maggie: "So thinking about students with complex needs and subjects I school, what's your experience of that? The complex learners?"

Laura : "Em, complex behaviour or?"

Maggie: "Just any…"

Teacher Interviewee Laura

These two segments taken directly from the extended transcribed interview text give examples of themes that emerged and were grouped into commonalities (Appendix 4). Seen here by colour. As can be seen, both teachers mentioned a “learning curve” due to their inexperience and further on relayed the importance of more experienced colleagues in helping them to develop their skills and awareness. This stood out to me as important in terms of the lack of awareness of teachers in general of the issues that affect learners with complex needs, it suggests that it’s something that is not expressly taught at university. Rather, it is something passed down by more experienced colleagues. All interviews were read, reread and compared in this way and the most common themes that emerged were used to structure both the presentation and discussion of findings.

Codes or themes that were stand alone and did not fit with a pattern identified were set into a group named ‘Other Interesting Quotes’ to be discarded later during the analysis process if appropriate. These quotes provided useful data to reinforce particular concepts throughout the writing process. All data grouped into themes can be found in Appendix 4.

The final stage in the analysis was to further group themes into overarching themes such as “challenges” with possible sub themes such as “othering” and these are tabled in the Presentation of Findings section of this thesis (Tables 1 and 2)

Critiques of thematic analysis have argued that it is not refined enough to be of value to academic research (Clarke & Braun, 2014). However, Clarke and Braun argue that this is due to lack of understanding of the versatility and application of thematic analysis as an approach. Thematic Analysis should not be considered a linear process and that researchers should be constantly revisiting (Clarke & Braun, 2017) , rethinking and rewriting themes as the process evolves until thoroughness has been achieved. In this instance the interview transcripts and extended survey responses were each read several times and as themes emerged these were reread to ascertain whether other instances of the theme became apparent on rereading. This was done both within and across participant accounts.

In determining what counts as a theme, a researcher has to use their own choice and judgement. In light of this, it should be noted that this process could be slightly subjective and that another researcher may choose or see completely different themes emerging. Gibson (2009) suggests that researchers must consider the relevance of what participants accounts reveal in relation to their contexts.

King and Horrocks (2010), suggest that themes are “Recurrent and distinctive features of participants' accounts...which the researcher sees as relevant to the research question” (King & Horrocks, 2010, p.150)

Following this process each of the overarching themes will be examined in turn and linked into the research questions. Quotes will be used to illustrate each theme.

3.7 Triangulation

Within any piece of research, quality data giving the most accurate representation of events is desirable. Denzin (1970) argued that different aspects of reality would be revealed through the use of multiple methods and data sources. Although Blaikie and Preist (2019) state that it would be over simplifying matters to assume that combining different methods will counteract all reliability issues, triangulation is one way of ensuring that the data gathered is as reliable as it can be in that if another researcher conducted the same research would the results be similar. In such qualitative research, due to the way the researcher is bound up or woven into the research process, there is no way to be certain of this. However, one way of ensuring that other researchers can scrutinise and replicate research as closely as possible is to give an in-depth account of methods used to gather and analyse data. A researcher must be transparent and reflexive in order for this to take place.

As mentioned, interpretivist research is most commonly associated with qualitative methodologies, which focus on views and experiences of those immersed in different issues or contexts. The key to the notion of interpretivism lies in its title. Researchers interpret data based on what they choose to be significant, through the lens of their own beliefs. Research here is selective and due to these factors and the often small sample sizes, it cannot claim to reflect the way things always are. However, due to the rich, in-depth data gained, results can be argued to be generalisable in the same circumstances.

In the case of this study, both interview data and online questionnaire data were combined to give a variety of sources and perspectives to be drawn upon. In addition, online questionnaire data was supplemented with some descriptive statistical data from the initial questions where participants were asked to select from response options. The process of the questionnaire removed my influence as someone passionately engaged with the topic, asking direct questions. This also allowed for a wider variety of perspectives on teachers’ experiences.

Cho and Trent (2006) define validity as a process that must be engaged with reflectively and reflexively as research progresses to ensure that methods and data are trustworthy and reflective of real life experiences. Through triangulation there is greater assurance of validity which means that results are more likely to be believable and trustworthy. This entails using more than one method of data collection, to give a range of examples. In this study two methods of data collection have been used- questionnaires and interviews. Triangulation allows for a fuller explanation of different phenomena than research which uses single methods.

3.8 Trustworthiness

The claim made by this research is that the findings are relatable to the current participants in their current context. I have decided upon this definition because extrapolating the findings to other students and other contexts may be difficult due to the very complex and individual differences between learners with CASN. Therefore, there will be many different experiences of teachers in the field. The research achieved trustworthiness in this respect because a clear picture of the experiences of a small group of students in the setting was obtained. However, the reading of the research separately by the two very experienced research supervisors ensures maximum trustworthiness as a representative account for this group of learners and teachers. Participants' experiences have been explored in detail, with a significant amount of time spent with each individual (both pupils and teachers) to ensure that my findings are reliable, and that data is rich.

In addition to this, a reflexive account of my own experience, values and beliefs has been included as recommended by Jooton et.al. (2009). In terms of this research, I am already immersed in the field of study being a Principal Teacher of CASN and currently working in the school that pupils were recruited from. Therefore, it was important to be transparent about this in order to consider my own subjectivity whilst reading and analysing the data in order to make the process as natural and reliable as possible. Inclusion of this account demonstrates that I have attempted to be genuine when offering findings by declaring any potentially influential factors. Jooton et al. (2009) argue that this process is particularly important during data gathering and analysis to ensure that I acknowledge and attempt to minimise subjectivity during these processes. As far as possible, the aim is to keep personal views and the area under study separate. However, it must be conceded that however a researcher tries to ensure validity in this way it is difficult not to influence how data is interpreted.

This particularly applies to thematic analysis, where the researcher uncovers themes. Again, having both supervisors read and feedback on this section separately added additional trustworthiness.

My beliefs about objectivity and detachment were challenged by my passion for understanding the experiences of the very individuals upon whom the research is centred. The nature of my research was rooted in my passion for the young people and therefore, very attached. This point has been recognised before in teachers' accounts of their motivations for doing research (Dadds, 2009), with many teachers undertaking research from a position of caring about the subject under inquiry and wanting to make a difference. Reflecting, during the latter stages of my thesis on my own positionality, I came to understand that this research means more because of my positionality, as opposed to my opinions about it being less credible for its inclusion. There cannot be a piece of research into the lived experiences of others without an element of researcher subjectivity but that must be transparent. Dadds (2009) suggests that putting oneself at the forefront by using 'I' is a source of cultural reticence, which resonates with my own feelings.

3.9 Conclusion of methodology section

This piece of research has used qualitative methodologies within a relativist framework to elucidate the experiences of students with CASN in a large special school setting and examine the influential factors on their experiences, including the attitudes of teachers. Rich, experiential data was sought, and this was gathered through semi-structured interviews for both pupils and teachers in the school as well as surveys for external CASN teachers to provide triangulation of evidence. Both interview schedules and survey questions were analysed for content validity by supervisors and this proved useful because due to the onset of the covid-19 pandemic they had to be administered more rapidly than initially expected.

Very careful consideration had to be given to the ethical implications of the study. Students with CASN are a very vulnerable group, they were also under the age of 18 and being interviewed within a school setting. This made them triply vulnerable and one of the strategies used to counteract this was the development and use of accessible tools such as symbols and simplified questioning to avoid coercion and ensure that truly informed consent was gained. I am highly experienced in working with learners with complex communication needs.

The research data was gathered at the beginning of a highly unusual time, the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. This meant that both students and teachers had to be interviewed within a short time frame and the situation was perhaps less natural due to the need for distancing.

Data from interviews was transcribed verbatim and emphasis or body language noted. Extended responses from the surveys were taken note of in a similar fashion. Following accurate transcription, data was thematically analysed to identify common themes both across and within data sets. This was a rigorous process involving much rereading and checking for subjectivity in theme development given my position as a Principal Teacher within the complex department of the school studied. This reflexivity was an important part of ensuring that the research was trustworthy.

The next section of this thesis will present the data gathered which has been organised into themes. Overview tables contain the themes and subthemes from both pupil and teacher data.

4. Presentation of Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter of the thesis will explore firstly, the data gathered from pupils and teachers. The themes that emerged from these interviews and additional text on survey boxes will be presented, followed up by the descriptive statistical data from the survey. The research questions that the research aims to elucidate are as follows:

1. To explore the experiences of students with CASN in relation to subject choices across the curriculum.

2. To elucidate the attitudes of teachers of students with CASN in relation to education and particularly accessing subjects within the curriculum.

3. To determine whether there is a link between teacher viewpoint on the education of students with CASN and the agency these students have in making subject choices across the curriculum.

The following section of the chapter will list the themes derived from my interpretation of the raw data. This was completed through careful reading and rereading of interview transcripts and survey text responses. Recurring themes were identified as part of the reading process. This is illustrated in the following example:

Cathy:"Emm, I think that it's been quite varied, obviously we've moved from where we were to where we are now, um, I've got access to children with more complex needs so that's been a bit of a learning curve" (learning curve)

Maggie: "And what about then, going onto more complex needs, what's your experience of the more complex children?"

*Cathy**: "**Well this is kind of the first year with really complex learners em so, I've taken a lot of advice from people that have more experience than me about what children have done in the past and what's been" (colleagues, inexperience)*

(Excerpt from interview with Teacher R)

Here, topics and quotes that stood out to me as a reader were highlighted and annotated. These were then compared with other interviewee's accounts and grouped by theme into a large table of themed data and quotes (Appendix 4).

During analysis of the interview transcripts and comment boxes on the survey, the following themes and subthemes were identified in teachers' accounts.

Table 5: Themes derived from teachers' accounts

Models	Challenges	Awareness	Choices and Agency
Definitions	Barriers - Practical and Othering	Colleagues	Communication
Individuality	What is education?	Willingness	Capacity
Social Model	Therapies		Subject Choices
Capability Model	Inexperience		

In addition to the themed table of data, outlying quotes of interest were listed underneath in order to allow them to be used within the write up of the research if appropriate. It should be noted that only seven of the teachers completed an interview, as opposed to the ten hoped for. This was due to Covid-19 and the closing of the establishment.

The pupil interviews were analysed separately and tabled in the same way as the teacher interviews and extended survey responses (Appendix 4). The following themes and subthemes were identified in pupils' accounts:

Table 6: Themes derived from pupils' accounts

Feelings	Barriers	Facilitators	Subject Choice
The importance of affective factors	Behaviour	Teachers	Favoured/non favoured Subjects
Expression of preferences and desired	Wanting to go home	Having Agency	Destinations

Data from students: It should be noted that, due to COVID-19, only six interviews were completed, as opposed to the ten planned for. In addition to this, many students were unable to give full answers due to communication ability, although I did pay regard to body language and emphasis for particular points. As an example, one student made an emphatic ‘hmm’ noise whilst pointing to her favoured subjects. Other students made similar noises or Makaton signs for happy when presented with the choices of symbols relating to feelings about school. These non-verbal cues were indicative of particular emphases that students wished to make on certain symbols to make a point.

The following section will now present the themes generated from the raw data and expand on them using evidence from both sets of interviews and the survey. As discussed in the methodology section, data generated from interviews and the survey was examined for themes that commonly appeared within the accounts of teachers and pupils, as well as the extended survey text. The following themes are those that emerged most clearly from the large amount of raw data generated.

Models: teachers interviewed mainly ascribed to social and capability models when speaking about students and these beliefs affected students’ experiences of agency in a positive way.

4.1.1 Definitions

Defining CASN was highlighted as a ‘problem’ for those working in the field. Several times during interviews, teachers would ask ‘what type of complex?’. In the survey data this was also reflected.

Pupils with CASN are so unique that even answering this survey is challenging

Questionnaire respondent 12

The literature review set out the issue of definition as a point of contention and this was supported by the fact that several teachers raised an issue with defining what CASN actually pertains to. This was highlighted in the following quote

The distinction between different types of CASN, particularly between physical and behavioural was an issue that came up frequently in interviews with teachers often referring to the fact that there was a difference between the types of complex profiles of learners.

Whether it's physical or behavioural, how that impacts the learning, what learning has happened prior

Teacher Interviewee Karen

The research was carried out in the department for students with complex physical and healthcare needs. However, the school featured in the research also has a department for students with more complex behavioural profiles. Many teachers were able to talk about both due to their teaching experience.

the most complex classes as you know would be kids who are non-ambulant and have limited or no conventional communication skills and so, a range of complex support needs

Teacher Interviewee John

I've been teaching more complex behavioural needs, more complex autism and in my previous establishment it was a severe and challenging school so it was on the more complex end of the spectrum

Teacher Interviewee Nicola

The apparent ambiguity around definitions of CASN, reflected in the literature review was also apparent in teachers' accounts during both the survey and the interviews.

4.1.2 Individuality

In addition to this, many teachers emphasised the unique nature of young people with CASN, articulating that each student should be treated as an individual in order to get to know them as a learner. This is illustrated in the following quote.

very individual learners but it just seems that they're put in with other pupils that are classed as complex and they're all doing one activity

Teacher Interviewee Laura

or

I mean they have complex needs but they are each individuals

Teacher Interviewee Nicola

This also ties in with the point that this group is not homogenous and teachers were clear that students, whatever their 'label' should be treated as individuals due to the complexity of their presentation. During the interviews in particular it was striking how well teachers of the complex classes knew their pupils as individuals.

4.1.3 Social Model

Across both the interviews and the survey, teachers showed varying levels of adherence to the commonly recognised models of disability previously discussed.

Many teachers gave indications of views linked to the principles of the Social Model of disability, particularly regarding barriers in the environment that might affect the learning of young people with CASN and how the environment can be adapted to accommodate their needs. Quotes that demonstrate teachers' familiarity with the social model of disability included:

I do things to adapt that and make things more comfortable for them

Teacher Interviewee Cathy

is the environment comfortable, are the lights too bright? Is the noise too much? Have we too much stuff on the walls, for some kids that's too much.

Teacher Interviewee Karen

This also pertained to lack of access to some activities due to physical barriers, where some teachers felt that education needs to be ' very proactive' in addressing these barriers to ensure CASN learners are able to access certain activities.

because physically, obviously because they're unable to access things, they need such a lot of facilitation and support to access things.

Teacher Interviewee John

In addition, teachers felt that awareness of these learners needed to be extended to those who are responsible for building the buildings that they are going to be educated in

I think that the people who are building the buildings for a start, are not the people who will be using the buildings. Accessibility is huge

Teacher Interviewee Nicola

This ties in with the later section on awareness where teachers felt that awareness raising of the issues that affect learners with CASN needs to be extended across society. This gives credence to the theme of experience that ran strongly throughout many of the interviews.

Finally, in terms of being able to interact as part of society, one teacher felt that the general population should have more understanding and ability in the area of alternative methods of communication in order to make society more accessible for people with complex needs.

in general, everybody at home, in school, in hospitals, in cafes, should all , there should be time for all of these people to learn how to use Makaton or Canaan Barrie on body signing, how to approach our pupils and not make them jump, just the basics

Teacher Interviewee Nicola

Much of the interview data had a very strongly 'pastoral' feel to it, teachers felt a sense of care and responsibility to ensure that their students' needs were met and that they were understood.

4.1.4 Capability model

In addition to the Social Model of Disability, many of the teachers referred to ideas or views that could be attributed to the Capability Model. Teachers here reinforced the points that they considered what a pupil 'can' do, rather than using deficit or medical approaches which focus on what they cannot. This was despite the fact that models had not been described in any of the literature related to the study that they were provided with. One teacher had changed deficit-based language to capability based, as illustrated in the following quote:

It's more, not what they can't do, more what can (emphasis) that pupil do and play to their strengths. I would say. It's not visually impaired, it's very socially aware.

Teacher Interviewee Nicola

Another described making positive assumptions about the inner lives of pupils being meaningful.

it's really important for us to assume that these kids have as much of a complex and meaningful inner life as we do and that they deserve to be enriched as far as we would like our lives to be enriched and then we try to facilitate that. That's what I think

Teacher Interviewee John

Again, there was a strong sense that teachers interviewed cared deeply not only about the educational experiences of pupils but about the pupils themselves as individuals with rights and worthiness. In line with this, many pupils reported positive feelings associated with school and the experiences they had there, with many accounts showing that the staff scaffolded this experience for them and created an environment where individual wants and needs were met.

4.1.5 Students' responses

4.1.5.1 The importance of affective factors

The students interviewed either referred verbally or indicated a symbol or Makaton sign for "happy" frequently throughout interviews when asked about aspects of school.

For example, when asked if she liked school, one student (Helen) nodded emphatically and pointed to the *happy* symbol voluntarily. Whilst Ryan, when asked how school made him feel, signed *"happy"* using Makaton. Based on these responses it was clear that students could indicate what made them happy in school and what they enjoyed. Students were able to express opinions on subjects and this expression was clear to see, students were confident in their communications and gave an impression of agency in expression of opinion. When symbols were used to ask Ryan how school made him feel he also attempted to vocalise *"happy"* whilst moving towards the *happy* symbol. Matthew used an eye pointing frame and dwelled on the symbol for *happy*.

It was very difficult for students, particularly those reliant on sign and symbol forms of communication, to give a deeper response about why they were happy or what affected this. Inference has been made, based on the teachers' data that staff attitudes and way of working with the children had a profound impact on why they felt happy at school.

4.1.5.2 Students' expressions of preferences and desires

Students were particularly keen to share what subjects they liked in school, many choosing a long list of what they enjoyed doing from the rage of available symbols, with others able to list these verbally.

What are the good things? I like the baking and um, I like going on outings.

Student Interviewee Olivia

Just write stuff and choosing time, I just like to do drawing, I like to give a nice friendship card so.

Student Interviewee Leo

When asked if there was anything else she wanted to say about school Hannah indicated the symbols for *"like*" and *"love'*. Particular emphasis was placed on like and love by a small, sharp *"hmm"*"noise as she pointed to each symbol. Hannah appeared very engaged and keen to emphasise how much she liked school.

Others indicated by pointing to symbols for "*like"* and then different subjects. For example, James pointed emphatically to "*English"* and then to "*like"*.

Some students indicated that they liked to have some responsibility around the school by doing certain tasks or helpful jobs. These students gave the impression that they could exercise agency by choosing to do tasks around the school.

"So I get the milk, I get the register."

Student Interviewee Olivia

A feeling of the pride and enjoyment of these tasks came through in pupils' accounts.

Maggie: "What kinds of things do you like doing at school then? "

Leo: "Just helping , helping somebody's job and that"

Through the interviews there was a strong sense that students felt that they were part of the school and had a role to play. Students appeared to enjoy talking about school and gave every indication that they enjoyed being there. Many students gave smiles, giggles and emphatic nods or sounds throughout the interviews.

4.1.5.3 Wanting to go home

The change of routine from home to school was another factor cited by a student as an area where negativity towards school was expressed. Ryan repeatedly signed that he wanted to go home and when asked if he'd had a good morning in class replied *'no'*. His demeanour indicated that he was unhappy with some aspect of being in school as opposed to at home.

The following section will give the findings for the sub themes of the second overarching theme 'Challenges'.

Challenges: The field of educating young people with CASN is fraught with challenges that may not appear in a mainstream setting

4.1.6 Barriers: practical and 'othering'

Most of the teachers interviewed or who gave questionnaire comments, gave accounts of barriers that they perceived to be unhelpful in the education of students with CASN. These included, staffing, resourcing and training. Training was identified the most frequently and many teachers referred to the points that there was very little CASN specific training available and in turn, very few well-trained staff:

"These students need highly trained, skilled and patient staff. Unfortunately this is not always what happens which has a hugely detrimental effect on all"

Questionnaire Respondent 23

I think they need training, because there are really valuable experiences that these kids can have at school but unless you have access to expert knowledge and experienced staff, it's very difficult to just intuit that for yourself

Teacher Interviewee David

This relates to the ‘othering’ discussed in the literature review. Teachers in the complex department of the school indicated that they had witnessed this type of behaviour from staff who did not work with the students on a regular basis.

Throughout the interviews two teachers referred to ‘othering’ type attitudes from teachers and staff who do not regularly work with the cohort of CASN children. Teachers appeared to feel offended and aggrieved by seemingly avoidant behaviour of staff from other departments towards the students in the complex classes. However, they showed understanding that this was perhaps down to lack of experience on the part of those staff members.

it just seems that we’re in a little bubble and people walk past but only look in the door but never feel confident enough to either venture in or if they do it’s just to speak to staff

Teacher Interviewee John

One striking quote illustrated that although teachers who worked with the students regularly knew them well and could understand their individual needs, other, less familiar staff did not.

they’d have a better understanding of the learners as individuals and they could tailor lessons towards it, rather than the fear you see in some of the teachers’ faces when our class appear.

Teacher Interviewee John

The next section follows on from the point made about understanding the learners by getting to know them as individuals. Teachers were clear that this can only be achieved if staff new to the field are supported through the right experience. This is a small field and not many staff will have the experience needed to support the learners.

4.1.7 Inexperience

The issue of inexperience was one of the most commonly brought up themes across interviews. Many teachers highlighted how little experience they had of working with learners with CASN prior to beginning. Many phrases such as ‘learning curve’ and ‘challenge’ were repeatedly used to describe teachers’ experiences and feelings in relation to the education of students with CASN and their job.

Some teachers came to the field with little experience and appeared to feel that they were ‘thrown in at the deep end’.

I don’t have the level of experience, I don’t have the time, I don’t have the staffing to provide her with a senior phase experience

Teacher Interviewee Karen

I was really thrown in with no experience at all. But, having said that, it was a wonderful challenge.

Teacher Interviewee Nicola

Teachers highlighted the ideas discussed in the literature review about marginalisation of these learners frequently by illustrating the lack of exposure to individuals with complex needs. As also highlighted, these learners account for a very small number of the total pupils in Scotland. Very few teachers will have a great deal of experience of working with such complex learners.

You know, I’ve been in teaching 17 years and I have been exposed to those type of children but not in a learning environment. Like I said, it’s a huge learning curve because it’s not like anything else I’ve ever encountered

Teacher Interviewee Laura

In addition to this, some teachers referred to initial discomfort when teaching students with CASN for the first time as it was something completely new to them.

I’m beginning to get more comfortable with it at the moment and I think because, I was so inexperienced in that field, but I’ve got great colleagues, such as yourself, to pull from

Teacher Interviewee Laura

In addition, as will be highlighted in a later section, the support of more experienced colleagues appeared to be a helpful resource. These more experienced colleagues included therapists, the importance of a multidisciplinary team to ensure that all of the individual student’s needs are being met was discussed in the literature review but during the interviews this came up as a problematic issue in terms of practicality as can be seen in the following section.

4.1.8 Therapies

Some teachers highlighted concepts related to therapy/therapist involvement for pupils with CASN. A theme that came up more than once was the competing agenda of therapies versus education. Interestingly, this is much removed from the medical model where medical needs were remediated as opposed to education being prioritised.

In terms of physical complex needs it's been a challenge in terms of things like having to liaise with outside agencies, occupational therapy, physio, speech and language which are things that I've never had to do before

Teacher Interviewee Karen

Teachers appeared to appreciate the input of therapists but found having time to liaise with them and manage their priorities on top of their own, possibly competing, educational ones a challenge.

it's nice to have physiotherapists come in to talk about equipment that we have but it would be much nicer if say, a very experienced teacher stood up and said 'these are ways you can help these pupils to gain access to educational experiences

Teacher Interviewee David

Later on in the presentation of findings, the theme of 'what education looks like' for learners with CASN will be outlined. For these teachers there appeared to be many competing agendas at play. However, teachers knew that the physical comfort of pupils was key to ensuring that they were ready to learn.

4.1.9 Barriers and challenges identified by pupils

4.1.9.1 Behaviour

Whilst not many pupils talked or communicated about behaviour, one student with complex behavioural needs indicated that her behaviour and mood could sometimes be a barrier to getting to do what she wants within the classroom.

Maggie: " Like so, say you want learn about something and you go to someone and say ' I want to do this' do they usually say 'ok'?"

Olivia: "They won't let me."

Maggie: "Why not?"

Olivia: "Cause sometimes I have a temper".

Maggie: "Ah, ok, so if you ask for it in a grumpy voice they'll probably say no.

Olivia: Yeah."

Maggie: "Well, is that maybe a bit different, they might ask you to ask again when you've calmed down?"

Maggie: "Um, yeah."

Olivia was beginning to show some awareness of the impact of her own behaviour on her experiences. In addition that her agency was somewhat constrained by adults who did not feel her behaviour was appropriate enough for her to be able to make decisions at that time.

4.1.9.2 Destinations

Something that students mentioned through the interviews both via symbols and verbal expression was about doing things out with the school environment.

One student indicated that 'work experience' was something that they would like to undertake and another raised some concerns that school leavers for the current year and next didn't know where they were going yet.

Leo: "Yeah, I know. I'm just saying about friends."

Maggie: "Are some of your friends going to do other things next year?"

Leo: "I don't know where they going yet."

Maggie: "Do you know where you are going yet?"

Leo: "I don't know I'm thinking about the best college and that."

Maggie: "Ah, ok, do you like it there?"

Leo: "Yeah, it's all right."

Maggie: "Do you think you have a choice about what you can do next year?"

Leo: "Yes."

Maggie: "That's good , what kind of things can you do next year? I don't know yet. But you're thinking about maybe college."

Leo: "Uh huh."

Notably, students very much communicated about the 'here and now', very little indication about anything past or future was given during the interviews. This may have been due to the complex needs of the learners and the inability to predict the unknown. Alternatively, perhaps the professionals involved with them only gave students information about the here and now.

The next theme focuses on the awareness of CASN in education and the need for awareness raising.

4.2 Awareness

The general awareness of CASN in education was influential, teachers felt strongly that awareness around the features of this exceptional group needed to be raised, within and out with their current setting.

4.2.1 Colleagues

In an earlier section the notion of a learning curve for inexperienced teachers was raised. Many teachers coming into the field had absolutely no experience of working with CASN learners. Due to another issue raised, lack of available training, many teachers were reliant on the support of more experienced colleagues to help them navigate the complexities of working with this exceptional group.

During the interviews when teachers referred to their own inexperience, they often referred to the importance of the support of more experienced colleagues. As one teacher illustrated:

this is kind of the first year with really complex learners em so, I've taken a lot of advice from people that have more experience that me about what children have done in the past and what's been successful for them

Teacher Interviewee Cathy

The physical presentation of the most complex learners added to this feeling and there was a feeling that teachers coming into the field for the first time had been almost frightened by some aspects of the learners' profiles.

I didn't want to break anyone if that's the right word and I got a bit of confidence from watching the girls that are used to working with children about how much, how much this child's going to resist and it's not going to hurt them

Teacher Interviewee Cathy

However, the teachers who had benefitted from the advice and support of more experienced colleagues were overwhelmingly positive about this.

Therefore, although the issue of training had come up as a barrier in some of the interviews, it appeared that advice and input from experienced staff members was invaluable in terms of increasing the confidence of teachers new to the field.

it was good to have experienced colleagues to chat to because for the first few months I felt like I was groping around in the dark

Teacher Interviewee David

I wished that I had had somebody at the beginning that could have explained it to me because I spent so long trying to work out how to motivate the children.

Teacher Interviewee Nicola

The value that new teachers attached to the advice of more experienced colleagues was clearly felt during their accounts of their experiences as a teacher new to the field. This did not come across as a theme in the extended comments from the survey, one reason for this is perhaps because teachers surveyed worked in schools with less of a spread of ASN profiles.

4.3 Choices and agency

Pupils in this school had a sense of agency but this was influenced by a variety of factors including teachers' beliefs and attitudes

Teachers' views on the agency of pupils to make subject choices were varied. Within the school, teachers interviewed mainly had the view that pupils accessed subjects but were not given the choice, some argued that activities required adaptation and others wanted more of a focus on life skills. Some of the extended comments from the survey were less positive in this respect. One of the main issues that came up was the communication of children with CASN and its impact:

4.3.1 Communication

Teachers generally agreed that choice was a positive thing but many voiced concerns about the expression of choice due to the fact that the learners were complex communicators, many using different methods and some with pre-intentional communication meaning that their noises, movement and facial expressions during lessons needed to be interpreted by a well-known communication partner.

Under curriculum for excellence you want as far as possible for pupils to have some autonomy and choice within their own education and for these kids it's not always easy to figure out ways that they can express choice

Teacher Interviewee David

If a student does not express choice in an obvious way then it follows that facilitating choice is more of a challenge for teachers. Ways in which teachers facilitated choice were also a key point made in both surveys and interviews.

how you incorporate choice for humans that don't make choices the way that other humans do

Teacher Interviewee David

And further, how this can be extended across society to improve accessibility

Accessibility is huge and I think everybody that would come into contact with our pupils should know how to interact with that pupil

Teacher Interviewee Nicola

Very frequently teachers mentioned how important individuality was and the support of a communication partner who knows the student well.

people that actually know the kids and can see the smallest reaction that's an answer from the pupil whereas to anyone else it may be a fleeting glance, they've looked at something and looked away and they haven't understood that this was them recognising what's been presented to them.

Teacher Interviewee John

Adults were seen as the facilitators or interpreters of pupil choice for the most complex learners.

Many of the choices available to students with CASN are limited to those provided by adults in a binary yes/no, this/that format. For pupils with the most profound needs, the authenticity of their choice relies largely on accurate interpretation of their behaviours by another person.

Questionnaire Respondent 48

4.3.2 Subject Choices

Many teachers agreed that pupils were accessing different subjects and were positive that particularly those in the Senior Phase, got to access a Senior Phase curriculum with pupils moving around subjects as they would in a mainstream high school.

This school is the first time I've actually experienced that, previous schools it's always been a Primary model so they've not been moving around accessing different subjects… So in this school, it's the first time I've seen our complex users being included in it

Teacher Interviewee Laura

However, many teachers stated that although students were accessing subjects, the element of choice was not there as it would be for a mainstream peer.

The children don't get to choose the subjects, that's the bone of contention that I have. So the subject is put upon those children maybe that's the wrong word, there is no personalisation or choice in it.

Teacher Interviewee Laura

I've kind of found with my class that they haven't had much choice so in a mainstream school they have options of subjects you want to be doing whereas ours were given a timetable, 'this is what you are doing

Teacher Interviewee John

However, the model of senior phase at the school is currently in its infancy and it is anticipated that this will develop into a full subject-choice model in line with mainstream experience.

Some teachers queried why pupils were doing the subjects that they were doing and stated that life skills or community work would be more appropriate for this group. One of the teachers in the school who was interviewed stated their feelings that students should be out in society, experiencing their community. However, this was articulated with a sense of this being their right.

they are entitled to get accreditation and their parents want them to get it but I'd rather they were looking at what's available in the community

Teacher Interviewee John

In the questionnaire data, there was less focus on what pupils wanted to do and rather on what adults deemed appropriate. One would imagine that for the pupils in the following teacher's school that they would have less agency if this view is universal across the school.

Access to all curricular areas is not always required- life skills can be more important and beneficial to CASN pupils

Questionnaire Respondent 6

Some teachers from the questionnaire did not agree that pupils should be making curriculum choices at all. This was quite a contrast to the views expressed in the interviews, where teachers were all very keen to ensure that learners' rights to choose were facilitated.

there are pupils in my class that will not and should not access all the curriculum

Questionnaire Respondent 69

those with complex needs are not able to make significant choices

Questionnaire Respondent 6

It could be that the teachers interviewed came from a school with an ethos that encouraged learners' rights to be heard and that those surveyed did not. It could also be that those interviewed by me were more positive due to the fact that they were known to me. However, this feeling did not come across during the interviews. In fact, there was a very strong sense of the importance of learners' rights and the pupil interviews gave credence to this.

4.3.3 Pupil views on having agency

When interviewing, I did get a sense that this particular group of students experienced a level of agency or were content that they could participate in things they enjoyed if they wanted to. For example, when asked if school helped her to do the things she wanted to, Hannah gave a thumbs up and Matthew, Ryan and James chose the symbol for 'yes'.

Another student verbalised in a similar way.

Maggie: "Does school help you to do what you want to do when you're here? Yes. How do they do that?"

Leo: "Well they are just asking me if me want to do it or me just ask them back so."

Maggie: "So you can ask if you want to do something?"

Leo: "Yes."

As previously mentioned, Olivia felt that her agency was restricted but by her own behaviour, as opposed to purely external factors.

4.3.3.1 Subject choices of students

Some references were made by students about things that they would like to study or take part in but hadn't had the opportunity.

When asked how she felt about the subjects she studied just now, Helen indicated the symbol for 'ok' and when asked what she would like to do that she doesn't do already she showed 'work experience' and 'dance' because they would be 'fun'.

Maggie: "Any different subjects?"

Olivia: "Like, Science."

Maggie: "Yeah, would you like to try a bit more science?"

Olivia: "Yeah."

Maggie: "Why do you want to do that?"

Olivia: "Cause there's slime and mentos."

Maggie: "That sounds good. Have you seen that on YouTube?"

Olivia:"Yeah."

Maggie: "It's quite cool, isn't it? And when you ask to do things in the class, does school help you do things you want to do?"

Olivia: "Sometimes."

Maggie: "Sometimes? Ok, so you want to do science. How would you make that happen? Who would you ask?"

Olivia: "Like, Science Week, we didn't do science week."

Maggie: "You didn't do Science Week, so you'd like to make that happen, would you."

Olivia: "Yeah."

Others indicated that they were happy with the subjects available and, as will be seen in the favoured subjects section, reeled off lists of subjects that they enjoyed.

Maggie: "Fantastic, so, think about, is there anything you want to do, anything extra you would like to do?"

Leo: "Umm, I don't know."

Maggie: "Do you think you've got enough choices about things that you like doing? You feel like you've got choices?"

Leo: "Yeah."

Maggie: "That's good, so what ways does school help you then?"

Leo: " It helps me about how helping to get things for because I'm leaving next year so…"

Maggie: "Are they helping you to get ready for that?"

Leo: "Yes."

Again, it was difficult for students who used non-verbal communication to answer questions about what they would like to study in addition to what they already did. This was possibly to do with the complexity of the concept or the receptive language demands of the task.

4.3.3.2 Favoured and non-favoured subjects of students

As mentioned, many students were keen to name or indicate by signing, pointing or eye pointing, long lists of subjects they enjoyed at school. All did this very enthusiastically.

Many of the students (some of whom access a hydrotherapy pool, some who access the school swimming pool) mentioned that they were particularly fond of swimming. Helen chose the symbol for *'swimming'*, alongside the symbol for *'love'*. Matthew, using eye point, also selected hydrotherapy as a favourite subject.

PE, computers and English were also popular favourites selected.

James and Matthew stated that something they did not enjoy was music. James and Leo indicated that things they perceived as too hard or tricky were not enjoyable

Maggie: That's good, is there anything that you don't like at school?

Leo: Some things is not my favourite, so.

Maggie: What's not your favourite?

Leo: I don't know. It's when it's too hard school work, so.'

However, Another pupil indicated that she enjoyed everything at school without exception.

Maggie: What about school work, like maths or English?

Olivia: I do all work.

Maggie: Do you like all work?

Olivia: What?

Maggie: Do you like all work?

Olivia: Yeah.

Maggie: So there's no work that you don't like?

Olivia: There's none.'

Again, a strong feeling of positivity came across in the pupil responses. Although Ryan stated that *'hard work'* was not his favourite, he didn't appear to actively choose not to do it or to dislike it. Olivia, who stated that she liked to do all work, appeared almost incredulous in tone when asked if there was anything in school that she didn't like.

4.3.4 Capacity

Within the extended comments from the survey, some teachers highlighted their perceptions that students did not have the capacity to make choices

Some children are unable to make choices for themselves

Questionnaire Respondent 9

Whilst children should have their views heard, they do not always make the right choices"

Questionnaire Respondent 69

I teach students with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities who would lack capacity to make choices around educational subject choices.

Questionnaire Respondent 51

Possibly influenced by my presence, as someone known to them, teachers in the school did not make overt comments relating to capacity but some did question why students were included in particular subjects.

They can touch the cake, they can smell the cake they can feel the cake, icing or whatever but they're not getting to taste it but the point of baking a cake usually is to eat it so they are going through this whole learning process for something that's not relevant to them as individuals

Teacher Interviewee John

However, the sense that the best interests of the students were at the heart of comments like these came through when teachers referred to them in relation to individuality. Here, the teacher is referring to a student who is gastrostomy fed via a tube directly into their stomach and is nil by mouth. Therefore, other than the smells and sensations of baking the teacher is asking whether making a cake is relevant if they can't eat it.

4.4 Experience and commitment to inclusive pedagogy of teachers influenced pupils' experiences

4.4.1 What is education for learners with CASN?

Teachers were asked questions about what education for pupils looked like from their viewpoint. Many had lengthy opinions on this and it was by far the lengthiest and fullest theme uncovered. In relation to this, many teachers stated referred to the unique individuality of learners with CASN, illustrated in the following quote:

you really need to know each of the kids individually what they're capable of, what your next step is and what you're looking to be progressing towards

Teacher Interviewee Cathy

This quote also reinforces the point that many teachers used language related to the capability approach throughout the interview.

When asked in particular about students accessing subjects, teachers had many opinions on how that should be done in order to make it relevant to the learners:

I think the students particularly that I work with, because they are so complex it is sensory, you know, audio visual in particular, tactile. It's a curriculum based around that

Teacher Interviewee Karen

Subject teachers themselves gave suggestions about how lessons were adapted and individualised for the pupils with CASN that attended their lessons, for example:

So, one unit is number recognition so for that it's a case of doing counting exercises through sensory stories where they count sounds for example or songs where we count and parachute games where we're counting how many times the parachute goes up and down. That's all number recognition…

Teacher Interviewee David

Whilst some teachers reinforced that education should be pertinent to the learner, not just for the sake of them accessing the same lessons as peers:

it felt a little bit like paying lip service and I didn't want it to be a case of I was doing all the work then, oh look here's a photograph of this person doing this wonderful thing for three seconds. That's not what it's about and if you're doing that then what's the point, you might as well do whatever we want for the rest of the day and for five minutes oh look, it's senior phase. That's not the point of it and that's not the point of any educational experience.

Teacher Interviewee Karen

Teachers were very committed to the activities offered being meaningful to the learners, not just for the sake of it or because they are part of the curriculum. As before, with the gastrostomy fed child participating in baking a cake, one teacher questioned the relevance of activities that involved adults moving the pupil's hand for them in order to get them to participate instead of offering activities that they could do with as much independence as possible.

Because the certifications that these children are exposed to, you can say, 'with full support', with full support. Full support, it's very teacher led, it's very hand on hand. You are

actually doing for that child…Sorry, sorry, my big question would be in that instance. Why are we doing it? Why aren't we doing a more sensory based curricular approach?

Teacher Interviewee Laura

Again, teachers linked back to the fact that timetables had been issued for the year, as opposed to options chosen.

The children don't get to choose the subjects, that's the bone of contention that I have. So the subject is put upon those children maybe that's the wrong word, there is no personalisation or choice in it.

Teacher Interviewee Laura

4.4.2 Willingness

During one or two of the teacher interviews an issue came up, that although small in terms of data, is worth mentioning due to the connotations behind it. This issue pertained to the 'willingness' of staff to work with students with CASN, due to the nature of the job. Whilst this could have been included in the section on 'othering', it was felt better to examine this separately as it brings up an important point relating to marginalisation and the vulnerable position that individuals with CASN are in.

I think the big thing for me at the moment is experienced staff, staff who are willing to work with complex needs children

Teacher Interviewee Cathy

The use of the word willing prompted my consideration, it was felt that the teachers interviewed were of the opinion that staff were sometimes reluctant to work with the most complex learners. Many felt that this was because other staff were frightened or lacking in confidence with this particularly exceptional cohort.

A lot of people don't have the confidence or the interest. I think it's something that if you're not wanting to do, it's, it's a huge ask of somebody.

Teacher Interviewee Nicola

4.4.3 Teachers as Facilitators

Pupils often mentioned teachers as the source of allowing students to make choices in the school setting, as well as one of Helen's favoured things about school. When asked if she wanted to do something like a new subject in school, who she would ask, Olivia mentioned her teacher by name.

4.5 Additional comments that provided further elucidation out with themes

In addition to the themes generated through careful examination of the data, there were several interesting quotes that did not fit into any of the themes. These included some noticeable contrasts amongst the teachers interviewed and surveyed.

One of the teachers in the survey questioned whether students should be included in mainstream settings and in whose interest the presumption of mainstream served if parents' expectations were unrealistic.

A presumption of mainstream is useful for some but a cost - saving cruelty for others. Individual needs should be carefully assessed and decisions made according to these, not finance or parents' desire for their child to be 'like the others' when that is an unreasonable expectation. (I have seen this more than once)

Questionnaire Respondent 35

In contrast, another teacher surveyed made an opposing statement.

I feel that the education of CASN students' needs to be mainstreamed in that the students shouldn't be taught away from the student body where appropriate and possible

Questionnaire Respondent 2

It is clear that for teachers involved in the education of students with CASN the mainstream/ASN school debate continues and that views of teachers differ vastly here.

As discussed, a strong pastoral ethos was apparent during many of the interviews. What also stood out was the passion that teachers appeared to have for the field that they work in. This is illustrated in the following quotes.

I love it, it's where my heart lies and I feel that there are children in mainstream that could do with the support that our children get

Teacher Interviewee Nicola

The teachers appeared to get a lot of satisfaction from working with their students and valued the relationships they had with them

a lot of days you feel like you're not getting anywhere but then the next day you'll have a tiny wee bit of progress and that will mean the world to you

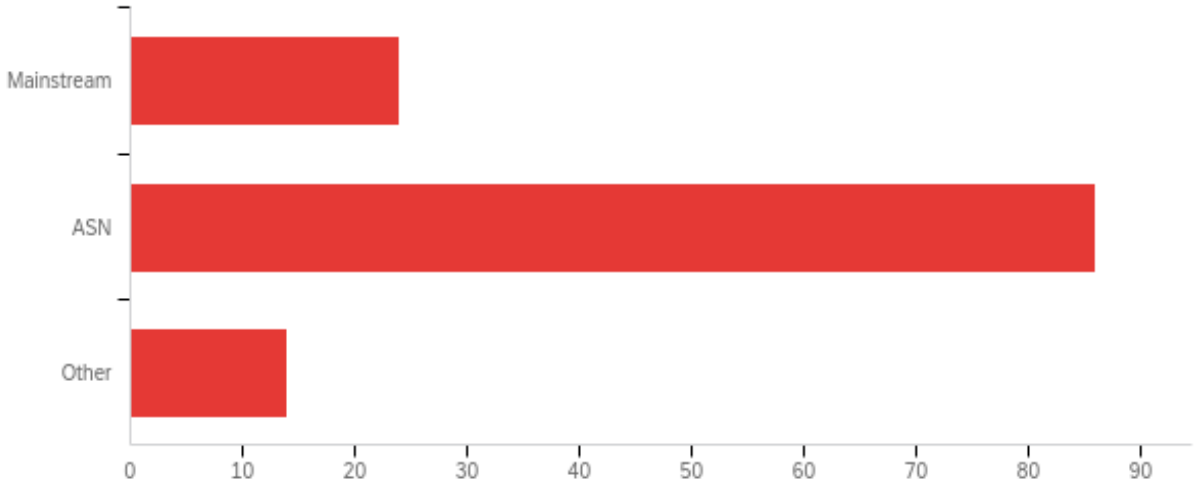
Teacher Interviewee Cathy

The next section will present the descriptive statistics from the survey which were generated alongside the extended text responses.

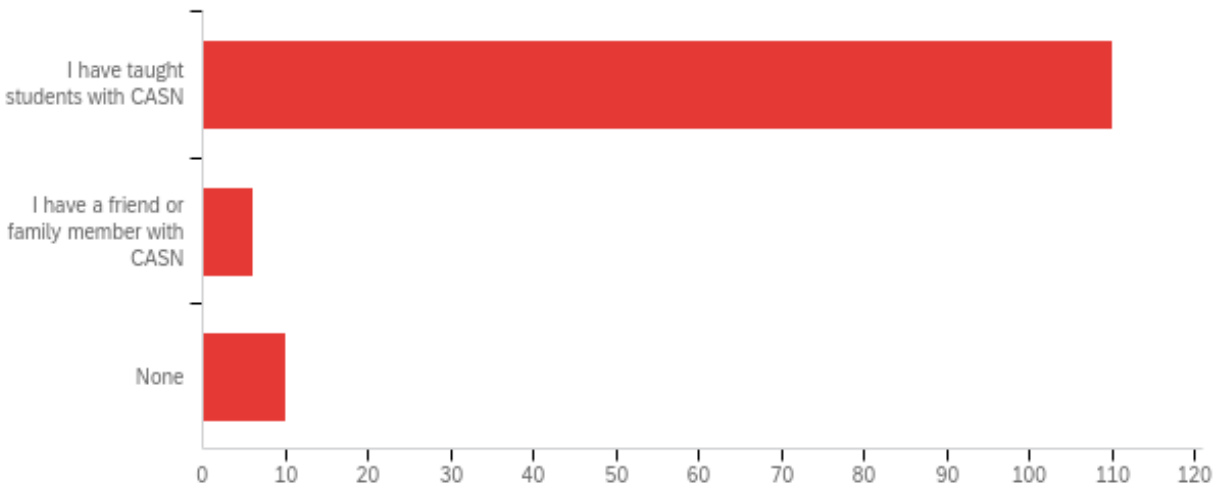
4.6 Descriptive statistics from questionnaire

The following section will present the descriptive statistical data gathered through the online questionnaire, the findings are grouped by question:

Overall, 124 teachers took part in the online survey. 69 % of those worked in the ASN sector:

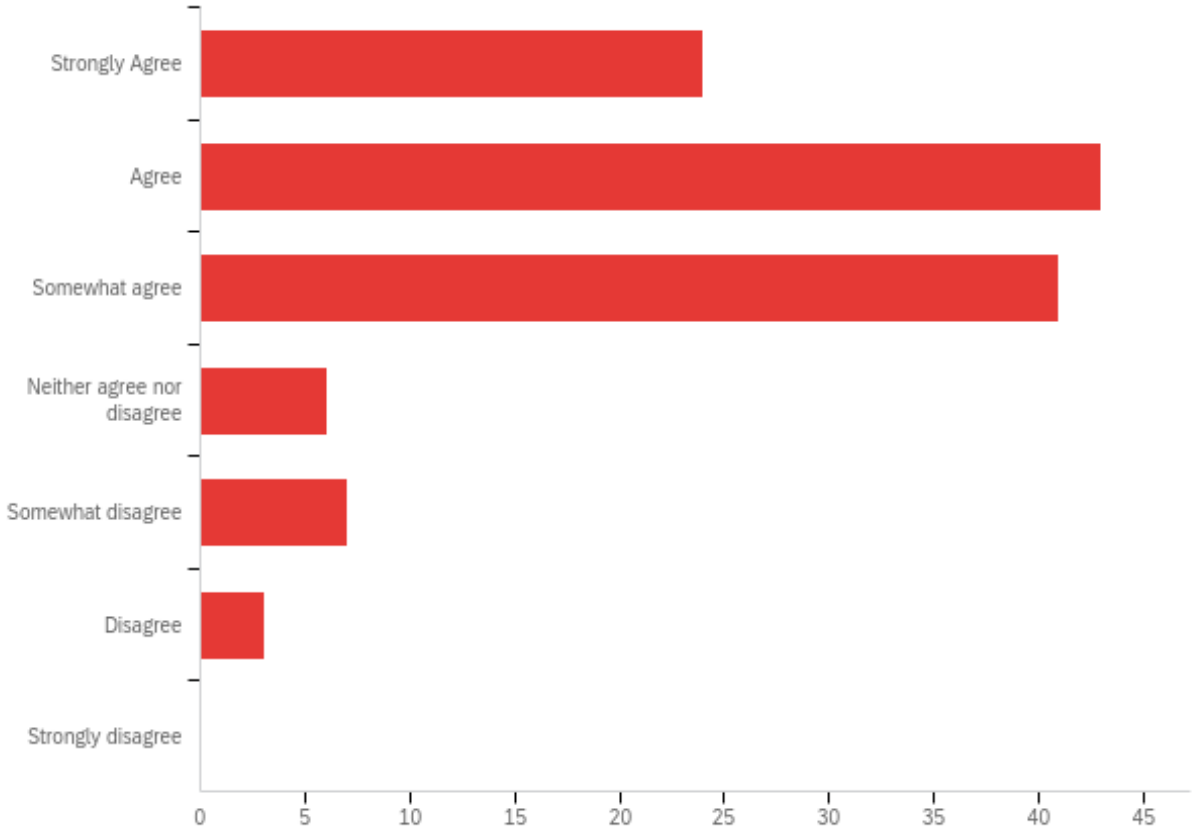


87% of teachers surveyed had experience of teaching students with CASN:

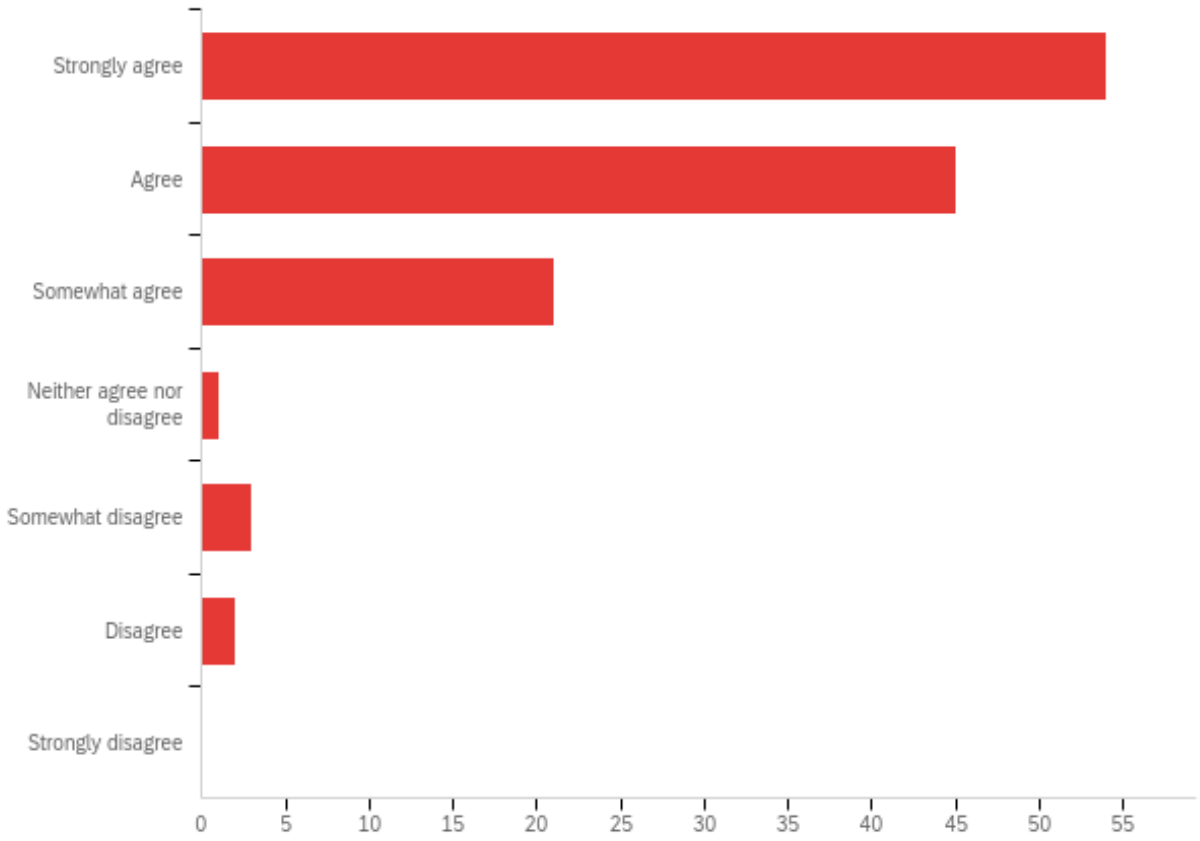


In addition, 69% of those who had experience of teaching students with CASN had taught more than ten pupils over the course of their career.

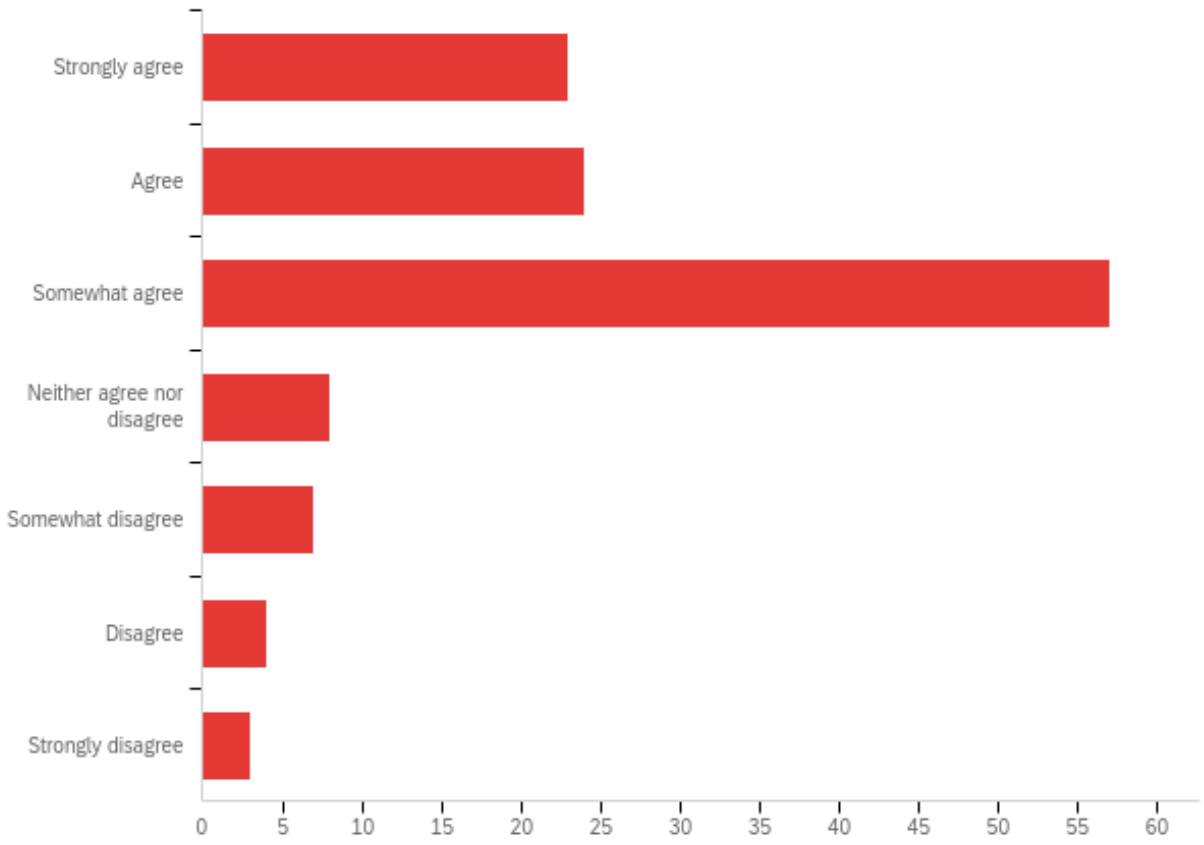
When asked to what extent they agreed with the statement ‘I believe that their difficulties can be mediated with adult support’, 87% of respondents selected options from the agree range from ‘somewhat agree’ to ‘strongly agree’.



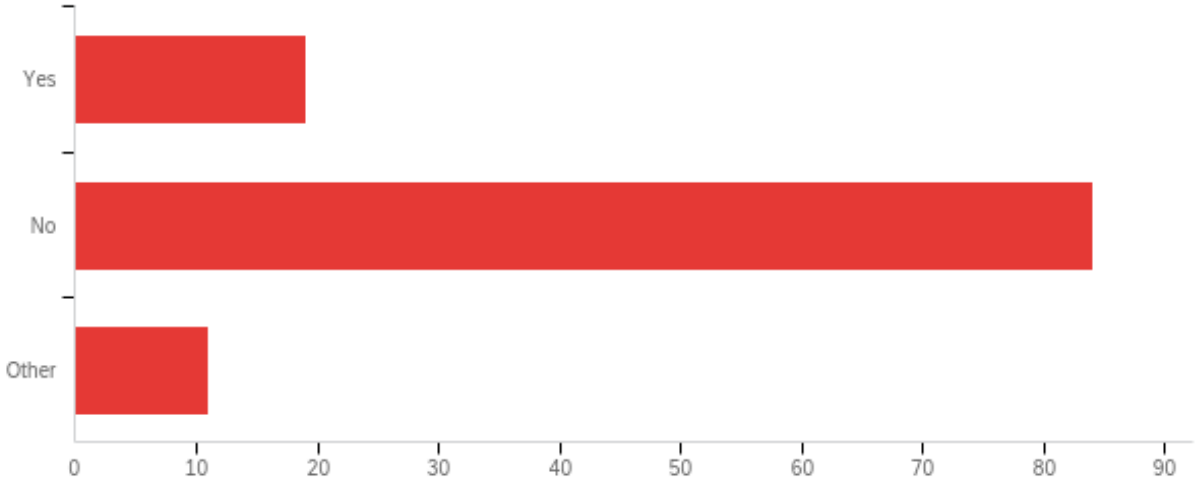
When asked ‘Some teachers say that they believe that educational services need to remove barriers to education for these students To what extent do you agree? ‘96% of respondents selected an option from the agree range:



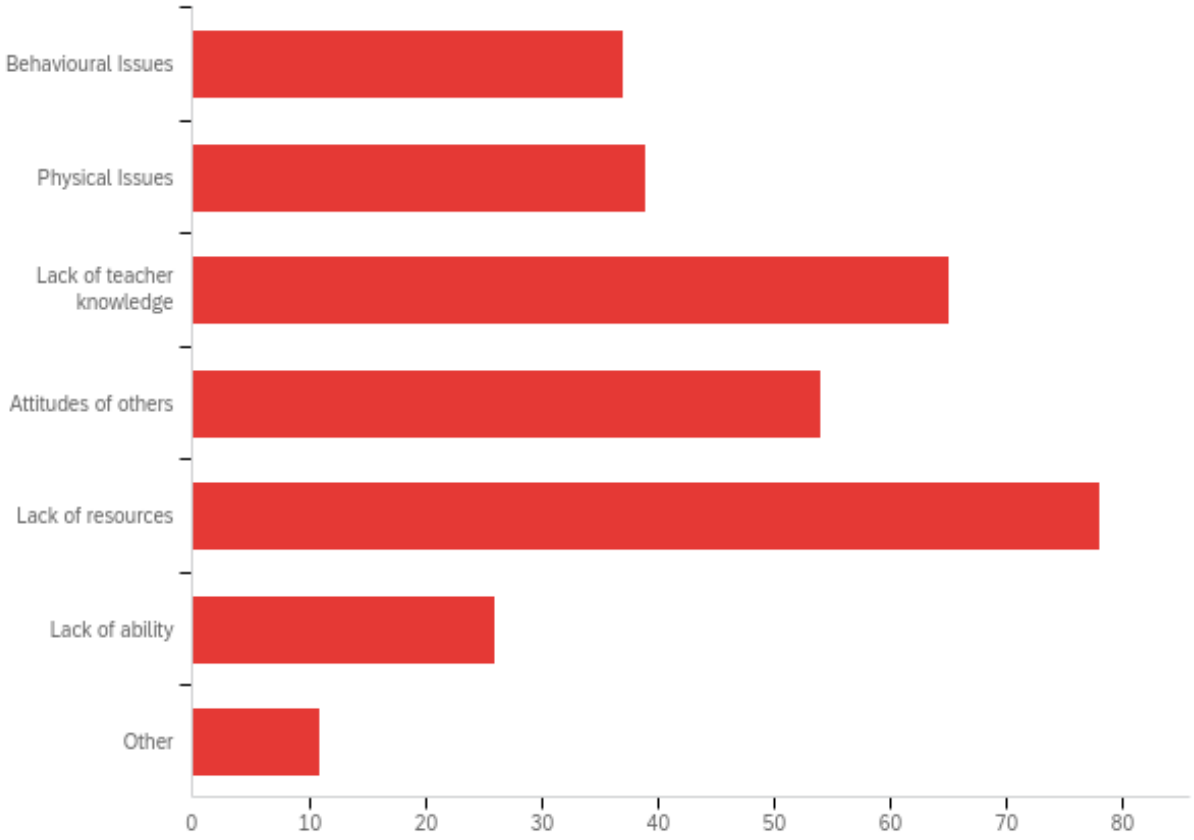
Finally, when asked about capacity of students and whether they should be able to contribute to decisions, 82% answered in the agree range with most selecting ‘somewhat agree’.



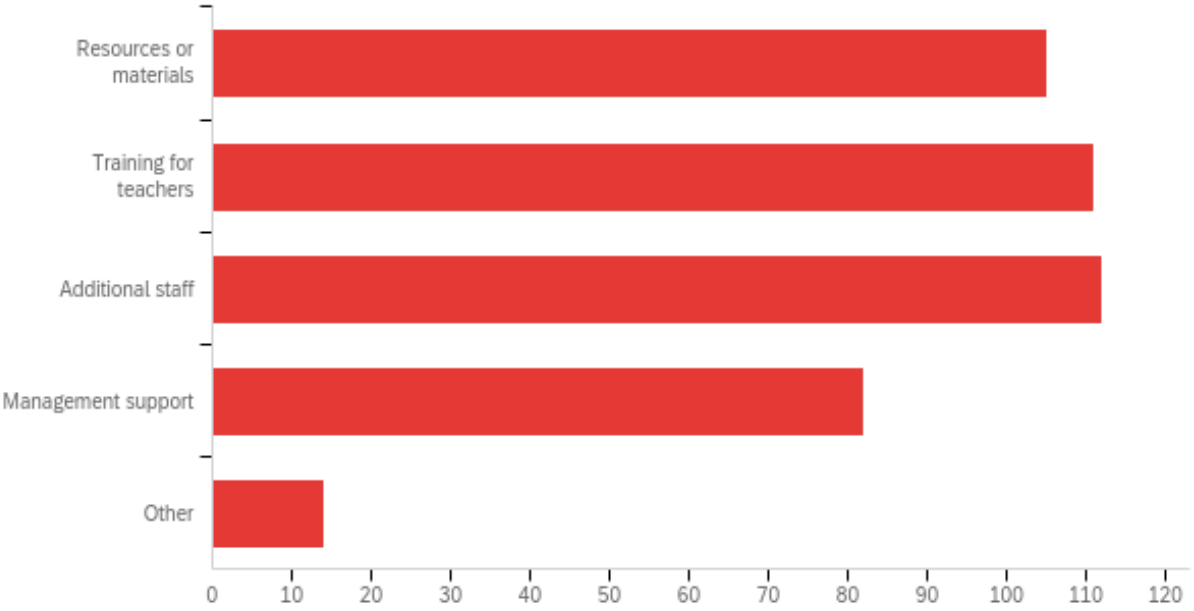
Most respondents did not agree that students with CASN had equal access to educational subject choices, with 74% selecting the ‘no’ response:



When asked to indicate the reasons for ‘no’ responses the main reasons selected were ‘lack of resources’ at 21% and ‘lack of teacher knowledge’ at 25% with ‘attitudes of others’ at 17%. Only 8% of respondents selected ‘lack of ability’.



Staffing, training and resources were selected as the main supports that were needed to facilitate subject choices for learners with CASN.



4.7 Concluding summary of relevant factors

A multiple cause diagram was used to illustrate the number and complexity of factors that impact on the experience of students with CASN. A multiple cause diagram can be used to pictorially represent all of the issues that affect learners in order to tease them out and can be used for examining individual concepts in future research, particularly if gaps exist in the available research. As can be seen below, there are many factors that were illuminated as impacting on the agency of learners through the study:

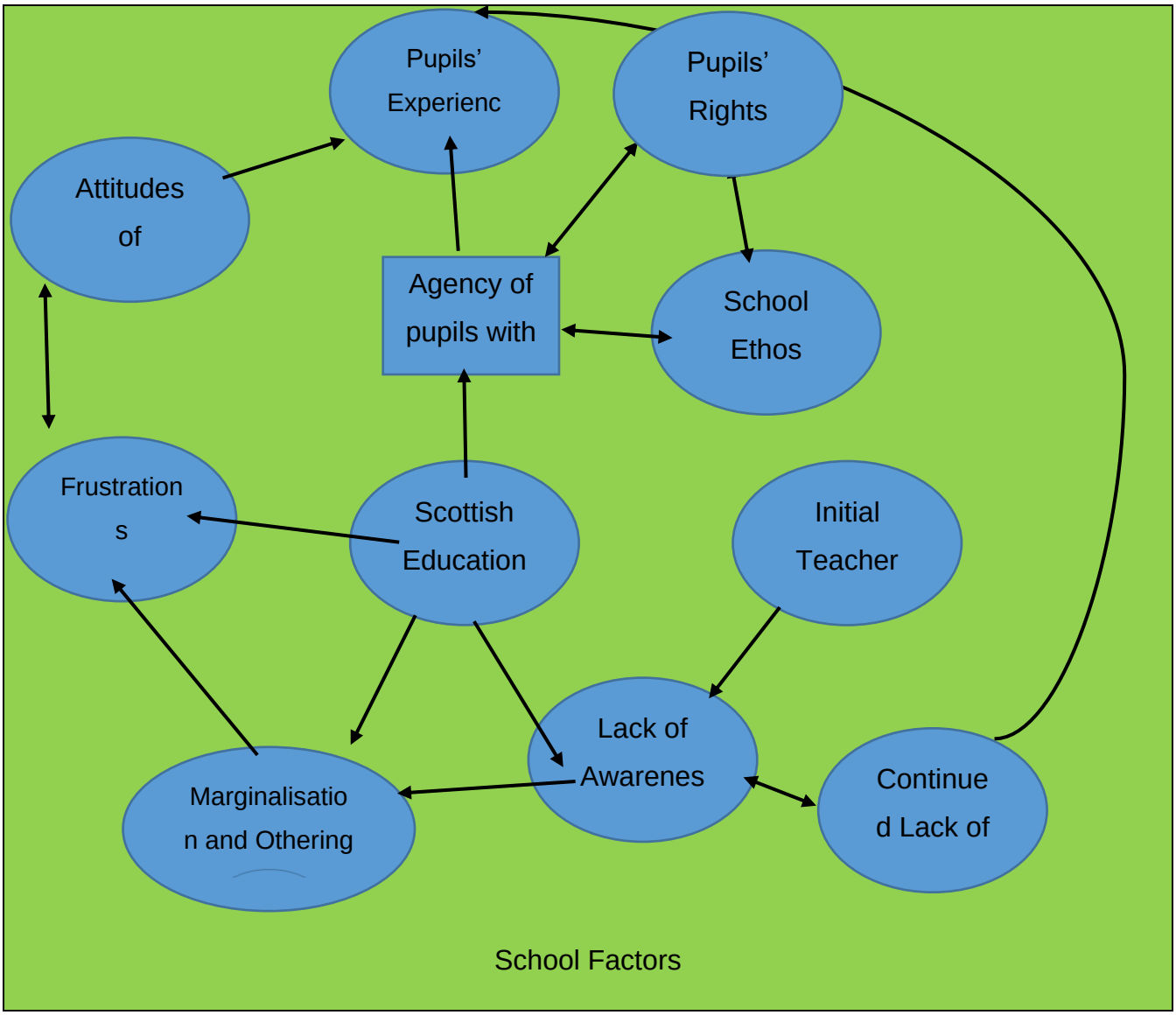


Figure 2: Student agency multiple cause diagram

The diagram points to many factors that influence pupils' experiences

The themes uncovered by the data collection process have been presented and these will be analysed and discussed in the following section.

5. Discussion of Findings

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter the extent to which the findings fit with the wider bodies of research and literature will be considered alongside their implications for Scottish education. This study aims to elucidate the factors that impact on the agency of pupils with Complex Additional Support Needs with a particular focus on the relationship between these factors and educational subject choices. The research questions were:

1. What are the experiences of students with CASN in relation to subject choices across the curriculum?

2. What are the views of teachers of students with CASN in relation to pupil choices across curricular subjects?

3. Do teachers' views on educating students with CASN affect the agency of those students when making curriculum choices?

Data was collected through teacher and pupil interviews, as well as an online teacher questionnaire. The data was transcribed and analysed using a thematic approach as detailed in the methods chapter.

The key findings were that pupils in the particular school studied did experience a sense of agency, and teacher attitude and experience was closely linked with this. In addition, awareness of CASN impacted on the experiences of both pupils and teachers, particularly when staff from out with the department of the school studied were charged with teaching the learners and lacked experience. This chapter will examine the key findings in relation to literature and make recommendations for practice and future research.

As stated, this research does not intend to add to the debate on whether mainstream or special provision is more appropriate for students with CASN. This research is an examination of students' experiences and teachers' attitudes towards student agency in a specialist setting. Various statistics demonstrate that a low number of students with complex needs are educated in a mainstream establishment. As an indication of the relatively low incidence of such students in mainstream settings, In Scotland this type of 'severe, low-incidence disability' was estimated by the Riddell Committee (1999) to account for less than 1% of pupils.

Although the sample of students interviewed was relatively small, the small numbers of these pupils across education in general means that it is more likely to be representative of that particular, exceptional group. The students interviewed in this study each had the label of complex needs but, as mentioned, these needs vary hugely. If the thinking of staff employed in a school follows normative ideas about what is typical of an ASN student, then it is likely that the experiences of this group of pupils are overlooked, as they are not typical. Groups who are marginalised or seen as 'other' within a specialist setting illustrate the fact that this type of thinking about ASN pupils does not only appear in a mainstream setting. Exceptional groups such as learners with CASN may be subject to this normative or ableist thinking, even within a specialist setting. One teacher in the study articulated that they could "see the fear in staff's faces" when their class approached. Robinson and Goodey (2018) discuss the concept of fear surrounding the label "severe and profound", in terms of teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. They state that this label provokes the most "phobic" reactions (p. 428). Nario-Redmond, Kemerling and Silverman (2019) give credence to this statement. In a study on forms of ableism encountered by those with disabilities they identified that many people with visible disabilities encountered 'fear-based' avoidance, as a form of 'hostile' or 'ambivalent' (p.727) ableism. As discussed in the literature review, this group is underrepresented in many areas, not least the educational policy that shapes schooling in Scotland today. Therefore, it is likely that there is a small pocket of experienced staff whilst others lack awareness of their unique attributes. The pupil group studied here are exceptional in their presentation and therefore appear in significantly smaller numbers than pupils classed as having ASNs in general. This study intended to conceptualise the issues around education for this incomparable group of learners, focussing on 'what' impacts on their educational experiences.

As highlighted in the literature review, it is very difficult to locate research on pupils with CASN in education. Prior research has mainly focussed on the perceptions of mainstream staff and has suggested barriers to acceptance, amongst teachers, of children with complex needs in mainstream schools (Gwin-Smith 2000; Coutsocostas and Alborz, 2010).This was particularly correlated with severity of disability, where the more severe the disability the more likely that teachers' attitudes were in favour of segregated settings. In the aforementioned studies teachers indicated that the primary barriers were lack of training and support, a finding also echoed by Ferriday and Cantali (2020) in a Scottish study on teachers' views on inclusion.

However, the accounts of teachers in the CASN department showed that they appeared to have the priorities for CASN students at the forefront of their agendas. This is additionally demonstrated in the high rate of questionnaire returns. The lack of available prior research means that very few researchers have engaged with this population of specialist staff, who clearly wish to share their views. This study is therefore aiming to fill a large gap in the research. This gap is something that I personally, feel passionately about. I hesitate to use the term 'professional benefits' when thinking of the young people with whom I have worked over the years, because they have given me immensely life enhancing benefits. However, professionally, I believe that we need a stronger theoretical background for both the curriculum and the education system within which these young people are bound. Just as with the notion of the lack of research meaning the lack of a research-based curriculum (Stewart and Walker-Gleaves, 2020) I believe that the more professionals working with young people with CASN who undertake this level of study, the more the field will become immersed in the latest research and hopefully, involved in it. A professional benefit for me, therefore, is that I have gained awareness of the research that has already been undertaken, where the gaps are and what could be done to fill them. This will enable to me to undertake future research in order to contribute in a positive way to the educational experiences of young people with CASN and potentially, the frameworks that surround these.

For example, policy, has served to 'other' the unique individuals who are those with complex needs. They are included under the blanket of ASN but effectively hidden in plain sight because there is limited awareness of their circumstances. Occasional policy clauses which do mention them refer to exceptional circumstances without further explanation. Hehir (2002) discusses ableism in relation to education, examining the ways in which ableist assumptions influence the education of young people with disabilities. Here we see that, even within the category of ASN, exclusionary narratives are evident. This is reminiscent of the medical model where students with CASN were seen as something different and in need of remediation, not entitled to an education. Most policy documentation refers to inclusion for students with ASN but the situation for learners with more complex needs is vastly different. In this instance, a specialist setting was more likely to yield a bigger sample of pupils and experienced teachers. Shaw (Shaw, 2017) argued that the 'quality' (p.295) of aspects of the establishment was key to positive student experience and the research presented concurs. Similarly to the findings of Shaw (2017) my research found that working with CASN students was mainly restricted to experienced teachers. In my research, either

experienced teachers or teachers being supported by experienced teachers directly taught the pupils in the department for complex needs.

In this case then, these findings may not have been apparent in a different setting. The experiences of these students were dependent on the individual setting in which they were educated. In line with relativist approaches, they cannot confidently be extrapolated to an alternative setting. Giving credence to Shaw's findings, the pupils' experiences were positive overall. There were many factors named by respondents that influenced this, many of which related to the ethos of the setting. Each subsection of this chapter will cover one of the key research findings in relation to the research questions. At the end, a conclusion will summarise the key points of the discussion section and make suggestions for future research. The main findings are discussed in each of the following sections.

5.2 Choices and agency

Pupils in this school had a sense of agency but this was influenced by a variety of factors including teachers' beliefs and attitudes.

In this study, the students interviewed appeared to have a sense of themselves as agentic within the school setting. Olivia, as cited on page 125, was easily able to identify a strategy to make something happen if she wanted to.

Students participating in the research were able to give clear examples of ways in which they could do this for example, requesting a desired activity from a teacher or staff member. This is in line with Binder (2019) who identified a sense of agency as having the ability to take action based on one's own goals. Students were making requests in the school setting, based on their own motivations and teachers were responding to these. The teachers' responses to these requests made a positive contribution to the sense of pupil agency observed in the school studied. Previous studies have found that students with CASN felt marginalised, or that they were excluded from decisions about their education (Stalker et al., 2015; Harris and Riddell, 2011) in the school studied, the student participants did not appear to feel that this was the case. Where it was expected that subject access may be restricted for these students, there were no findings that gave any indication that this was the case in this setting.

This diverges from previous research which indicates that in some settings students are not seen as having capacity to have meaningful agency (Mercieca, Gilmer & Wiseman, 2013). In addition, Stalker (2015) argues that provisions for agency are not in place in every setting

whilst Gurdal and Sobring (2018) found that students perceived themselves to have the least agency with teachers in comparison with other relationships.

Gurdal and Sobring's (2018) research indicated also that students would be reprimanded for displaying agency in some contexts relating to the teacher-pupil relationship. However, here, the students' interviews conveyed to me that they felt a sense of belonging within the school which gave them confidence to state their preferences and requests. The fact that teachers in this school appeared very invested in actively pursuing choices for these learners may have contributed to this finding.

…you want as far as possible for pupils to have some autonomy and choice within their own education

Teacher interviewee John

The influence of teacher attitude and awareness of pupils' rights to choose was apparent. Where previous studies have listed many negative impacts of teacher attitude, this study showed the positive impact that teacher attitude can have. Later in the chapter, the need for universal awareness of CASN and rights across Scottish education will be discussed. If all schools were driven to facilitate the right to choose for these young people, differences in teachers' attitudes could be negated.

It is important to highlight the point that although students had the agency to request subjects and activities, these were not always realised due to a variety of factors. For example, one particular student highlighted their own behaviour as a confounding factor. This suggests that this Olivia had explored the reasons behind the restriction in the exercise of this agency with a staff member and reflected on it although this reasoning was at a very early level. The section of the interview illustrated in the comments of Olivia on page 125 gives an example of this.

When talking, or using alternative communication to talk about their school experiences, the students were keen to share things they liked and enjoyed. In addition to this, they frequently mentioned or indicated feelings of happiness relating to the school setting itself. Therefore, in this specialist setting, students' experiences tended to be positive and they gave little indication of feeling 'othered' or left out of anything. The students' responses imply that they are accustomed to having their views sought and listened to. Indeed, they overwhelmingly agreed that they did have choices and could pursue their interests. Perhaps,

as Heibert et al. (2003) argued, the benefits of giving more autonomy to students have been reaped in terms of their developing confidence and sense of agency in this setting.

In the school studied students all categorically stated that they had choices, both about subjects studied and activities they wished to carry out. This ethos is aspirational for all of Scotland's educational establishments. On page 120 of the findings chapter Leo's example clearly showed that he could ask if he wanted to undertake an activity of choice and that school staff would help him to achieve the task.

Many researchers have claimed that a sense of belonging is essential for human development. For example, Pendergast et al. (2018) noted the positive influence of a sense of belonging at school on issues such as attainment, attendance and mental health of pupils and argued that school climate was essential in developing this sense of belonging. These claims on the importance of belonging are based on the eminent research by Abraham Maslow (1943) on human motivation which will be examined in greater detail later in the chapter (see Figure 1.). There was a clear sense of belonging felt during students' accounts. Most students were able to give at least one example of a subject they liked in school by either vocalising or selecting a symbol for that subject. Two students stated that they enjoyed helping out and being given responsible jobs in class and across the school. Within this, particularly for the two students that enjoyed helping around the school, a sense of belonging was evident. Students appeared to feel that they played an active role in the daily life of their school or class. Students appeared to get a lot of satisfaction from this sense of belonging, corroborating the claims of researchers such as Pendergast (2018) on the importance of this. Particular research has noted this as an area of meaning for students with Additional Support Needs. Prince and Hadwin (2013) define belonging as feeling "accepted, respected, involved and supported" (Prince & Hadwin, 2013, p.238). A sense of belonging cited by the same authors is widely acknowledged as a "basic psychological need" (Prince & Hadwin, 2013, p.238). This is particularly pertinent for those with CASN in a school environment, who are so often marginalised in other areas of society. Many studies have linked this sense of belonging for young people with positive outcomes both academic and social (Bond et al. 2007; Goodenow 1993; McGraw et al. 2008). In the findings, for example, students were completing chosen tasks that led to positive social outcomes, as seen in the example from student interviewee L on page 120.

Pupil comments indicated that they had a sense of agency within the setting. If, as suggested, all schools aspired to be as inclusive as possible for pupils with Complex Needs

then students within a greater number and type of setting would have comparable experiences. The next section will examine the attitudes that teachers displayed which had an impact on pupil agency, in particular, the models that teachers ascribed to when talking about pupils.

5.3 Teachers interviewed mainly subscribed to social and capacility models when speaking about students and this affected students' experience in a positive way

This finding is exemplified by the evidence that the teachers in this school often focussed in interviews on strengths, rather than deficits. For example,

It's more not what they can't do, more what can that pupil do and play to their strengths. I would say. It's not visually impaired, it's very socially aware. Looking at strengths. We all have things that we can't do that we hide really well. Even in mainstream. Everyone should play to their strengths, that's a human aim I think

Teacher Interviewee Nicola

As mentioned, this led to a sense of agency for the pupils who often cited their teachers as facilitators of their wishes.

In the literature review, the increased focus on students' rights in recent years to be involved in decisions about their education was highlighted. This may have had an impact on the experiences of students, due to increasing development of the ways we talk and think about students with such exceptional needs in general literature. This is perhaps reflective of the move away from medical towards social and capability models of education for young people with disabilities and was certainly apparent in teacher interviews.

Everyone can make choices, in spite of difference it just takes time, understanding and consistency.

Survey Respondent

In some ASN schools an environment conducive to exercising agency has begun to develop in line with our increasing knowledge (Burger, 2019). Certainly, within the school studied, pupils felt a sense of agency and there were clear examples of teachers ensuring that they exercised it given in both pupil and teacher accounts. Staff within the school were experienced (or supported by experienced colleagues) in ensuring that the communication needs of pupils were met and this assisted with the facilitation of pupil requests and choices. Scottish policy

has actively promoted the rights of young people to be involved in such decisions. The Equality Act (2010) sets out the framework that ensures that no one with a disability is discriminated against whilst the Education Scotland Act (2016) has extended the rights of pupils (although with capacity) to use their rights to make decisions on their own behalf.

The Education (Scotland) Act (2016) explicitly acknowledges children's rights to make decisions. The Scottish Government has a strategy for 'Progressing the Human Rights of Children in Scotland' (2018) in which they state that children should be recognised as citizens in their own right. Indeed, a study by Burger (2019) acknowledged an increased awareness of children's participation rights in general in British education and the potential benefits of teachers actively considering pupil rights in terms of children's agency. This means that pupils now have more input into their education and are increasingly participating in choices relating to it. It is a possibility that teachers in general are more cognisant of encouraging choice and using the language around it, due to developments in our understanding of the importance of creating an environment adapted to ensure contributions from all. Our understanding of the importance of accessible communication, for example, means that more individuals can contribute than ever before (HM Government, 2009). The school studied had displays with students' rights listed in corridors and clear evidence of an active pupil council. Research has found that when students are aware of the fact that they have rights and teachers respect this then they are more likely to be engaged in school (Covell et al., 2011) the similar findings of this study give credence to this argument . Furthermore, the same researchers argued that the effects of teachers respecting pupils' rights could counteract some of the effects of potentially disadvantaging factors, including disability. In a school where pupils feel respected, they learn that they have value and in turn, develop a sense of their own agency.

Because teachers treat them as persons with rights rather than as objects to be moulded, students perceive a supportive relationship in a welcoming school environment. Moreover, the school not only emphasises the principle of participation but also facilitates its practice, in accord with article 12 of the Convention. It does so through providing democratic classrooms and giving students a voice in school governance and procedures. In doing all of this, it is reasonable to believe that rights-respecting schooling has a compensatory effect on social disadvantage. (Covell, Howe &. Polegato, 2011, p.203).

Dialogue around the right to education is common. Most teachers and schools are well versed in the rhetoric of the UNCRC. However, for students with CASN, rights to make

choices within their own school are potentially life changing. As Alderson argues (2018), a right or choice that seems small to one person may be of immense importance to another. One of the teachers interviewed captured this in the following comment:

it's really important for us to assume that these kids have as much of a complex and meaningful inner life as we do and that they deserve to be enriched as far as we would like our lives to be enriched and then we try to facilitate that.

Teacher Interviewee David

When adults take small choices away from learners by assuming that they are not important choices the impact could be significant. As described by Mario-Redmond, Kerling and Silverman (2019), some of the more common forms of ableism encountered by those with visible disabilities included "unnecessary help, infantilisation an invasion of privacy" (p. 727), leading to feelings of frustration and dehumanisation. Making the language of rights common place in discussions on within-school choices would begin to develop the understanding of social justice for these young people amongst all who work with them. The Levels of Engagement (as cited by Education Scotland, 2019) use a scale to gauge individual pupil engagement within activities and could potentially provide a bridge for this gap by increasing common sense knowledge around how learners with CASN show progress and enjoyment. Levels of engagement base teacher judgements around how engaged pupils are with a particular activity and can assist with decision making in the best interests and motivations of the young person. Teachers interviewed were beginning to use language related to engagement, rather than ability when talking about subjects.

It should look like an enjoyable experience, something where they are engaged, they want to be there and they're having a good time

Teacher Interviewee Karen

Stimulation, engagement and enjoyment are perhaps better indicators of progress for these learners than anything else. Children's provision rights *to* education are generally supported, but their participation rights *in* education are more contested. Few schools democratically inform and consult students, and share policymaking with them (Alderson, 2018, p.180).

Interestingly, some of the responses to the questionnaire articulated that respondents didn't feel it was appropriate for students with complex needs to choose or access across the

curriculum as they didn't have the capacity to make the right choices. The following quotes are taken from survey extended text responses.

Access to all curricular areas is not always required

There are pupils in my class that will not and should not access all the curriculum.

…those with complex needs are not able to make significant choices…

Survey Respondents

Some staff surveyed appeared to believe that an entirely different approach, based on the acquisition of life skills, was more relevant for the group of young people discussed. Particularly in the survey, teachers were less positive about subject access, favouring a life-skills based approach.

life skills can be more important and beneficial to CASN pupils

Survey Respondent

It could be that an additional survey to get at the heart of these differences is required. The differences perceived between the school interviews and the extended text responses from the survey may also indicate that the survey is more representative of the general attitude of CASN teachers in the field. The survey had over 120 respondents. As mentioned, ASN schools are beginning to develop approaches to realising choice for pupils with complex needs but perhaps not all teachers buy into this concept fully at the moment. The quotes above highlight the need for universality across the system but also for awareness raising of the rights of pupils with CASN to have choices in their education and rigorous procedures to ensure that teacher attitude in not a barrier to agency. This gives credence to the argument that the agency afforded to students in this school may not be representative of the wider school system. As Shaw argued, "quality" (Shaw, 2017, p.295) of the establishment has a significant impact on outcomes for pupils, rather than setting. One of Shaw's markers of quality was experience of teachers; therefore it could be that teachers surveyed were less experienced in making choices happen for pupils with complex needs. Teachers in the school studied assumed capability of students to pursue subjects or ideas that were of interest to them. The learners interviewed in this setting clearly felt listened to. For example, when asked if school helped her to do the things she wanted to, Helen gave a thumbs up and others chose the symbol for 'yes'. They often cited staff as the facilitators of their choices. The degree to

which staff listened to, and acted on, students' requests and interests influenced their experiences in a positive way. Students mainly indicated that they could pursue their choices and who would help them to do that. When asked if she wanted to do something like a new subject in school, who she would ask, Olivia mentioned her teacher by name.

There is a long history in ASN education of adults making decisions on behalf of our most complex young people (Alderson, 2018). In addition to this, Article 12 of the UNCRC (1992) affords a "child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child". Notions of capability are central to children's experiences. Arguably, how teachers perceive the ability of the child to make decisions is likely to directly impact on the amount of agency they have. In the setting studied, teachers very much spoke in line with social or capability models. Scottish Education bodies need to continue to develop the concept of agency for pupils with CASN. Most policy documentation refers to inclusion regarding children with ASN in general but the unique presentation of pupils with CASN must be highlighted. This can only be developed when all staff are aware of the right to participation and choice for pupils with CASN and schools are driven to promote it.

Teachers had many views on what education 'looks like' for complex learners. There were strong statements around 'individuality' and 'Sensory' learning. The notion of individuality is widely reported in research into people with complex needs. Anastasiou and Kauffman (2012) argued that by oversimplifying definitions of categories of learner within ASN education we overlook the individual abilities of each person. As one teacher in the survey stated:

> *It needs to be personalised and therefore fully learner led*
>
> Survey Respondent

The importance of getting to know individuals as a person is critical, as Doran (2012) suggested, if we see the label and not the individual, we will miss opportunities to see what they can do. Increased awareness of the CASN profile across schools would facilitate understanding of the unique profile of each individual.

Clarity on the position of young people with CASN in educational policy and practice is needed to resolve this dichotomy. Authors such as Imray (2018) and Slee (2018) have highlighted the policy gaps that impact on children with disabilities. Slee (2018) in particular, has argued that there is a need to 'fight for the democracy' of fully inclusive education (p.81) in regard to school placement, perhaps the same is true of subject access. This piece of research has no wish to argue that all learners with CASN should attend all subjects

regardless, the issue at the heart of the matter is that in the name of social justice they should have the option to if they so desire. Mednick (2002) gives credence to this idea:

"disability often renders them helpless, without the opportunity to make real choices about what affects them. We need to give them back as much control as possible, even though most tasks require adult intervention and support. In this way they will start to believe in themselves." (Mednick, 2002, p.1).

It does not matter if the progress made by these students is non-academic or non-linear (Colley, 2020), if they enjoy it then they should have the option to participate. Perhaps standard attainment pressures make staff feel like this should not be the case. For example, Education Scotland collect data on how many qualifications at national level are gained within each school. The assessments for many of these national units are based on linear learning outcomes. Staff may feel pressure to continuously improve standard attainment in order to ensure that the figures for the school look positive. Allen and Sims (2018) refer to this as an "audit culture" (p.91) and relate it negatively to "teacher happiness" (p.91). Hehir (2002) states that ableist assumptions serve to undermine the educational progression of those with disabilities by favouring the manner in which non-disabled children make progress. Subsequently, devaluing the progress made by those with disabilities and over-focussing on 'fixing' issues relating to that disability, above all else. For example, Hehir illustrates ableism in action when discussing 'oralism', when the popular model of education for deaf children was to teach them to lip read and speak, instead of using sign language. The fact is that attainments made by learners with CASN are just as valid and meaningful, they are simply unable to be tracked in a linear fashion due to the individual profile of each learner. However, it cannot be denied that skills which foster independence for the future are important too. The fact cannot be ignored that progress needs to be defined differently for these pupils. One teacher spoke about this from an ethical viewpoint.

To hold something with both hands instead of casting it aside. People might think that that's not learning, but for her, it is learning. She's going to go into adult services next year and if she keeps casting away whatever people are giving her then people are eventually going to stop giving her things. They think she doesn't want it. It's not that she doesn't want it, it's just that she hasn't yet learned how to hold and explore an object. You need to help her for the first minute or two but after that you can take your hands off. She will hold it for a couple of seconds and for her that's progress

Teacher Interviewee John

Ascertaining enjoyment and choice is the most important factor in ensuring that young people have a sense of belonging, equity and stimulation.

However, ethically, it is hard to argue that the above quote is not as, or more, important than a fun subject for her because it is developing a skill for the future. It is important that awareness is raised not only in features of CASN but also in the challenges and dichotomies that frequently present.

Most teachers were positive about their students accessing a range of subjects whilst others felt that 'life skills' were more important. Ware (2017) gives credence to this dichotomy and argues that there is little agreement on what the goals of education for this group actually are. The finding of the current study replicated Ware's argument, one of the key sub themes identified was that there was little consistency on what education 'looks like' for these unique learners. These exceptional learners do not fit into 'linear' or academic achievement-based curriculums with a focus on future employment and conventional independence. Arguably, this is why greater clarity and specific reference to this cohort is needed in policy. In Scotland this dichotomy has been mediated somewhat with the Milestones for Complex Learners (Education Scotland, 2019) which recognise that progress may look different for these learners. However, the milestones take an, arguably, linear differentiated approach by breaking curricular concepts down for learners. As discussed in the literature review, these learners may not learn in a linear fashion. To account for this complexity, the Foundation Milestones have been developed (Education Scotland, 2019) to reflect the skills that one may expect to see more complex learners developing over the course of their education. All milestones will be used as thinking tools for progression through Curriculum for Excellence and SQA. This is a positive step in recognising the type of steps that these learners may make but must be backed up by policy and universal understanding on the nature of education for these exceptional individuals.

Huge differences in teacher attitude are seen when comparing the results of the survey with the interview transcripts. In the school studied, teachers were very positive about agency for their pupils. This was not the case within the survey, which had many respondents and therefore could be more representative of wider attitudes outside this school. It is therefore worth considering the overarching ethos of the school under which teachers are working on a day-to-day basis and whether this has a significant impact. In the school studied both students and teachers spoke very positively. The need for universality of knowledge and understanding is key. Scottish education needs a 'driver' for this to happen, in order that

pupils receive equality of experience across establishments. Several future developments could contribute to this. Firstly, the development of policy to reflect the true position of these learners would give clarity to all staff involved with them.

The development of professional learning resources to be rolled out countrywide, as well as during initial teacher training would ensure that they are seen from the start as part of the system and not something ‘other’. In addition, rigorous quality assurance procedures such as focussed inspection, self-evaluation tools and national priorities would hold schools accountable for the experiences of these specific learners.

Some authors have argued that changing the way we talk about the education of students with CASN can have an immense impact on their educational experiences. For example, institutional ableism may exacerbate exclusionary practices within individual settings through the reproduction of ableist narratives, as Campbell (2009) suggests. In some settings, disablement is the effect, not the cause of exclusionary discrimination (D’Souza, 2020). As was reflected in the findings, the capability-based language used by teachers in the school was evident and clearly impacted on the pupils’ sense of agency. Giving credibility to the idea of a change in everyday knowledge and dialogue around learners with CASN is a piece of research by Runswick-Cole and Hodge (2009). Based on seminal work by Foucault (1973) which highlighted the power of language, the authors acknowledge the role that language has played in education. The links between commonly used language and positive or negative views of learners are played out in both policy and common educational practice, this is also acknowledged by Slee (2018) who argues that common discourse can lead to exclusionary practice. In the findings from the interviews teachers used consistently positive language when referring to learners.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (2006) was signed by the UK in 2007. Article 12 of the convention pertains to those who do not communicate by conventional means participating in decisions and choices and their capacity before the law. This article and the Equality Act (2010) ensure that someone with a disability is treated equally and is supported to make decisions in matters affecting them. However, parts of GIRFEC have been developed specifically for young people with a disability to ensure that Scotland is getting it right for them alongside their peers. Perhaps the position of people with complex needs demands to be elucidated in order to ascertain how society can make this happen. Specific inclusion in policy to enhance awareness would begin this process.

The Medical, Social and Capability models discussed in the literature review all make outcomes for students with CASN dependent on what others think- what they think can be remediated, what they think society should provide, what they think people with CASN are capable of.

Such approaches make people with ASN highly dependent on what teachers, staff and families believe them to be capable of, rather than what they can achieve in reality. Approaches like those described are therefore subjective without rights or voice at the centre. Arguably, even Article 12 of the UNCRC is ambiguous in this respect. Although in committee recommendations following implementation it was stated that capacity should be presumed initially, the presumption of capacity is mediated by adult intervention (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2009) and assessment of capability to make choices. In an article on exclusion of learners with PMLD from inclusive education. Colley (2020) argues that a capability model should be adopted by all in order to reconceptualise thinking on education for learners with the most complex needs. However, certainly in this special school setting, my research found that many teachers talked very much around the capability of their students, as opposed to deficit. However, if there was an inherent assumption of 'educational rights' without question the perhaps othering could be avoided and this even further step towards re-conceptualisation would be more appropriate. In fact, Slee (2018) argues that fully inclusive, non-segregated education would be closer to its realisation were rights and responsibilities recognised withing the current, ineffective system.

The historically popular medical model focussed on remediation of perceived internal deficits yet the more currently popular social and capability models emphasis the role that social and external factors contribute. However, they continue to problematise the issue of 'special needs'. Runswick-Cole and Hodge (2009) argue that, rather than continuing with the language of 'special needs', a dialogical turnaround is required. They suggest shifting the dialogue away from the language of the problem of whether someone has capacity or not and towards a dialogue of blanket entitlement by using the language of educational rights. This would promote, as Holt (2007) suggests, a move away from the ableist notion that the problem is rooted within the child instead of the exclusionary environment. As adults, it would be our role to ensure that these rights were met. Children's rights advocates have argued that if fully implemented, participation rights would represent "one of the most profound transformations in moving towards a culture of respect for children's rights, for their dignity and citizenship, and for their capacities to contribute significantly towards their own well-being" (Lansdown, Jimerson, & Shahroozi, 2014, p. 4).

Indeed, this would mean that all learners had immediately obvious rights and that these rights were implicit in dialogue about Scottish education. In addition, if we were explicit about it, learners with CASN would also be included in this blanket terminology and could no longer be ‘excluded by omission’.

For want of better phraseology, adults could not get away with either not knowing ‘what to do’ with these learners or ‘doing what is best’ for them, without consultation. However, this research argues that these learners need to be written explicitly into Scottish educational policy, in turn, making educational dialogue around their characteristics the norm. Policy needs to be revised or rewritten to ensure that understanding of this group of learners is implicit and obvious. This would not be with the intention of ‘othering’ them but with saying ‘we are part of this too’, in order to raise awareness. As this research highlights, currently, awareness is lacking. Current curricular and policy documentation uses terminology such as ‘personalisation and choice’ and whilst occasional reference is made to the UNCRC (1992) the fact that students with CASN have ‘rights’ is rarely referred to, specifically in relation to making choices. Even within the interviews conducted, teachers did not refer to ‘rights’ as a concept, they tended to focus on capabilities and addressing barriers.

Removing barriers - I take that to mean addressing their sensory needs and providing a meaningful way to communicate

Teacher Interviewee Nicola

The way that students with CASN make choices and show positive response is not always typical. The Standards and Testing Agency (2020) use the phrase “subtle nuances of response and behaviour” which illustrates this beautifully**,** (p.13)

Furthermore, the increased awareness of the UNCRC (1992) and the rights afforded to children is acknowledged. This has been fostered in Scotland particularly though the Rights Respecting Schools programme (UNICEF, 2020). The crucial element to this is helping students with CASN to access their rights. This is no small feat, as Hodkinson (2012) wrote on inclusion, there is always going to be a conflict between “ideality and practicality” (p.7). Staff working with these pupils may have the ideality of realising children’s rights to be heard in choices, but the practicality of this in terms of the support needed to make it happen is always going to be an issue. For example, some children may need therapies during class time to maintain their posture, or the educational establishment may have limited access to assistive technology due to funding issues. Ways of making this happen for our most

complex learners need to be expressly considered in order to negate these issues. As one teacher interviewed put it, we don't want to be "paying lip service" to educational choices for these young people. There are two aspects of rights for these learners - choices and staff knowledge of how to respond to their choices. Therefore, different facets of understanding of choice need to be developed.

Considering the evidence presented and with a view towards forging a way forward in standardising good practice, I propose an 'educational rights' model for all learners as a developing concept. Where previous models have continued to problematise disability, this model would acknowledge disability yet negate it as a barrier to choice by making rights a given understanding for all learners. In this model, the education system must ensure that rights are met, regardless. Explicit, embedded dialogue about the 'educational rights' of every learner in Scotland would allow for increased objectivity in ensuring that the right to participation and choice for every learner in Scotland was realised. A robust CLPL (Career Long Professional Learning) and quality assurance programme would be essential alongside this model.

The act of providing education for these wonderful, individual young people is an area fraught with such dichotomies. Clarity, awareness raising, and aspirational policy could go some way to mediating these dichotomies. Staff highlighted many challenges in the field of CASN, these are discussed below.

5.4 Challenges: The field of educating young people with CASN is fraught with challenges that may not appear in a mainstream setting

…a lot of it comes down to the knowledge and understanding of the teachers, because, you don't know what you don't know

Teacher Interviewee Cathy

Several themes came up repeatedly across teachers interviewed. Most teachers gave examples of overarching educational structures or practices that they perceived to be a barrier. One of these that was particularly striking was the perceived lack of training for staff working with pupils with complex needs. This has been identified as an issue by other researchers (Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2009; Doran, 2012), as has the lack of initial teacher training in ASN in general (Carter, 2015). Therefore, new staff are coming into an unknown field with little or no formal knowledge to start with and are often relying on more experienced

colleagues to help them initially. This reliance was also identified through the interview themes. Again, this highlights another example of exclusion by omission; training opportunities for staff working with complex learners are not always readily available. Therefore, not all staff are immediately aware of how to promote agency for this group.

This could account for some of the previously reported negative attitudes. Many teachers stated similar views during interviews.

It is a very complex, different world and until you're talked through that and start to get some experience of that you don't know how to include the complex kids, so we need to educate. We need to get more training for teachers, get them on board.

Teacher Interviewee Nicola

This has been previously identified by other researchers (Imray et al., 2017; Carpenter, 2015). For these students to wholly participate and have equality of access to education, all practitioners must be aware of their existence within the framework of education. In addition, they must be aware of entitlements for all (without caveat) and how to make desired or enjoyed subject access a reality for these exceptional young people. This has implications for the way that initial teacher education is presented. If these exceptional young people were included in the agenda from the start, then learning to work with them would surely not be as much of a challenge.

The implicit assumption should be that students with CASN are offered the choice to be included in the same subjects as their peers. As discussed in the literature review, there is a gap between policy rhetoric and practice for this group. More awareness raising and training is needed. As seen in these results, inclusion is influenced by a variety of school-based factors, such as institutional ableism or teacher attitude, despite the overarching policy. What that means should be made explicit. Careful thought needs to be given to how this is done and how learners' desires are ascertained. As Florian (2017) argues, whether working in a mainstream or specialist setting, teachers need to be prepared to meet challenges of diversity. Unfortunately, there seems to be a knowledge gap evident in this respect. Filling this gap with awareness raising and policy would begin the process of counteracting it. Many teachers referred to their initial experiences of teaching complex learners as a 'challenge'. It is not hard to imagine that coming into the field with little experience or background knowledge is a potential challenge. This challenge is exacerbated by the lack of information in educational policy or initial teacher training which reinforces

social inequality. This is potentially a vicious circle because developing educational policy to meet the needs of such an exceptional group of learners is another unique challenge!

Allen and Sims (2018) highlight the importance of a supportive school environment on increasing the teacher "learning curve" (p.73). Interestingly many of the interviews contained the phrase 'learning curve' in relation to initial experiences of teaching complex learners. For example, one teacher articulated this as

I think just now it's been a huge learning curve for me, this side of it. How do the learners present? Em, partially sighted, peg fed, em, a lot of hand on hand you know

Teacher Interviewee Cathy

Many staff interviewed highlighted the lack of knowledge that they came to the CASN field with and the impact that this had on the students.

for the first few months I felt like I was groping around in the dark

Teacher Interviewee David

Staff new to the department were relying heavily on support from more experienced colleagues. They had developed their own coaching and mentoring approaches in an informal way. This was reflected on by these staff members in a positive way and as a result is going to be an increased focus for the whole-school development plan, as is the awareness raising discussed below. If this were to become Scotland-wide, it would go some way to ensuring that pupils were having their needs met from the start. In this school, what became clear is that subject specific qualifications of teachers were not the crucial element in ensuring that students had a positive subject experience, teacher experience with CASN learners was. Many teachers were starting with no experience at all. Those that showed the most confidence had either been in the field for a long time or had received extensive support and advice from colleagues as to best methodology to support their learners.

I have loved it, but I wished that I had had somebody at the beginning that could have explained it to me because I spent so long trying to work out how to motivate the children.

Teacher Interviewee Nicola

In this respect, children with CASN are at a disadvantage from the start because so few teachers are aware of their unique features, much less how to teach them. Therefore, it is important to get this on the Scottish education agenda to ensure that this initial disadvantage is at least somewhat negated.

5.5 Awareness

The general awareness of CASN in education was influential, teachers felt strongly that awareness around the features of this exceptional group needed to be raised, within and out with their current setting

Many teachers were also vocal about the lack of awareness of the characteristics of the young people with complex needs of staff across the rest of the school. Staff from outside the complex needs department were perceived to lack understanding of the needs of this group. The quote on page 146 by Teacher Interviewee John about 'fear' in other teachers' faces stood out as particularly striking. This gives credence to the discussion on the issues with the use of the language of 'all' in Scottish educational policy. There is little specific awareness of the issues that affect those of our young people with CASN. Indeed, hostile or ambiguous ableism as defined by Nario-Redmond, Kemerling and Silverman (2019) may be the result. These young people may not have had the opportunity, as a group, to form a positive cultural identity in order to counteract this.

Many teachers indicated that they felt this led to what has been referred to as 'othering' throughout this thesis. Strongly linked with the concept of ableism, Mik-Meyer (2017) defines this as considering another individual or group as different to the rest. Whilst students interviewed appeared to feel included and had a sense of belonging, the perceptions of teaching staff in relation to the attitudes of other staff members was that the students with the most complex needs were on the outside. Additional research (Mietola et al., 2017) has argued that this group are the most marginalised both in society and research. Teachers felt that this was down to lack of experience and could be improved by raising awareness. Mario-Redmond, Kemerling and Silverman (2019) give credence to this by highlighting that 'narratives of tragedy' (p.727) or 'fear-based avoidance' (p.727) compound this marginalisation. People who do not work specifically with this cohort may have little experience of interacting with young people with CASN, leading to unhelpful attitudes.

The majority of staff interviewed were passionate about the importance of raising awareness of this group of learners to avoid the 'othering' described above, this was an important aspect

that came through in the data on staff attitude. Staff in the school were passionate about ensuring equality of opportunity for their learners and raising their profile across the school through ongoing training and involvement. Teachers felt that knowledge and experience was crucial to this. If training is not made more readily, standardly available then this situation is going to be indefinite.

Education Scotland have used the language of 'all' as a possible anti-othering agenda, with undoubtedly good intentions. It must be questioned, though, whether this has served students with CASN well. As previous research found (Pijl & Frisson, 2009), many teachers simply do not know how to include these young people and the lack of specifics in initial teacher training and policy may have impacted on this. In the school setting researched, teachers were passionate about awareness raising and had begun to plan a programme of training for other staff for the following session. Teachers appeared frustrated on behalf of their learners about the impact of these issues.

Another challenge cited was the relationship between education and therapies or health services. Teachers highlighted this as an area particular to the field and indeed, many studies have noted the importance of working as a multidisciplinary team to help young people with CASN achieve their potential (Imray & Hinchcliffe, 2014). In 1943 Abraham Maslow wrote about what he termed a 'Hierarchy of Needs' that all individuals need to progress through in order to achieve their full potential in life. The hierarchy proposed by Maslow can be an extremely useful way to think about the importance of working as part of a multidisciplinary team to support young people with CASN as it shows the importance of basic needs being met in order to progress up the hierarchy. The table below is based on Maslow's (1943) hierarchy and my own knowledge, derived from extensive experience and reading, the table should be read from the bottom up to express hierarchy of need as Maslow intended:

Table 7: Maslow's Hierarchy Interpreted for CASN, based on the work of Maslow (1943) and my own knowledge, gained from working with CASN pupils.

Maslow's Need	Illustrative Processes/ Experiences	What this Might Look Like	Impact on Schooling
Self Actualisation	Morality, Creativity, Spontaneity,	Staff and pupils understand that they	Participates in a wide variety of activities

Maslow's Need	Illustrative Processes/ Experiences	What this Might Look Like	Impact on Schooling
	Problem Solving	have agency within themselves to achieve their potential, is given opportunities for creativity, own ideas and ways to solve problems.	throughout the school, understood well by a familiar communication partner and achieves potential, equity and a strong sense of agency.
Esteem Needs	Self-esteem, Confidence, Achievement, Respect of and by Others	Is given responsibility and agency, is respected by al staff. Communicative attempts are listened to and acted on.	Can have agency with support from staff that know them well, may link their communications and actions to a predictable outcome and therefore have agency by prompting that outcome. Participating in a range of activities.
Love and Belonging Needs	Friendship, Family	Feels secure and familiar, a part of the class, knows their needs will be met by people who know them well.	Comfortable and ready to learn because their needs are met.
Safety Needs	Security of Body, Family, Health and Resources	Being comfortable in their wheelchair, being at their best health-wise.	Has secure and comfortable position and level of energy for learning.
Physiological Needs	Breathing, Food, Excretion, Sleep	Not being hungry, clean pad, typical breathing.	Feels satisfied in basic needs in order to be made comfortable in position.

This, Imray & Hinchliffe (2014) argue, highlights the "Imperative nature" (p.119) of collaborative working between professionals who know the individual. This is imperative for the progress of the learners and therefore an important facet of staff knowledge and experience. For example, without physiotherapy advice to ensure a comfortable sitting

position in a wheelchair, a learner may not be able to progress past the physiological rung of the table above.

In this respect, it is not only essential that education and therapy staff work together but also that staff working with students with CASN have a sound knowledge base in order to understand the complex factors that affect students. Slee (2018) argues that identity must not be seen solely in terms of impairment, which then leads to reductive practices. However, I recognise that entitlement cannot be realised until these basic needs are met. We are not remediating deficits here, we are ensuring that the learner has a secure base for accessing their right to participation. Again, this is an important point for awareness raising on the rights of these learners, their rights cannot be realised without basic needs met. What education in its entirety looks like for young people with CASN needs further elucidation. However, the educational rights model proposed would firstly acknowledge their right to have their physical needs met in order to be ready to learn. Staff interviewed were also clear on this.

A big thing for me is looking at the physical ability of the child, can they see? Can they hear? I do things to adapt that and make things more comfortable for them.

Teacher Interviewee Karen

Any developments in Scottish education must raise the awareness of multidisciplinary working in order to achieve a secure base for learning for young people with CASN. This was demonstrated clearly during the school-based interviews where teachers' accounts had a strongly pastoral feel to them, showing care and concern that the needs and rights of students were met. Quotes like the one illustrated above not only show that the teachers who work with this unique group of learners took on a strongly pastoral role but also showed understanding of and adherence to different models of disability, the social model can be seen in the quote above. However, staff must be committed to moving past the first stages of Maslow's theoretical hierarchy and on to the capability to be educated and make choices about educational experiences. In this respect, the disabling effects of attitudes, unsuitable environments and lack of accommodating pedagogy must be counteracted through a participation-positive narrative.

So passionate were the teachers interviewed on the rights to participation of these young people that many emphasised what they considered to be poor practice in realising young people's participation rights that they had observed. Such accounts give credence to the

argument of Hehir (2002) around counteracting the ableist assumption that young people with CASN should do things in the same way as everyone else.

Examples were highlighted of hand-on-hand activities with little perceived meaning for learners by Teacher interviewee F on page 119, for example.

Comments such as these corroborate Imray & Hinchliffe (2014) who argue that this approach is relatively meaningless and instead students should be given objects to explore in order to develop the skills to do so as independently as possible. There is no doubt that most teachers interviewed had not only a sound knowledge of the needs of pupils but actively sought to offer them optimal experiences. The Committee on the Rights of the Child (2009) discussed the considerable international effort that has gone into developing children's rights through policy and practice. This has led to the sub-phrase 'participation' which brings the concept to life for many involved in helping children to have a say in matters that affect them. This is reflected in teachers' attitudes during the study, rather than children always having to articulate choices, staff can help them to participate in ways that are meaningful to them. However, some teachers questioned how meaningful different types of participation were. Hand-over-hand where an adult guides a physically disabled child's hand towards an activity was an example of this. Some teachers were unsure that this equated to adequate choice and participation. It is arguable that those involved in the making of programmes and policy need to consider such things by delving deeper into the current experiences of young people with CASN is Scotland. This study has been undertaken with the view to forging a pathway towards providing equity in educational choice. Teachers interviewed very much came from a positive approach, focussing on what students could do, how engaged they were and whether they enjoyed activities. Again, for this to become uniform across Scotland it needs to be the expectation from governing bodies, not just a pocket of good practice.

5.6 Experience and commitment to inclusive pedagogy of teachers influenced pupil's experiences

In the interview data around inclusivity, the experiences of teachers were fraught with issues such as lack of understanding, classroom organisation, training and resources as found by previous research (Pijl & Frisson. 2009; Rix, Simmons, Nind, & Sheehy. eds., 2005). These issues also came across through the survey

I do feel like I fail my children academically at times because there is just not enough time to prepare all the individual resources needed to help them access the curriculum.

Survey Respondent

However, the teachers in this school all gave the impression of a strong commitment and 'can do' attitude when it came to ensuring learners with CASN were included in subjects. The findings of my research give credence to the argument in the literature review that the experiences of students are dependent on the attitudes of teachers and the ethos of the school in general. In addition, they diverged from previous findings in that teachers here understood what was necessary for full inclusion, albeit with the support of more experienced colleagues when starting their journey into complex needs education. Again, these results challenge some previous findings that students didn't always receive equality of access to subjects (Stalker & Moscardini, 2012; Wright, 2015) from the viewpoint that generally this might be the case but in certain settings this is definitely not the case. Here, the commitment to equality of access was clear to see. Again, the influence here may be school ethos and a widespread attitude of commitment to inclusion across the department. As Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model illustrated, the right environment can provide the best conditions for learning, progress and achievement.

Within the literature review subject access was unpicked using MFL as an illustrative device. However, what came across strongly in the research was that teachers (who worked with complex learners in the school) had no preconceived ideas about what subjects students should attend, although one teacher did mention the importance of 'life-skills'. There was only one exception to this, where one teacher commented on cooking not being relevant because students were nil by mouth and couldn't eat what they had made. All teachers were committed to including the students. Subject access was more dependent on this positive attitude than what the particular subject was. In the senior phase of the school, for example, all students attended MFL classes. As Abrams (2008) highlighted, it is not the subject that needs to be considered in terms of relevance but the learner's unique abilities that are matched to the pedagogy employed. The right to subject access can only be achieved if teachers are willing to show a positive attitude to inclusion of exceptional learners. This highlights the importance of teacher quality and the expertise that can be gained from the experience of backing from colleagues in a supportive school environment. Positive attitudes of the school and teachers within have a "disproportionately positive" (Allen & Sims, 2018, p.3) impact on disadvantaged pupils. In another school, the experiences of students may be very different. As mentioned, expectation of good

practice, set out from the beginning and documented in policy would go some way to ensuring that this was happening consistently for all students with CASN in Scotland.

Indeed, the survey data indicated that universality is a long way from being achieved. Teachers who responded to the online survey did not all demonstrate the same attitudes. Some argued that students didn't have the capacity to choose subjects because they might make the wrong choice, or the subject wasn't relevant.

there are pupils in my class that will not and should not access all the curriculum.

Survey Respondent

It must be questioned whether the same principle would be applied to the educational subject choices of a mainstream pupil. If this is not the case then this quote is an example of the pockets of prejudice that continue to exist in the field and the need for a universal understanding of educational rights for all. This arguably ableist assumption, that some subjects are not suitable for those with complex needs, could effectively hinder progress for these pupils. I believe that further clarity is needed about who makes choices and how. This can only be done within a clear framework of expectations, underpinned by awareness and training. The positive ethos is relative to this particular setting. Ultimately it would be ideal to aim for this attitude to be universal, backed up by legislation or guidance. Over twenty years ago, Gwin-Smith (2000) argued that then was the time to instil positive attitudes within teachers, towards pupils with complex needs, given the inclusion agenda. At the moment, it still cannot be guaranteed that this is happening across Scotland for our most unique learners, due to the lack of specific acknowledgement of their rights in overarching policy.

Teachers' positive attitudes across the school came through strongly. Although they agreed that developing pupil choice was an issue for expansion because adults currently decide on the subjects offered to students.

I've kind of found with my class that they haven't had much choice so in a mainstream school they have options of subjects you want to be doing whereas ours were given a timetable, 'this is what you are doing' and I get it, it's new, it's getting set up and it maybe in the future it will be more tailor-made to the individuals

Teacher Respondent John

Giving credence to this argument, Joanna Grace (2020) develops the concept of “Presumed Competence” (p. 30) of individuals with CASN, where staff are making assumptions about the relevance of a subject for a learner but in actual fact, it is relatively meaningless to that learner.

However, at the moment this is due to practical constraints such as timetabling and room availability, rather than low expectations that have been identified in previous research (Moscardini, 2015) or presumed competence . In addition to this, students interviewed were positive about their ability to make choices and do things that interested them. Contrary to what was expected based on the previous research in the field, no students had been withheld from subjects deemed inappropriate for them. This was other than a child described by one of the teachers who had found transitioning between different rooms and staff very stressful and clearly indicated a preference for remaining in the base class with familiar staff and activities. The move away from a primary to a senior phase model was in its very early stages and teachers had an awareness that the model should be developed to incorporate more choice for learners with complex needs. As stated, the findings cannot be extrapolated as relative to any setting other than the one studied. Therefore, although these findings are unexpectedly positive in many ways, they apply only to one pocket of good practice. What is needed is policy to drive this forward, alongside necessary raising of awareness of the unique and complex features of these learners and quality pedagogy. The next section will examine ways in which this could be realised.

5.7 Realising the rights of pupils with CASN

A new ‘educational rights’ model of education for these learners could change the way that learners with CASN participate in their education.

As mentioned in the section on teacher attitude, implicit rights for these learners could make the findings from the school studied more applicable to other establishments. This proposed ‘educational rights’ model would be supported to be introduced and embedded in schools through guidance, training and resources. A multidisciplinary team of professionals and researchers could undertake this development. Firstly, a participative charter would be developed and applied to this group of learners. This would list their rights and be considered an essential document. Secondly, a training package for all educational establishments and initial teacher training programmes would be delivered and built on annually. As Coutsocostas and Alborz (2010) suggest, this would provide teachers in all sectors with

knowledge and methodological strategies to expand their own knowledge and work out with their “comfort zone” (p. 159).

For those working with CASN learners this would be delivered by experienced professionals. Finally, awareness raising on strategies to ensure that these rights were met for each student (e.g., Intensive Interaction, communication partners) would be rolled out country wide. What is needed is a shift in thinking and this can only be achieved by making the necessary concept commonplace in educational dialogue.

Approaches which focus on the capabilities of young people with CASN to have agency in their lives and further, make this a right, regardless of communication style would be transformative. Runswick, Cole and Hodge (2009) refer to the Reggio Emilia approach mentioned in the literature review. Here, all children are seen as having the ability to construct knowledge, relationships between child and teacher are fundamental. Rather like the previously discussed Intensive Interaction (Nind & Hewett, 1994) commonly used as a way of communicating and interacting with individuals with complex needs. The ‘educational rights’ model would develop this further for children in Scotland and one way of doing this for learners with CASN is to ensure that appropriate strategies are used to maximise the opportunities for communication of all learners. For learners with very complex communication needs, for example, the concept of ‘educational rights’ in combination with understanding of the benefits of approaches such as intensive interaction could have profound impact on the agency of these exceptional learners. Ways of ensuring the views of those with CASN are heard are varied. Other authors have written on listening to the views of those with complex communication needs. Research such as the work listed below would be developed into a set of strategies to ensure equity of input for learners with CASN.

As noted, students with CASN are not a homogeneous group and present with a wide variety of profiles (Anastasiou & Kauffman, 2012), particularly in their communication. The question must be then posed- what of learners who cannot express those views freely though speech, symbols or gesture? A key consideration for any professionals involved in the development of the educational rights model would have to be communication. For the most profound learners an alternative approach to eliciting response would need consideration (Goodwin, 2017). Writing on listening and responding to people with PMLD (Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities), Goodwin highlights the importance of a communication partner in actively listening for signals from the person with PMLD that can be interpreted in order to support the person and respond to them. Tying in with the notion of advocacy discussed

above, Goodwin also highlights previous focussed research on the communication of people with complex needs (Grove, et al, 2000; Watson, 2016; Goodwin, 2017).

The importance of a communication partner who knows the person well in order to ensure that they can use their prior knowledge of the communication of their partner to help them to express their agency must be accepted. The need for this type of communication advocacy must be acknowledged in any model that develops the concept of rights for these learners, the educational rights model could not be fully realised for the most complex communicators without the aid of a communication partner. Watson (2016) articulates this in a straightforward fashion "*firstly, a person's expression of will and preference needs to be acknowledged (noticed and not ignored), then interpreted and finally acted upon*" (Watson, 2016, p.365).

It would be unrealistic to assume that if an awareness raising campaign was mounted to increase general awareness of complex communication, this would achieve equity. Referring back to the literature review, part of the issue has always been that it is hard to qualify what it means to have complex needs because people with complex needs are so individual. Therefore, their communication methods are heterogeneous. However, a system of communication partnership may be a way around ensuring non-subjective agency. Any partnership would have to involve someone being an experienced communication partner for that person. This concept is extremely complex. The fact is that people with complex communication needs depend on someone who knows them well to interpret the smallest flicker of an eyelid or facial grimace. This fact is inescapable. How this is achieved is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, a proposal is not.

In the study, teachers were often cited as a facilitator for students acting upon their interests and subject choices. People with CASN can be agentic when they know that someone will listen and act upon their expressions is there for this purpose. As proposed in Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model, the interaction between the young person and their immediate environment is of prime significance. The importance of the relationship between student and teacher/communication partner is critical here as people with complex communication often have an interdependency with those who are closest to them and can interpret their expressions. The way that staff respond to young people will drive forward the ways in which they make choices. Ultimately, it will be the ways that staff teaching and working with learners with CASN approach the proposed 'educational rights' model that makes it successful. However, underpinning everything we do with policy will ensure that quality indicators are being met and ensure that individual establishments are accountable

for any failure to reach them. Currently, varying practices across schools may mean that not all students with CASN have such a positive experience. The need for unification of such practices is apparent.

5.8 Limitations of research

The setting was a large special school. Many CASN pupils are educated in special schools due to the nature of their disabilities. A sample of many students and teachers in mainstream would be possible but logistically much more challenging. With estimates of only 18% of pupils with complex needs educated in mainstream settings (Scottish Government, 2019b), sourcing a large enough sample may have challenges, future researchers may need to conduct surveys prior to the main research to find a suitable sample size. However, finding out whether experiences are similar across different settings could also make a very valuable contribution to research and give credence to the idea of the need to develop the model of 'educational rights' as a universal one. This in turn will ensure that the voices of greater numbers of students with CASN are heard and acted upon.

Within the school studied, it would have been useful to interview additional staff across the school, to get a picture of their perceptions. Staff from outside the CASN department may have been able to illuminate some of the issues, particularly in relation to the perception by staff within the department of feeling that staff had a sense of fear or hesitation in including and supporting their students. This type of information could be very useful in informing the roll out of any professional learning package for a new model.

To some extent the methodology used in this study has shaped the findings. For example, the interviews would have been improved by including questions on the nature of how subjects were organised at the school and how satisfied students were with that. In the school studied, subjects for pupils were pre-decided. Therefore, the finding that no students were excluded from subjects was partly due to the fact that each student attended each subject as a matter of course. Whilst useful findings were derived from teachers' responses on suitability of subjects, the absence of data on restriction of subject access could be partly attributed to this organisational factor. To investigate the way that subjects are organised for pupils with CASN in a different school would provide a useful comparison. It could be the case that upon further investigation, some subjects are thought of as more important than others for pupils with CASN, in alternative settings. This would give credence to work by researchers such as Moscardini et al., (2012) who found that children with ASN were often excluded from musical instrument instruction.

Due to the timing of the data collection part of the research coinciding with the first lockdown for Covid-19, fewer students were able to be interviewed. This meant that only six students were interviewed in total. Additionally, it meant that there was deeper data from students Leo and Olivia, who verbalised their responses. Had there been time to take adaptive action regarding methodology to elicit more data from the students who used AAC then this could have been actioned. A strategy to overcome this is suggested below.

The grouping of participants was not completely representative of the heterogeneous nature of the spectrum of CASN in Scotland. As mentioned, one way to capture the experiences of the most complex learners would be to conduct a longitudinal study using a communication partner approach. For learners with complex communication needs then an appropriate strategy to gauge engagement, responses and enjoyment of subjects would be to send them to subjects over a longer period with the same experienced and well-known communication partner. The communication partner would monitor these and complete a data input on the student's response after each subject session. This would allow for comparison of responses between subjects, teachers and confounding factors such as discomfort. In this way, deeper and more nuanced responses for the learners who do not verbalise would have been possible.

Whilst the research does come from a relativist position, and the experiences were relative to the students interviewed, a larger sample size would have given richer and fuller data.

6. Conclusion of Thesis

6.1 Summary of key recommendations of research

The outcomes of the research indicate that the Scottish Government's use of the terminology of 'all' has inadvertently excluded learners with CASN from being adequately considered under the overarching framework of educational policy and entitlement in Scotland. This is exacerbated by the lack of training in both initial and ongoing teacher education on the unique nature of this group. Revisiting what education and curriculum looks like for learners with CASN in both policy and practice is necessary.

There are significant implications for teacher training highlighted through this research. The group of pupils described here are some of our most unique and exceptional yet marginalised young people. If newly qualified teachers are not aware of their existence or what ensuring the best outcomes for them entails, then the notions of ableism and othering will only be perpetuated. However, it must be acknowledged that such developments will come with a set of challenges and tensions that will need to be managed. Krainer et al. (2018) acknowledge the complexity of 'scaling up' to accomplish educational improvements. Their research states that some of the tensions may be related to the levels at which 'scaling up' is required e.g. at individual teacher level or structural level. In this case, change is required at all levels of the system to ensure that the voices of young people with CASN are validated within it. In line with Krainer et al. (2018) who make the suggestion that nationwide support systems are very beneficial, adequate levels of support would need to be provided throughout the process of developing our practice. This will inevitably incur both financial and strategic costs which could be justified by providing a research-based rationale for such developments at a government level. Furthermore, changes to established practice can be challenging for teachers (Thomson, 2014). We need to give up on "taken for granted" (Thomson, 2014, p.89) ways of thinking and doing, in order to make these changes. Perhaps this tension could be managed by letting teachers see the benefit of employing the new approach, therefore increasing their motivation. This would, again, require significant input into the benefits of employing approaches which consistently see young people with CASN as individuals who have something positive to contribute. Additionally, Cavallera, et al. (2019) argue, a support network which ensures that support is offered at all levels can assist with the likelihood that any changes are fully taken on board and have long term impact.

Stakeholders, including leaders, should be supported in order to practically apply new ways of working. Coaching approaches could be employed (Horner et al., 2014) to assist with motivating staff to make these changes.

Whilst it is important to recognise that young people with CASN can experience some commonalities such as physical or cognitive differences, it must be ensured that teachers are basing their approaches on the individual, not on perceived homogeneity amongst this group. In any programme that seeks to raise awareness of CASN amongst educators it must be recognised that each young person will present with their own unique and exceptional set of attributes. The notion of relationship building must be at the heart of this programme to ensure that individual differences are taken into account. Norwich and Lewis (2007) discuss the relationships between common and individual characteristics of young people with disabilities. They argue that teaching strategies must be informed by both. They cite the “unique differences” position (Norwich and Lewis, 2007, p.130) and state that an individual’s unique characteristics should be at the forefront of their educational provision, with a curriculum that responds to these characteristics in terms of intensity of input. Therefore, it is very important that, as we increase teachers’ awareness of CASN, we retain the position of each child as an individual at the centre of their educational experience. In Scotland the principles of GIRFEC (Scottish Executive, 2007) can be used to develop a profile of each individual using the ‘My World Triangle’ (Scottish Executive, 2007). The ethos of such an approach is rooted in notions of the importance of individual experience and framing wellbeing, placing the child and their family at the centre. For young people with CASN it is extremely important to use such person-centred approaches in all aspects of their lives because they are unique. Perhaps one recommendation would be that each young person should have such a profile of their unique attributes, ensuring that each was catered for and developed as a consequence?

The findings of the research were relative only to the setting investigated. Useful further investigations would include elucidating the experiences and attitudes of teachers from different schools and setting types. Further investigation of the impact of whole school ethos would be useful, to elucidate a link.

The sample wasn’t truly representative of the CASN population that I wanted to capture. A longitudinal study based on intensive interaction would have been more apt in order to gauge the experiences of students with the most complex needs over time. It would allow for deeper responses for the students who used AAC.

Had lockdown not been a factor the study would have evolved along these lines. However, it now provides a next step in research for my passion in bringing the voices of these extraordinary young people into the picture.

In relation to this, this thesis will be developed into a shorter piece of practitioner enquiry to be shared with the school. This will include recommendations for future practice. It is hoped that awareness and experience with learners classed as CASN will continue to develop and that processes for increased inclusion and awareness across the school will be put into place as part of the whole-school development plan. However, it must be noted that the ethos within the complex needs classes studied was aspirational for all schools in Scotland.

The development of a charter of educational rights for complex learners would embed the language of a rights-based, entitlement model of education for these exceptional learners. In addition, it would increase awareness. Presently there is a knowledge gap between the current population of teachers and the current population of complex needs students. In order to bridge this gap, awareness of this exceptional group needs to be raised and made commonplace. The lack of training both for new teachers and those who are more experienced must be remediated.

Implications for policy, practice and research are presented in the table below.

Key Issues	**Suggested Improvement**
Choices and views need to be heard consistently, even for those with the most complex communication.	Establish charter of 'educational rights', embed language and ways of thinking via training and whole of Scotland programme roll out.
Reduction of othering and increased awareness.	Awareness raising through specific inclusion in policy and training for all staff.
Teacher attitude, quality and establishment ethos needs to be consistent.	Charter of 'educational rights' as an essential document with robust quality assurance procedures, training programme and strategies provided for development/CPD.
Educational rights need to be embedded.	Robust quality assurance, ongoing training, monitoring and professional dialogue.
Lack of experienced staff.	Hand in hand with awareness raising, a programme of CLPL for teachers and school staff would increase the knowledge base needed to feel confident in CASN.

Table 8: Implications of research for policy, ongoing research and practice

This research has come from a relativist position; any findings are specific to the school and pupil group studied. What came across very strongly was the impact that school ethos and teacher attitude had on the educational experiences of the group studied. Teachers' views of children's choices have impact- teachers who accept that all pupils have agency can embed that, teachers who believe that it is important for adults to choose for the child, can constrain this agency. Because class staff and teachers have the expertise that others do not then others may leave these decisions to these key staff, potentially more subjective and dependent on their ways of thinking about CASN. Some teachers believe that pupils are not able to make the right choices. There are many influences on this, however, the notion of educational rights for these learners must be embedded further into Scottish policy to ensure that they are attained. The fact that realisation of agency and rights to make choices can vary according to practices within different schools is of concern.

The way in which we understand the communication of individuals with complex needs is critical. As discussed, the learners here were able to communicate in a way that someone with an understanding of how to use symbols and gestures to support communication could understand. For those with less formal communicative ability interpretation is a more complex issue. In that case, the fact that an adult will need to interpret the communication of the individual is inescapable and how this is done objectively is a matter for consideration.

Subject choice is an example of the many areas in which those with complex needs are marginalised. Awareness raising amongst, first, teachers and policymakers then expanding to the public would be transformative in so many ways. As one teacher put it

… everybody at home, in school, in hospitals, in cafes, should all…, there should be time for all of these people to learn how to use Makaton or Canaan Barrie on body signing, how to approach our pupils and not make them jump, just the basics. Introduce themselves. That should be for everyone who comes into contact with them. Teacher Interviewee Nicola

How listened to, accepted and part of society our exceptional individuals would feel if this were the norm.

7. References

Abbott, M. (2018). Beyond a Bridge to Understanding: The Benefits of Second Language Learning. *American Educator, 42*(2), 39.

Abel, T., & Frohlich, K. L. (2012). Capitals and capabilities: Linking structure and agency to reduce health inequalities. *Social Science and Medicine*, *74*(2), 236–244. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2011.10.028

Adams, J. (1998) *A Special Environment? Learning in the MLD and SLD Classroom,* PhD Thesis, University of Northumbria at Newcastle

Ainscow, M., & Miles, S. (2008). Making education for all inclusive: Where next? *Prospects: Quarterly Review of Comparative Education*, 38(1), 15–34. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11125-008-9055-0

Atkin, K., & Lorch, M. (2016). An ecological method for the sampling of nonverbal signalling behaviours of young children with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD). *Developmental Neurorehabilitation*, 19(4), 211-225. https://doi.org/10.3109/17518423.2014.935822

Alderson, P. (2018). How the rights of all school students and teachers are affected by special educational needs or disability (SEND) services: Teaching, psychology, policy. *London Review of Education*, *16*(2), 175–190. https://doi.org/10.18546/LRE.16.2.01

Allen, R., & Sims, S. (2018) *The Teacher Gap*, London: Routeledge.

American Educational Research Association. (2006). Standards for Reporting on Empirical Social Science Research in AERA Publications, *Educational Researcher, 35*(6), 33-40

Anastasiou, D., & Kauffman, J. M. (2012). Disability as cultural difference: Imlications for special education. *Remedial and Special Education*, *33*(3), 139–149. https://doi.org/10.1177/0741932510383163

Baglieri, S., Valle, J., Connor, D., & Gallagher, D. (2011). Disability Studies in Education. *Remedial and Special Education, 32*(4), 267-278. https://doi.org/10.1177/0741932510362200

Ball, S. (1997) Policy, Sociology and Critical Social Research: a personal review of recent education policy and policy research. *British Educational Research Journal, 23* (3) , 257-74. https://doi.org/10.1080/0141192970230302

Barker, J., & Weller, S. (2003). "Is it fun?" developing children centred research methods. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy, 23*(1/2), 33-58. https://doi.org/10.1108/01443330310790435

Bedoin, D., & Scelles, R. (2015). Qualitative research interviews of children with communication disorders: methodological implications. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, *6257*(October), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2015.1035884

Berger, R. (2008). Agency, structure, and the transition to disability. *The Sociological Quarterly,* 49, 309–333. https://doi.org/ 10.1111/j.1533-8525.2008.00117.x

Berger, R. (2015). Now I see it, now I don't: researcher's position and reflexivity in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, 15(2), 219–234. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794112468475

Bialystok, E. (2011). Reshaping the Mind: The Benefits of Bilingualism. In *Canadian Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 65 (4). https://doi.org/ 10.1037/a0025406

Binder, C. (2019). *Agency, Freedom and Choice,* Dordrecht : Springer Netherlands

Bloom, B. S. (Ed.), Engelhart, M. D., Furst, E. J., Hill, W. H., & Krathwohl, D. R. (1956). The taxonomy of educational objectives: The classification of educational goals: Handbook *1*: *Cognitive domain*. New York, NY: David McKay Company.

Bourdieu, P. (1973). Cultural reproduction and social reproduction. In R. Brown (Ed.), *Knowledge, education, and cultural change: Papers in the sociology of education*. 71–84. London: Tavistock.

Boxall, K., & Ralph, S. (2011). Research ethics committees and the benefits of involving people with profound and multiple learning disabilities in research. *British Journal of Learning Disabilities, 39*(3), 173-180. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-3156.2010.00645.x

Braun, V.& Clarke, V. (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology, *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3 , 77-10. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Brigg,G., Schuitema, K. & Vorhaus, J. (2016) Children with profound and multiple learning difficulties: laughter, capability and relating to others, *Disability & Society,* 31 (9), 1175-1189, https://doi.org/ 10.1080/09687599.2016.1239571

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979) *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design.* Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

Brown, N., & Leigh, J. (2020). *Ableism in academia : Theorising experiences of disabilities and chronic illnesses in higher education.* UCL Press, London.

Burger, K. (2019). The subjective importance of children's participation rights: A discrimination perspective. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 89*(1), 65–76.

https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000343

Campbell, F. K. 2009. *Contours of Ableism*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Carpenter, B. (2015). *Engaging learners with complex learning difficulties and disabilities :* A resource book for teachers and teaching assistants. Routledge:London

Carpenter, B. (2015, May) The Changing Landscape of Special Educational Needs – Part 1, *SEND Magazine. https://barrycarpentereducation.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/barry-send-pt-1.pdf*

Carter, A. (2015). *Carter Review of Initial Teacher Training.* London: Dept. for Education

Castanneda, R., & Peters, M. L. (2000). Ableism. In M. Adams, W. Blumenfeld, R., Castaññeda, H., Hackman, M., Peters, & Zuññiga, X. (Eds.), *Readings for diversity and social justice: An anthology on racism, sexism, anti-semitism, heterosexism, classism, and ableism*, 319–323. New York: Routledge.

Cavallera, V., Tomlinson, M., Radner, J., Coetzee, B., Daelmans, B., Hughes, R. & Dua, T. (2019). Scaling early child development: What are the barriers and enablers? *Archives of Disease in Childhood, 104*(Suppl 1), 43-50. https://doi.org/10.1136/archdischild-2018-315425

CCEA. (2014). *Quest for Learning, Guidance & Assessment Materials : Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties.*
www.nicurriculum.org.uk/docs/inclusion_and_sen/pmld/quest_guidance_booklet.pdf

Cecchetti, M., Last, J., Lynch, J., & Linehan, C. (2021). Evaluating the longitudinal impact of a disability education intervention on medical students' attitudes towards persons with a disability. *Disability and Health Journal, 14*(3), 101092. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dhjo.2021.101092

Chatzitheochari, S., & Platt, L. (2018). Disability differentials in educational attainment in England. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 2019, 70 (2), 502-525. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.12372

Children and Young People's Commissioner (Scotland) , 2018, *No Safe Place: Restraint and Seclusion in Scotland's Schools.* CYPCS: Edinburgh

Cho, J., & Trent, A. (2006). Validity in qualitative research revisited. *Qualitative Research*, *6*(3), 319–340. https://doi.org/10.1177/146879410606500

Clark, A. (2010). *Transforming Children's Spaces*. London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203857588

Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2017). Thematic analysis. *Journal of Positive Psychology*. 12 (3), 297–298. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2016.1262613

Cleary, M., Horsfall, J., & Hayter, M. (2014). Data collection and sampling in qualitative research: Does size matter? In *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 70 (3), 473–475. https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.12163

Cleary, S.L., Taylor, N.F., Dodd, K.J. and Shields, N. (2019), Barriers to and facilitators of physical activity for children with cerebral palsy in special education. *Developmental Medical Child Neurology*, 61, https://doi.org/1408-1415. 10.1111/dmcn.14263

Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (2011) *Research Methods in Education* (7th Ed.) ,London: Routledge

Cologon, K. (2022). Is inclusive education really for everyone? Family stories of children and young people labelled with 'severe and multiple' or 'profound' 'disabilities'. *Research Papers in Education, 37*(3), 395-417. https://doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2020.1849372

Cooper, P., Drummond, M.J., Hart, S., Lovey, J. and Melaughlin, C. (2000) *Positive Alternatives to Exclusion,* London: Routledge Falmer.

Coutsocostas, G., & Alborz, A. (2010) Greek mainstream secondary school teachers' perceptions of inclusive education and of having pupils with complex learning disabilities in the classroom/school, *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 25(2), 149-164, https://doi.org/ 10.1080/08856251003658686

Council for Disabled Children, . (2013). *The VIPER Project: what we found*.

Covell, K., Howe, R. B., & Polegato, J. L. (2011). Children's human rights education as a counter to social disadvantage: A case study from England. *Educational Research*, *53*(2), 193–206. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131881.2011.572367

D'Souza, R. (2020). Exploring ableism in Indian schooling through the social model of disability. *Disability & Society, 35*(7), 1177-1182. https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2019.1668635

Dadds, M. (2009). From passionate enquiry to loving detachment: one researcher's methodological journey. In S. E. Noffke, & B. Somekh *The SAGE handbook of educational action research,* 278-289. SAGE Publications Ltd, https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9780857021021.n26

Daniels, H. (1996) Back to Basics: Three Rs for Special Needs Education. *British Journal of Special Education*, 23 (4), 155-61. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8578.1996.tb00968.x

Davis, J. & Watson, N. (2000). Disabled children's rights in every day life: Problematising notions of competency and promoting self-empowerment. *The International Journal of Children's Rights, 8*(3), 211-228. https://doi.org/10.1163/15718180020494622

De Haas, C., Grace, J., Hope, J., & Nind, M. (2022). Doing Research Inclusively: Understanding What It Means to Do Research with and Alongside People with Profound Intellectual Disabilities. *Social Sciences (Basel), 11*(4), 159. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci11040159

De Valenzuela, J.S., Bird, E. K-R., Parkington, K., Mirenda, P., Cain, K., MacLeod, A. A.N, & Segers, E. (2016). Access to opportunities for bilingualism for individuals with developmental disabilities: Key informant interviews. *Journal of Communication Disorders, 63,* 32-46. doi: 10.1016/j.jcomdis.2016.05.005

del Pilar Agustín-Llach, M. (2019). The impact of bilingualism on the acquisition of an additional language: Evidence from lexical knowledge, lexical fluency, and (lexical) cross-linguistic influence. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, *23*(5), 888–900. https://doi.org/10.1177/1367006917728818

Denscombe, M. (2009). *Ground rules for social research: Guidelines for good practice* (Open UP study skills). London: Open University Press.

DES (Department of Education and Science) (1978) Special Educational Needs: report ofthe Committee of Enquiry into the Education ofHandicapped Children andYoung People (The Warnock Report). London: HMSO.

Department of Health, (2009) *Valuing People Now: A New Three Year Strategy for people with learning disabilities*, London:DH Publications

Doran, P. (2012). *The Right Help at the Right Time in the Right Place. Strategic Review of Learning Provision for Children and Young People with Complex Additional Support Needs.* 108. http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2012/11/7084/0

Dreyfus, H., & Taylor, C. (2015). *Retrieving realism*. Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press.

Drummond, J. S. (2005). Relativism. *Nursing Philosophy : An International Journal for Healthcare Professionals*, *6*(4), 267–273. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1466-769X.2005.00234.x

Edmonds-Cady, C. (2012). A view from the bridge: Insider/outsider perspective in a study of the welfare rights movement. *Qualitative Social Work*, 11, 174–190. https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325011401467

Education Scotland, (2018). *Milestones to Support Learners with Complex Additional Support Needs,* https://education.gov.scot/media/pcvpeaeg/milestones-supporting-learners-with-complex-asn.pdf

Emirbayer, M., & Mische, A. (1998). What is agency? *American Journal of Sociology*, 103, 962–1023. https://doi.org/10.1086/231294

Enable Scotland, (2017). *Included in the Main?! 22 steps on the journey to inclusion for every pupil who has a learning disability,* Eurocentral: Enable

European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (2011) *Teacher Education for Inclusion Across Europe – Challenges and Opportunities,* Odense, Denmark: European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education

Felzmann, H. (2009). Ethical Issues in School-Based Research. Research Ethics Review, 5(3), 104-109. https://doi.org/10.1177/174701610900500304

Ferriday, G., & Cantali, D. (2020). Teachers talk about inclusion… but can they implement it in their classroom? Exploring teachers' views on inclusion in a Scottish secondary school. *Support for Learning, 35*(2), 144-162. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9604.12295

Finch, K., Theakston, A., & Serratrice, L. (2020). Teaching modern foreign languages in multilingual classrooms: An examination of Key Stage 2 teachers' experiences. *Language Learning Journal, 48*(5), 628-642. https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2018.1448432

Flores, D. (2018). Standing in the middle: Insider/outsider positionality while conducting qualitative research with opposing military veteran political groups. *Sage Research Methods Cases Part 2*, https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781526437181

Florian, L. (2015) Inclusive Pedagogy: A transformative approach to individual differences but can it help reduce educational inequalities?, *Scottish Educational Review* 47(1), 5-14.

Florian, L. (2017). Teacher Education for the Changing Demographics of Schooling: Inclusive Education for Each and Every Learner. In *Teacher Edcation for the Changing Demographics of Schooling*, 9-20, Springer International Publishing. http://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-54389-5_2

Gallagher, D., Connor, D., & Ferri, B. (2014). Beyond the far too incessant schism: Special education and the social model of disability. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 18*(11), 1120-1142. http://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2013.875599

García-Carrión, R., Roldán, S. M., & Campos, E. R. (2018). Interactive leaning environments for the educational improvement of students with disabilities in special schools. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *9*(SEP). http://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01744

General Teaching Council for Scotland. 2004. *Teaching Scotland.* March. Edinburgh: GTC

Goodenow, C. 1993. The psychological sense of school membership among adolescents: Scale development and educational correlates. *Psychology in the Schools* 30 (1) 79–90. http://doi.org/10.1002/1520-6807(199301)30:1<79::AID-PITS2310300113>3.0.CO;2-X

Goodwin, M. (2017) Raising the Bar Through a Listening and Responding Approach. *PMLD Link, 30(1), vol. 89,*11-14.

Grace, J. (2020) A Dangerous Assumption? *SEN Magazine*, 104, 30-31.

Gray, D. (2014). Doing Research in the Real World, 3rd edition. London: Sage

Griffiths, M. (1998) *Educational Research for Social Justice: Getting off the fence,* Open University Press: Buckingham, Philadelphia

Gruber, C.W., Clark, M.G., Klempe, S.H. & Valsiner, J. (eds). (2015) *Constraints of Agency: Explorations of Theory in Everyday Life.* Switzerland: Springer International Publishing

Gurdal, S., & Sorbring, E. (2018). Children's agency in parent–child, teacher–pupil and peer relationship contexts. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-Being*, *13*(sup1). https://doi.org/10.1080/17482631.2019.1565239

Gwin Smith, M. (2000). Secondary Teachers' Perceptions Toward Inclusion of Students with Severe Disabilities. *NASSP Bulletin*, *84*(613), 54–60. https://doi.org/10.1177/019263650008461309

Haegele, J., & Hodge, S. (2016). Disability Discourse: Overview and Critiques of the Medical and Social Models. *Quest (National Association for Kinesiology in Higher Education), 68*(2), 193-206. http://doi.org/10.1080/00336297.2016.1143849

Hamill, P., & Boyd, B. (2002). Equality, fairness and rights - the young person's voice. *British Journal of Special Education*, *29*(3), 111-117. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8527.00252

Hartveit Lie, Janaina. (2020). Student participation in dialogue in individual subject curriculum meetings: Students' and parents' perceptions. *International Journal of Inclusive Education,* 26 (9), 913-926. https://doi.org /10.1080/13603116.2020.1749945

Harris, N. (2009). Playing catch-up in the schoolyard? Children and young people's 'voice' and education rights in the United Kingdom. *International Journal of Law*, *Policy and the Family*, 23(3), 331-366. https://doi.org/ 10.1093/lawfam/ebp007

Hasan, M. (2014). Positivism: To what extent does it aid our understanding of the contemporary social world? *Quality & Quantity, 50*(1), 317-325. https://doi.org: 10.1007/s11135-014-0150-4

Hedge, N. & MacKenzie, A. (2012). Putting Nussbaum's Capability Approach to work: re-visiting inclusion. *Cambridge Journal of Education,* 42(3), 327-344. https://doi.org /10.1080/0305764X.2012.706252

Hehir, T. (2002). Eliminating ableism in education. *Harvard Educational Review, 72*(1), 1-32. https://doi.org /10.17763/haer.72.1.03866528702g2105

Henwood, B., Derejko, K., Couture, J., & Padgett, D. (2015.) Maslow and mental health recovery: a comparative study of homeless programs for adults with serious mental illness. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research,* 42(2), 220–228. https://doi.org/ 10.1007/s10488-014-0542-8.

Hiebert, J., Morris, A.K., & Glass, B. (2003). Learning to Learn to Teach: An ``Experiment'' Model for Teaching and Teacher Preparation in Mathematics. *Journal of Mathematics Teacher Education, 6*(3), 201-222. https://doi.org /10.1023/A:1025162108648

Higgins, C. (2016). The promise, pitfalls, and persistent challenge of action research. *Ethics and Education*, *11*(2), 230–239. https://doi.org /10.1080/17449642.2016.1185831

Hinchey, P. (1998) *Finding Freedom in the Classroom: A Practical Introduction to Critical Theory.* London: Peter Lang

Ho, A. (2004). To be labelled, or not to be labelled: That is the question. *British Journal of Learning Disabilities, 32*(2), 86-92. DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-3156.2004.00284.x

Hodge, N. & Runswick-Cole, K. (2013) 'They never pass me the ball': exposing ableism through the leisure experiences of disabled children, young people and their families, *Children's Geographies*, 11:3, 311-32.

https://doi.org/10.1080/14733285.2013.812275

Hodkinson, A. (2012) Illusionary Inclusion. What went wrong with New Labour's landmark educational policy? *British Journal of Special Education.* 39 (1), 4-11. https://doi.org /10.1023/A:1025162108648

Holmes, A. G. D., (2020). Researcher Positionality - A Consideration of Its Influence and Place in Qualitative Research - A New Researcher Guide. *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, 8 (4) , 1-10. https://doi.org /10.34293/ education.v8i4.3232

Holt, L. (2007). Children's Sociospatial (re)production of Disability within Primary School Playgrounds. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 25(5): 783–802. https://doi.org /10.1068/d73j

Horner, R., Kincaid, D., Sugai, G., Lewis, T., Eber, L., Barrett, S., & Johnson, N. (2014). Scaling Up School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 16*(4), 197-208. https://doi.org /10.1177/1098300713503685

Hurst, P, & Bird, S. R., (2019). Questionnaires. In *Research Methods in Physical Activity*

and Health (1st ed), 93-101.London: Routledge.

Hurwitz, S., Perry, B., Cohen, E. D., & Skiba, R. (2019). Special Education and Individualized Academic Growth: A Longitudinal Assessment of Outcomes for Students With Disabilities. *American Educational Research Journal*. https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831219857054 +++

Imray, P. (2008). Challenging behaviour and profound and multiple learning difficulties. In *Turning the Tables on Challenging Behaviour* (pp. 77-93). David Fulton. https://doi.org /10.4324/9780203932285-12

Imray P and Hinchcliffe V (2014) *Curricula for Teaching Children and Young People with Severe or Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties: Practical Strategies for Education Professionals*. London. Routledge

Imray P, Colley A, Holdsworth T, Carver G and Savory P (2017) *Listening to Behaviours: adopting a Capabilities Approach to education.* The SLD Experience. 76, 3-9.

Imray P & Colley A (2018) *Inclusion is Dead: Long Live Inclusion.* London. Routledge.

Inclusion Scotland, (2015). *Second Class Citizens? How Welfare Reform Marginalises Disabled People.* Edinburgh: Inclusion Scotland

Jackson, B., & Marsden, D. (1962). *Education and the working class : Some general themes raised by a study of 88 working-class children in a northern industrial city*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Jellison J, Brown L., & Draper E. (2015). Peer-Assisted Learning and Interactions in Inclusive Music Classrooms: Benefits, Research, and Applications. *General Music Today*. 28(3):18-22. https://doi.org /10.1177/1048371314565456

Johnson-Bailey, J. (2004). Enjoining positionality and power in narrative work: Balancing contentious and modulating forces. In K. deMarrais & S. D. Lapan (Eds.), *Foundations for research: Methods of inquiry in education and the social sciences,* 123-138. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Kellett, M,. and Nind, M. (2005) Ethics in Quasi-Experimental Research on People with Severe Learning Disabilities: Dilemmas and Compromises.In Nind, M., Rix, J., Sheehy, K., & Simmons, K. (2005). *Ethics and Research in Inclusive Education*. London: Routledge. 168-175. https://doi.org / 10.4324/9781315018171

Kelly, B., & Byrne, B. (2015). Valuing Disabled Children and Young People. *Child Care in Practice*, *21*(1), 1–5. https://doi.org / 10.1080/13575279.2014.987023

King-Sears, M. E. (2008). Using Teacher and Researcher Data to Evaluate the Effects of Self-Management in an Inclusive Classroom. Preventing School Failure, 52(4), 25-36. https://doi.org /10.3200/PSFL.52.4.25-36

Kozleski E.B, and Waitoller, F. (2011). *Inclusive Education: Examining Equity on Five Continents*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press

Krainer, K., Zehetmeier, S., Hanfstingl, B., Rauch, F., & Tscheinig, T. (2018). Insights into scaling up a nationwide learning and teaching initiative on various levels. *Educational Studies in Mathematics, 102*(3), 395-415. https://doi.org / 10.1007/s10649-018-9826-3

Lamb, B. (2019). Statutory Assessment for Special Educational Needs and the Warnock Report; the First 40 Years. *Frontiers in Education (Lausanne),* 4, 1-17 https://doi.org / 10.3389/feduc.2019.00051

Lamichhane, K., & Okubo, T. (2014). The nexus between disability, education, and employment. Oxford Development Studies, 42(3), 439-453. https://doi.org / 10.1080/13600818.2014.927843

Lansdown, G. (2005). *The Evolving Capacities of the Child*. http//ideas.repec.org/p/ucf/innins/innins05-21.html

Lawson, A., & Beckett, A. (2021) The social and human rights models of disability: towards a complementarity thesis. *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 25:2, 348-379. https://doi.org / 10.1080/13642987.2020.1783533

Leonard, D., Becker, R. & Coate, K. 2005. To Prove Myself at the Highest Level: The Benefits of Doctoral Study. *Higher Education Research and Development* 24 (2): 135–149. https://doi.org / 10.1080/07294360500062904.

Lewis, A. (2005) Reflections on interviewing children and young people as a method of enquiry in exploring their perceptions on integration/inclusion.In Nind, M., Rix, J., Sheehy, K., & Simmons, K. (2005). *Ethics and Research in Inclusive Education*. London: Routledge, 215-226. https://doi.org / 10.4324/9781315018171

Lewis, A., & Porter, J. (2004). Interviewing children and young people with learning disabilities: Guidelines for researchers and multi-professional practice. *British Journal of Learning Disabilities, 32*(4), 191-197. https://doi.org / 10.1111/j.1468-3156.2004.00313.x

Lingard L, & Kennedy TJ. (2010). Qualitative research methods in medical education. In Swanwick T, editor. *Understanding medical education: evidence, theory and practice*. West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell; p. 323–335. https://doi.org / 10.1002/9781118472361.ch26

Livingston, J. (2021). Commentary on Kelly et al.: The struggle to define or be defined. *Addiction (Abingdon, England), 116*(7), 1768-1769. https://doi.org / 10.1111/add.15425

Lalvani, P. & Broderick, A., (2013) Institutionalized Ableism and the Misguided "Disability Awareness Day": *Transformative Pedagogies for Teacher Education, Equity & Excellence in Education,* 46(4) 468-483, https://doi.org / 10.1080/10665684.2013.838484

Lock, S., & Irving, S. (2017). No Safe Place. *Gaza*, 68–105. htts://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt183h0s5.10

Maher, A. J. (2017). 'We've got a few who don't go to PE': Learning support assistant and special educational needs coordinator views on inclusion in physical education in England. *European Physical Education Review*, *23*(2), 257–270. https://doi.org/10.1177/1356336X16649938

Maslow, A. H. (1954) *Motivation and Personality*. New York. Harper.

McAllister, A., Rantala, L. & Jónsdóttir, J. (2019). The Others Are Too Loud! Children's Experiences and Thoughts Related to Voice, Noise, and Communication in Nordic Preschools. *Frontiers in Psychology, 10*, 1-13. https://doi.org /10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01954

McMillan, D. J., McConnell, B. & O'Sullivan, H. (2016) Continuing Professional Development – Why bother? Perceptions and Motivations of Teachers in Ireland. *Professional Development in Education* 42(1), 150–167. https://doi.org /10.1080/19415257.2014.952044.

Mccoll, H. (2005). *Foreign Language Learning and Inclusion : Who ? Why ? What ? – and How ? 20*(3), 1–10. https://doi.org /10.1111/j.0268-2141.2005.00372.x

McDonald, K.E.,& Kidney, C. (2012) What Is Right? Ethics in Intellectual Disabilities Research. *Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities,* 9(1), 27-39. https://doi.org /10.1111/j.1741-1130.2011.00319.x

McKay, J. (2014). Young people's voices: Disciplining young people's participation in decision-making in special educational needs. *Journal of Education Policy, 29*(6), 760-773. https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2014.883649

McNeilly, P., Macdonald, G., & Kelly, B. (2015). The participation of disabled children and young people: A social justice perspective. *Child Care in Practice*, 21(3), 266-286. https://doi.org/ 10.1080/13575279.2015.1014468

Mietola, R., Miettinen, S., & Vehmas, S. (2017). Voiceless subjects? Research ethics and persons with profound intellectual disabilities. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, *20*(3), 263–274. https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2017.1287872

Mik-Meyer, N. (2016). Othering, ableism and disability: A discursive analysis of co-workers' construction of colleagues with visible impairments. *Human Relations*, *69*(6), 1341–1363. https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726715618454

Mitchiner, J., Batamula, C., & Kite, B. J. (2018). Hundred languages of deaf children: Exploring the reggio emilia approach in deaf education. *American Annals of the Deaf, 163*(3), 294-327. https://doi.org/10.1353/aad.2018.0021

Morrison, K. (2012). Searching for causality in the wrong places, *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, *15 (1)*, 15-30. https://doi.org/ 10.1080/13645579.2011.594293

Moscardini, L. (2015). Primary special school teachers' knowledge and beliefs about supporting learning in numeracy. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, *15*(1), 37–47. https://doi.org/ 10.1111/1471-3802.12042

Nario-Redmond, M., Kemerling, A., & Silverman, A. (2019). Hostile, Benevolent, and Ambivalent Ableism: Contemporary Manifestations. *Journal of Social Issues, 75*(3), 726-756. https://doi.org/ 10.1111/josi.12337

Neher A., (1991) Maslow's Theory of Motivation: A Critique. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*., 31(3):89-112. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022167891313010

Nind, M. &Hewett, D. (1994) *Access to Communication: Developing the Basics of Communication with People with Severe Learning Difficulties through Intensive Interaction.* London: David Fulton.

Nind, M., Rix, J., Sheehy, K., & Simmons, K. (2005). *Ethics and Research in Inclusive Education*. London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315018171

Norwich, B. (2014). How does the capability approach address current issues in special educational needs, disability and inclusive education field? *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*. 14(1), 16-21. https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-3802.12012

Norwich, B., & Lewis, A. (2007). How Specialized Is Teaching Children with Disabilities and Difficulties? *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 39*(2), 127-150. https://doi.org/110.1080/00220270601161667

Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic Anlysis: Striving to Meet the Trustworthiness Criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *16*(1), 1–13. https://doi.org/ 10.1177/1609406917733847

Nussbaum, M. (1988). Nature, Function and Capability: Aristotle on Political Distribution. In J. Annas and R. H. Grimm (Eds.), Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy (Supplementary Volume), 145-184. Oxford: Clarendon.

Obasi, C. (2014). Negotiating the insider/outsider continua: A black female hearing perspective on research with deaf women and black women. *Qualitative Research*, 14, 61–78. https://doi.org/ 10.1177/1468794112465632

O'Brien, B. C., Harris, I. B., Beckman, T. J., Reed, D. A., & Cook, D. A. (2014). Standards for reporting qualitative research: A synthesis of recommendations. *Academic Medicine*, *89*(9), 1245–1251. https://doi.org/10.1097/ACM.0000000000000388

Office for Disability Issues. (2011). *UK initial report on the UN convention on the rights of persons with disabilities*. 1–126. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/345120/uk-initial-report.pdf

Olli, J., Vehkakoski, T., & Salanterä, S. (2012). Facilitating and hindering facors in the realization of disabled children's agency in institutional contexts: Literature review. *Disability and Society*, *27*(6), 793–807. https://doi.org/ 10.1080/09687599.2012.679023

Organización Mundial de la Salud. (2002). Towards a common language for functioning, disability and health: ICF. *International Classification*, *1149*, 1–22. http://www.who.int/classifications/icf/training/icfbeginnersguide.pdf

Parsons, S. & Platt, L. 2017 The Early Academic Progress of Children with Special Educational Needs, *British Educational Research Journal* 43 (3): 466–485. https://doi.org/ 10.1002/berj.3276

Pendergast, D., Allen, J., McGregor, G., & Ronksley-Pavia, M. (2018). Enaging marginalized, "at-risk" middle-level students: A focus on the imprtance of a sense of belonging at school. *Education Sciences*, *8*(3), 138. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci8030138

Petry, K. & Maes, B. (2006) Identifying expressions of pleasure and displeasure by persons with profound and multiple disabilities, Journal of Intellectual & Developmental Disability, 31:1, 28-38, https://doi.org/10.1080/13668250500488678

Pogge T (2002) Can the capability approach be justified? *Philosophical Topics 30*(2): 167-228.

Prince, E. J., & Hadwin, J. (2013). The role of a sense of school belonging in understanding the effectiveness of inclusion of children with special educational needs. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *17*(3), 238–262. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2012.676081

Qu, X. (2020). A critical realist model of inclusive education for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. *International Journal of Inclusive Education,* 1-15. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2020.1760366

Rankin J & Regan S (2004), *Meeting Complex Needs: The Future of Social Care*, London: Turning Points/ Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR).

Reeves S, McMillan SE, Kachan N, Paradis E, Leslie M, & Kitto S. (2015) Interprofessional collaboration and family member involvement in intensive care units: emerging themes from a multi-sited ethnography. *Journal of Interprofessional Care*. 29. 230-237. https://doi.org/10.3109/13561820.2014.955914

Riddell, S., & Weedon, E. (2010). Reforming special education in Scotland: tensions between discourses of professionalism and rights. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, *40*(2), 113–130. https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2010.481257

Riddell, S., & Weedon, E. (2014). Changing legislation and its effects on inclusive and special education: Scotland. *British Journal of Special Education*, *41*(4), 363–381. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8578.12080

Rioux, M.H., & Pinto, P.C. (2010) A time for the universal right to education: back to basics, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 31 (5), 621-642. https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2010.500094

Robinson, D., & Goodey, C. (2018). Agency in the darkness: 'fear of the unknown', learning disability and teacher education for inclusion. International Journal of Inclusive Education, 22(4), 426-440. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2017.1370738

Rosenthal, R., & Jacobson, L. (2003). *Pygmalion in the classroom : Teacher expectation and pupils' intellectual development.* Carmarthen: Crown House.

Runswick-Cole, K., & Hodge, N. (2009). Needs or rights? A challenge to the discourse of special education. *British Journal of Special Education*, *36*(4), 198–203. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8578.2009.00438.x

Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists. (2013) Five good communication standards. London: RCSLT

Safrudiannur (2020) Offering an approach to measure beliefs quantitatively: Capturing the influence of students' abilities on teachers' beliefs. In: *Measuring Teachers' Beliefs Quantitatively*. Kölner Beiträge zur Didaktik der Mathematik. Springer Spektrum, Wiesbaden.

Samuel, J. & Pritchard, M. (2001) 'The Ignored Minority: Meeting the Needs of People with Profound Learning Disability', Tizard Learning Disability Review, 6: 34–44. https://doi.org/10.1108/13595474200100017

Scottish Educational Research Association (SERA), (2005). *Scottish Educational Research Association Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research,* https://www.sera.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2018/08/SERA-Ethical-GuidelinesWeb.pdf

Scottish Executive (2006), *Further Education and Complex Needs: Views of Children and Young People*, Edinburgh: The Scottish Executive.Education Scottish Government, (1974) (Mentally Handicapped Children) (Scotland) Act

Scottish Executive (2007). Getting It Right for Every Child. Edinburgh: HMSO

Scottish Government, (2004) *Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (as amended)*

Scottish Government. (2008). *Curriculum for Excellence: Building the Curriculum 3*. http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/

Scottish Government, (2012), Language Learning in Scotland A 1+2 Approach, Edinburgh: Scottish Government

Scottish Government, (2012), *The Right Help at the right time in the right place:* Strategic Review of Learning Provision for Children and Young People with Complex Additional Support Needs, (The Doran Review), Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

Scottish Government, (2014). *The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act*

Scottish Government, (2016). *Education (Scotland) Act*.

Scottish Government. (2017). Supporting Children's learning: Statutory Guidance on the Education (Additional Support for Learning) Scotland Act 2004 (as amended). Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

Scottish Government (2018) *Progressing the Human Rights of Children in Scotland: An Action Plan* 2018-2021.

Scottish Government, (2019a). *Report of the Analysis of the Consultation on "Scotland's Ten Year Strategy for the Learning Provision for Children and Young People with Complex Additional Support Needs 2017-2026."*

Scottish Government (2019b) Summary Statistics for Schools in Scotland

Scotland's National Centre for Languages SCILT, (2011), Modern Languages Excellence Group Report, Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

Scotland's National Centre for Languages SCILT, (2015), Corseford School,

(onlineat:http://www.scilt.org.uk/A12ApproachtoLanguageLearning/Introducingadditionallanguagestoprimary/CorsefordSchool/tabid/5473/Default.aspx)

Scotland's National Centre for Languages (2015) Newsletter, Summer 2015, Glasgow: University of Strathclyde.

Scottish Parliment. (2010). Supporting children's learning: Code of practice (Revised Edition). *Edinburgh, UK: Scottish Executive*, 232. https://doi.org/978-0-7559-9470-0

Secules, S., McCall, C., Mejia, J., Beebe, C., Masters, A., L. Sánchez-Peña, M., & Svyantek, M. (2021). Positionality practices and dimensions of impact on equity research: A collaborative inquiry and call to the community. *Journal of Engineering Education (Washington, D.C.), 110*(1), 19-43. https://doi.org/10.1002/jee.20377

Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research : A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences* (3rd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.

Sen, A. (1992) *Inequality Reexamined.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Shakespeare, T. (2006) *Disability Rights and Wrongs*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Shakespeare, T. (2012). Commentaries: Developed countries' responses to the world report on disability: Still a health issue. In *Disability and Health Journal*, 5 (3), 129–131. https://doi.org/ 10.1016/j.dhjo.2012.04.002

Shakespeare, T., & Watson, N. (1997). Defending the social model. *Disability and Society*, *12*(2), 293–300. https://doi.org/:10.1080/09687599727380

Shakespeare, T. W. (1992) 'A reply to Liz Crow', *Coalition*, 40.

Shaw, A. (2017). Inclusion: the role of special and mainstream schools. *British Journal of Special Education*, *44*(3), 292–312. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8578.12181

Shipton, C. and O'Nions, C. (2019). An exploration of the attitudes that surround and embody those working with children and young people with PMLD. *Support for Learning, 34*(3), 277-289. https://doi.org/ 10.1111/1467-9604.12265

Shifrer, D. (2013). Stigma of a Label: Educational Expectations for High School Students Labeled with Learning Disabilities. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 54*(4), 462-480. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022146513503346

Simmons, B., & Watson, D. (2014) *The PMD Ambiguity: Articulating the Life-Worlds of Children with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities*. London: Karnac.

Simmons, B. (2021) From living to lived and being-with: exploring the interaction styles of children and staff towards a child with profound and multiple learning disabilities, *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 25:6, 657-670, https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2019.1569732

Skidmore, D. (2004) Inclusion: the dynamic of school development. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Slee, R. (2018). *Inclusive Education isn't Dead, it Just Smells Funny* (1st ed.). Milton: Routledge https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429486869

Snyder, H. (2019). Literature review as a research methodology: An overview and guidelines. *Journal of Business Research, 104*, 333-339. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.07.039

Soar, K., Burke, K., Herbst, K., & Gersch, I. (2005). Pupil involvement in special educational needs disagreement resolution: Some perceived barriers to including children in mediation. *British Journal of Special Education*, 32(1), 35-41. https://doi.org/ 10.1111/j.0952-3383.2005.00367.x

Stalker, K., MacDonald, C., King, C., McFaul, F., Young, C., & Hawthorn, M. (2015). “We could kid on that this is going to benefit the kids but no, this is about funding”: Cutbacks in services to disabled children and young people in Scotland. *Child Care in Practice*, *21*(1), 6–21. https://doi.org/ 10.1080/13575279.2014.972341

Stalker, K., & Moscardini, L. (2012). *A critical review and analysis of current research and policy relating to disabled children and young people in Scotland*. https://strathprints.strath.ac.uk/43048/

Standards and Testing agency. (2020). *The engagement model*. *January*, 31. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-engagement-model

Stewart, C., & Walker-Gleaves, C. (2020). A narrative exploration of how curricula for children with profound and multiple learning difficulties shape and are shaped by the practices of their teachers. *British Journal of Special Education, 47*(3), 350-375. https://doi.org/ 10.1111/1467-8578.12313

Storey, K. (2007) Combating Ableism in Schools, Preventing School Failure: *Alternative Education for Children and Youth*, 52 (1), 56-58, https://doi.org/ 10.3200/PSFL.52.1.56-58

Sudman, S., Bradburn, N., & Wansink, B. (2015). *Asking questions: The definitive guide to questionnaire design - for market research, political polls, and social and health questionnaires* (Research Methods for the Social Sciences). Jossey-Bass.

Sullivan, T. N., Sutherland, K. S., Lotze, G. M., Helms, S. W., Wright, S. A., & Ulmer, L. J. (2014). Problem Situations Experienced By Urban Middle School Students With High Incidence Disabilities That Impact Emotional and Behavioral Adjustment. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*, *23*(2), 101–114. https://doi.org/ 10.1177/1063426614528243

Terzi, L. (2008) Justice and Equality in Education: *A Capability Perspective on disability and Special Educational Needs,* London:Continuum.

Thomson, P. (2014). 'Scaling up' educational change: Some musings on misrecognition and doxic challenges. *Critical Studies in Education, 55*(2), 87-103. https://doi.org/ 10.1080/17508487.2014.863221

Tisdall, E. (2012). The Challenge and Challenging of Childhood Studies? Learning from Disability Studies and Research with Disabled Children. Children & Society, 26(3), 181-191. https://doi.org/ 10.1111/j.1099-0860.2012.00431.x

Tomlinson, S. (2015). Is a sociology of special and inclusive education possible? *Educational Review*, 1911(June), 1–9. https://doi.org/ 10.1080/00131911.2015.1021764

Trigg, A., (2004) Deriving the Engel Curve: Pierre Bourdieu and the Social Critique of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, *Review of Social Economy,* 62 (3), 393-406, https://doi.org/ 10.1080/0034676042000253987

UN General Assembly, (2007). *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*

UNICEF, (2020). Rights Respecting Schools Programme, https://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/the-rrsa/what-is-a-rights-respecting-school, accessed October 2020.

United Nations (2006) *Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities*. Available at: Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities | OHCHR (accessed 15th June 2022).

Urbach, J.& Banerjee, R. (2019). Participatory Research with Young Children from Special Populations: Issues and Recommendations. In: Eckhoff, A. (eds) Participatory Research with Young Children. Educating the Young Child, vol 17. Springer, Cham. https://doi-org.proxy.lib.strath.ac.uk/10.1007/978-3-030-19365-2_8

Vaivio, J. (2012). Interviews - Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing. *European Accounting Review, 21*(1), 186-189. https://doi.org/10.1080/09638180.2012.675165

Valentine, C. (2007). Methodological Reflections: Attending and Tending to the Role of the Researcher in the Construction of Bereavement Narratives. Qualitative Social Work, 6(2), 159–176. https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325007077237

Vehmas, S. (2010). Special needs: a philosophical analysis, *International Journal of Inclusive Education,* 14(1), 87-96. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603110802504143

Vehmas, S., & Shakespeare, T. (2014). Disability, harm, and the origins of limited opportunities. *Cambridge Quarterly of Healthcare Ethics*, *23*(1), 41–47. https://doi.org/10.1017/S096318011300042X

Watson, R. I. (1962). The experimental tradition and clinical psychology. In A. J. Bachrach (Ed.), Experimental foundations of clinical psychology (pp. 3–25). New York: Basic Books

Watson, J. (2016) The right to supported decision making for people rarely heard.(availablefrom:https://www.researchgate.net/publication/258997358_Thesis_The_right_to_supported_decision-making_for_people_rarely_heard (accessed June 2020)

Wight, M.C. (2015), Students With Learning Disabilities in the Foreign Language Learning Environment and the Practice of Exemption, *Foreign Language Annals,* 8(1) ,39-55. https://doi.org/ 10.1111/flan.12122

World Health Organisation. (2002). Towards a common language for functioning, disability and health: ICF. *International Classification*, *1149*, 1–22. http://www.who.int/classifications/icf/training/icfbeginnersguide.pdf

World Health Organization (2007) 'Chapter V: Mental and Behavioural Disorders (F00–F99); Mental Retardation (F70–F79). In International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, 10th rev. (ICD-10).

Wright, K. (2008). Researching the views of pupils with multiple and complex needs. Is it worth doing and whose needs are served by it? *Support for Learning,* 23 (1), 33-40. https://doi.org/ 10.1111/j.1467-9604.2007.00366.x

Appendix 1: Interview Schedule - Student

Clapping our names ice breaker activity

Hello _____, how are you today?

Have you had a good morning in class?

Do you like your school ?

Why/why not?

What things do you like at school? (use symbols if necessary)

Is there anything you don’t like at school?(use symbols if necessary)

What kind of subjects do you work on? (use symbols if necessary)

Do you have a favourite subject? (use symbols if necessary)

How do you feel about the subjects you study at the moment?

Are there any things that you would like to study or do work on in school that you don’t do already? (use symbols if necessary)

Why do you want to do that?

What ways does school help you to study the things that you want to?

What ways can you think of to make this happen?

Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about school?

Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about the different subjects you study?

Appendix 2: Interview Schedule - Teachers

Hello, thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview about the educational experiences of students with complex additional support needs.

What is your experience of teaching students with additional support needs?

How do you feel about your experiences of teaching students with additional support needs?

What is your experience of teaching students with complex additional support needs?

How do you feel about your experiences of teaching students with complex additional support needs?

What subjects have you experienced students with complex additional support needs accessing?

Are there any subjects that you have not experienced students with complex additional support needs accessing?

What supports do teachers need to ensure that CASN pupils can access different subjects?

What do you think they key issues with subject access for students with complex additional support needs are?

Thinking about the education of students with complex additional support needs, what are the factors that teachers needs to consider when teaching their students across the curriculum?

What is your view of education for those with complex additional support needs, in general?

Many thanks for taking part in this interview. Do you have any questions?

Appendix 3: Online Teacher Questionnaire

Please circle or write the answer that best describes your own experience.

---

1. What sector do you currently work in?
    a. Mainstream
    b. ASN
    c. Other- _____

2. How many students with complex additional support needs have you taught in the last five years?
    a. 1-5
    b. 5-10
    c. 10+

3. To what extent do you agree with the comments below on the education of students with complex additional support needs?
    a. I believe that their difficulties can be mediated with adult support

        Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly Disagree

    b. I believe that educational services need to remove barriers to education for these students.

        Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly Disagree

    c. I believe that students have the capability to make decisions about their own education and should be able to contribute to this.

        Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly Disagree

    d. Other-

        _____

        _____

4. Do you feel that students with complex needs have access to a full range of educational subject choices?

   a. Yes

   b. No

   c. Don’t know

   d. Other

   _____

   _____

5. If no, why not (select all that apply)?

   a. Physical or behavioural issues

   b. Lack of ability

   c. Teacher knowledge

   d. Attitudes of others

   e. Lack of resources

   f. Other

   _____

   _____

6. What supports do teachers need to ensure that pupils with CASN receive access to all curricular subjects (select all that apply)

   a. Materials

   b. Additional staff

   c. Training

   d. Management support

   e. Other

   _____

   _____

Please note any further comments below:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix 4: Themes

Choices and Agency	Models	Awareness	Challenges
Communication	**Definitions**	**Inexperience**	**Training/Barrier**
Under curriculum for excellence you want as far as possible for pupils to have some autonomy and choice within their own education and for these kids it's not always easy to figure out ways that they can express choice, so that would be a key example because you're talking about people that communicate in a very unconventional way so to give them a sense that they have any sense of self-determination within their education at all is quite a difficult thing to facilitate. So yeah, choice and how you incorporate choice for humans that don't make choices the way that other humans do Three lessons going on at once all trying to communicate the same lesson to these pupils. It's just a constant challenge, the differentiation aspect. Accessibility is huge and I think everybody that would come into contact with our pupils should know how to interact with that pupil.	The most complex classes as you know would be kids who are non-ambulant and have limited or no conventional communication skills and so, a range of complex support needs. It's need and that's why our children are called complex because they are so complex Started with the more complex, profound as they were known, users, service users and I've also worked with complex autism as well. I've been teaching more complex behavioural needs, more complex autism and in my previous establishment it was a severe and challenging school so it was on the more complex end of the spectrum. It would have been helpful to better describe what you mean by 'complex' - can vary so widely Pupils with CASN are so unique that even	Um, I'm really enjoying it, I'm enjoying the challenge. I felt like I had gone as far as I could go in mainstream because I wasn't interested in moving up the way. So this is a nice brain break, a big challenge and a big change. She is getting consistency in our class, which is great, the down side of that is because of her level of complexity, I don't have the level of experience, I don't have the time, I don't have the staffing to provide her with a senior phase experience. So I have an idea of how to transition her but it's just trying to put that into place before she leaves. **I do think that they need to have more awareness, more understanding, time** with people that actually know the kids Where we are now, um, I've got access to children with more complex needs so that's been a bit of a learning curve.	Access to appropriate training because there's an awful lot of training that is very sporadic. That's what I'm finding as barriers at the moment. Resources, em the resources that are appropriate and we also need to be taught how to use these resources. We are limited, I think we've got limited resources and we need more, more training on how to use, how to do that. At first it was difficult because a lot of staff complain about not having special training about how to educate pupils with support needs of that kind. So it was quite tough I think they need training, because there are really valuable experiences that these kids can have at school but unless you have access to expert knowledge and experienced staff, it's very difficult to just intuit that for yourself

Not specifically if they don't know them but in general, everybody at home, in school, in hospitals, in cafes, should all , there should be time for all of these people to learn how to use Makaton or Canaan Barrie on body signing, how to approach our pupils and not make them jump, just the basics. Introduce themselves. That should be for everyone who comes into contact with them. Providing a meaningful way to communicate - or form strong relationships so that small early communication signals are understood. Many of the choices available to students with CASN are limited to those provided by adults in a binary yes/no, this/that format. For pupils with the most profound needs, the authenticity of their choice relies largely on accurate interpretation of their behaviours by another person. People that actually know the kids and **can see the smallest reaction that's an answer from the pupil whereas to anyone else it may be a fleeting glance, they've looked at**	answering this survey is challenging. **I mean they have complex needs but they are each individuals the three that go to Senior Phase I mean they're three very individual learners but it just seems that they're put in with other pupils that are classed as complex and they're all doing one activity.**	I think we've come a long way but I think there is still a long way to go with a lot of things, this is the first two years I've been around students with more complex needs so it's still a learning curve for me so to give a full answer, I mean, I would have been aware of this before. I think just now it's been a huge learning curve for me, this side of it. How do the learners present? Em, partially sighted, peg fed, em, a lot of hand on hand you know, real full engagement from staff. I'm beginning to get more comfortable with it at the moment and I think because, I was so inexperienced in that field, but I've got great colleagues, such as yourself, to pull from. You know, I've been in teaching 17 years and I have been exposed to those type of children but not in a learning environment. Like I said, it's a huge learning curve because it's not like anything else I've ever encountered. I was really thrown in with no experience at all. But, having said that, it was a wonderful challenge. I wasn't expecting it to be but it was a wonderful	w, particularly if you've got very little or absolutely no experience of working with people with complex additional support needs uh, so, obviously training. In my opinion, in an environment like this, there's a lot of training for training's sake. You could say that our children experience the subjects but it would be limited. For example, we don't have enough staff to go to the shops. So dealing with money in an abstract fashion. Doesn't mean anything to our learners at all. Whereas, you know, in a mainstream situation learners can sit in a classroom and imagine that they're at the shops, our learners need to be in that situation. So that restricts their learning. They can't access real-life situations. Work experience, is nearly impossible for our learners. Each individual student needs to be educated in the way that suits them best and given every opportunity to thrive. Unfortunately with budget cuts and overcrowded classes these opportunities are not always

something and looked away and they haven't understood that this was them recognising what's been presented to them.		challenge. It made me rethink everything we do in teaching.	available despite staff trying their hardest. It's money, it must be money! Because there are not enough bodies, not enough people to support our learners out in the community. In the past when we've had more staff we were able to do gardening, even jobs around the school. Training would help us to know what is out there and how to do it. I feel that, as individuals we are reinventing the wheel al lot of the time. If there was also a focus on, an inclusion officer, somebody that could target or that we could go to for advice. Absolutely, staffing numbers and you know, funding, buses. Just to get learners into a situation where they can actually understand what they are learning. In the past it's tended to be for practical reasons that my pupils have not accessed subjects, so for example, at my last school we had a group that went out to one of the local, walked to one of the local colleges and it was decided that one of my pupils couldn't access that **Why?** Because they would be out of the school for too long,

Subject Choices You could say that our children experience the subjects but it would be limited. In the past it's tended to be for practical reasons that my pupils have not accessed subjects… they'd be away from their moving and handling and their programmes that they needed to access. I do feel like I fail my children academically at times because there is just not enough time to prepare all the individual resources needed to help them access the curriculum.			they'd be away from their moving and handling and their programmes that they needed to access, that was hard because they were excluded from the rest of it, from their class. I think it's, a lot of it comes down to the knowledge and understanding of the teachers, because, you don't know what you don't know. It is a very complex, different world and until you're talked through that and start to get some experience of that you don't know how to include the complex kids, so we need to educate. We need to get more training for teachers, get them on board. Needs to be properly staffed.staff need a high level of training. I feel that these young people are under educated due to ignorance/ funding/ lack of knowledge/ poor use of technology **You can't get anything off the shelf, everything has to be tailored for the individuals. It's time consuming, resources are an issue and expensive** I think parents need to be given realistic information when planning for transition and what each

I've kind of found with my class that they haven't had much choice so in a mainstream school they have options of subjects you want to be doing whereas ours were given a timetable, 'this is what you are doing' and I get it, it's new, it's getting set up and it maybe in the future it will be more tailor made to the individuals but they are going to subjects and doing things that to me aren't relevant to them. **Pupils that are nil by mouth are going to cooking sessions three times a week, I don't see the point.** The children don't get to choose the subjects, that's the bone of contention that I have. So the subject is put upon those children maybe that's the wrong word, there is no personalisation or choice in it. Access to all curricular areas is not always required- life skills can be more important and beneficial to CASN pupils ***** dichotomy of life skills/choices.** There are pupils in my class that will not and should not access All the curriculum. **So unless they can be as independent as possible and**			establish can reasonably offer and limitations. I also think that education as a whole has to 'catch up' with medical advances and properly offer places for all children, meeting the most complex of needs appropriately. Finance as a reason for lacking supports, inappropriate facilities and not enough quality training opportunities need addresses. These students need highly trained, skilled and patient staff. Unfortunately this is not always what happens which has a hugely detrimental effect on all. I do feel like I fail my children academically at times because there is just not enough time to prepare all the individual resources needed to help them access the curriculum. Each of them have a very different learning style and different interests to enable them to engage. Time, resources and class sizes are the main barriers. How the lack of experience manifests itself as 'othering'- **In the previous school I was at, people had a better understanding but in this current school that is the minority**. There is a

express themselves as much as possible I do have the feeling that they will just be on the sidelines. **Trying to merge school and adult services. For as long as possible with staff that know them inside out and can share experiences and knowledge like how independent they can be assisting themselves at mealtimes, personal care and things that otherwise are just going to be taken for granted. If we can be teaching them real life skills at an early age.** Of course it is right to give students n element of choice but those with complex needs are not able to make significant choices but are able in some cases to state a preference. It is right that they should be exposed to a range of experiences as they may not choose to do this and therefore miss out on enriching experiences. So, they've had BGE, I'm not saying they shouldn't be entered for Nationals, they should be getting accreditation for work they're doing but to me, for most of them, that's a nice extra. They're not going to be			wide range of complex needs ********** But the kids that I'm working with, **it just seems that we're in a little bubble and people walk past but only look in the door but never feel confident enough to either venture in or if they do it's just to speak to staff.** The kids are a bit better but if you're in the hall or something then it is a select few who will come and interact with the kids because…**you don't get a lot back from some of the pupils but, I don't know, I kind of feel like they're on the side lines and they have to fit into what the rest of the school is doing.** Being as independent as possible, communicating to the best of their ability because they've got a long way to go in adult services and I fell it's just going to be a bit like school where they are on the sidelines because they are the minority. **They'd have a better understanding of the learners as individuals and they could tailor lessons towards it, rather than the fear you see in some of the**

going into higher education and yes, they are entitled to get accreditation and their parents want them to get it but I'd rather they were looking at what's available in the community. I've kind of found with my class that they haven't had much choice so in a mainstream school they have options of subjects you want to be doing whereas ours were given a timetable, 'this is what you are doing' and I get it, it's new, it's getting set up and it maybe in the future it will be more tailor made to the individuals but they are going to subjects and doing things that to me aren't relevant to them. Pupils that are nil by mouth are going to cooking sessions three times a week**, I don't see the point.** **They're not going to be going into higher education and yes, they are entitled to get accreditation and their parents want them to get it but I'd rather they were looking at what's available in the community.**			**teachers' faces when our class appear.**

Capacity	Social Model	What is education?	Colleagues
The children don't get to choose the subjects, that's the bone of contention that I have. So the subject is put upon those children maybe that's the wrong word, there is no personalisation or choice in it. And I think perhaps the adults decide because, the inexperience is there and number two, you need all hands on deck. You know if you have six complex children like that, how would you actually teach six certifiable subjects? In a 45 minute slot but that's something that we'll have to look at further down the line. Not having an adult fill in a form on behalf of a child who perhaps, more than likely, doesn't understand. Some children are unable to make choices for themselves. Whilst children should have their views heard, they do not always make the right choices. I teach students with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities who would lack capacity to make choices around educational subject choices. This may be	Whether it's physical or behavioural, how that impacts the learning, what learning has happened prior. A big thing for me is looking at the physical ability of the child, can they see? Can they hear? I do things to adapt that and make things more comfortable for them. So, behavioural factors, is the environment comfortable, Are the lights too bright? Is the noise too much? Have we too much stuff on the walls, for some kids that's too much. It's just looking at the physical space, the physical child and trying to marry that up with what we are going to do. Are we going to be receptive to what we are going to do as a result? I don't think so, partly because physically, obviously because they're unable to access things, they need such a lot of facilitation and support to access things. Partly because they don't have a database of knowledge from watching television and from discussions that other learners would have about what is our there for them. So unless we are really, really	**Individuality** It needs to be personalised and therefore fully learner led. **You really need to know each of the kids individually what they're capable of, what your next step is and what you're looking to be progressing towards** **They can touch the cake, they can smell the cake they can feel the cake, icing or whatever but they're not getting to taste it but the point of baking a cake usually is to eat it so they are going through this whole learning process for something that's not relevant to them as individuals.** **What they're going to isn't probably what I would pitch it at so, sensory stories and things have their place but it's off the shelf and The Three Little Pigs for a 17 year old, a 16 year old and a 15 year old. Although cognitively that may be the level they're at, the context of it is so completely inappropriate to me, it's so inappropriate you could be making your own sensory stories. We are using**	This is kind of the first year with really complex learners em so, I've taken a lot of advice from people that have more experience that me about what children have done in the past and what's been successful for them I didn't want to break anyone if that's the right word and I got a bit of confidence from watching the girls that are used to working with children about how much, how much this child's going to resist and it's not going to hurt them so just keep going with things So probably, people that had more experience than me giving me advice was the best thing for me. It was good to have experienced colleagues to chat to because for the first few months I felt like I was groping around in the dark, doing some things that were a bit too repetitive and not, I wasn't sufficiently involving the kids in terms of making decisions and making contributions to their own learning so … Talking to other staff gave me some ideas on how to incorporate that kind of experience

different to CASN. My students however are taught by highly skilled teachers who as part of their job are able to identify motivating subjects matter/ content to engage their learners. They have access to a range of subjects, but they may lack capacity to make those choices for themselves. This school is the first time I've actually experienced that, previous schools it's always been a Primary model so they've not been moving around accessing different subjects… So in this school, it's the first time I've seen our complex users being included in it	proactive in that respect, then they have no way of making those choices. I think that the people who are building the buildings for a start, are not the people who will be using the buildings. Accessibility is huge. Accessibility is huge and I think everybody that would come into contact with our pupils should know how to interact with that pupil. Not specifically if they don't know them but in general, everybody at home, in school, in hospitals, in cafes, should all , there should be time for all of these people to learn how to use Makaton or Canaan Barrie on body signing, how to approach our pupils and not make them jump, just the basics. Introduce themselves. That should be for everyone who comes into contact with them.	**the same resources but in a more age appropriate way.** Very rewarding, which is a cliché, I know but it is very rewarding and very em, although you're seeing very smalls bits of progress, when you look back over a period of time it's leaps. That's lovely to see and lovely to see the change and the trust that the pupils build up as we move forward over time. I think the students particularly that I work with, because they are so complex it is sensory, you know, audio visual in particular, tactile. It's a curriculum based around that. I'm trying to keep the curriculum as varied as possible. So in the morning they do Literacy and Numeracy and in the afternoon we try and change it up, so they get art, they get cooking, they get science which is my background and I'm passionate about that. So, em, we are trying to do that as far as possible. The majority of my class range from P7 to S2 so they are still covering the Broad General Education anyway. We do have one learner who should be	it's nice to have physiotherapists come in to talk about equipment that we have but it would be much nicer if say, a very experienced teacher stood up and said 'these are ways you can help these pupils to gain access to educational experiences, then that would be great'. I'm beginning to get more comfortable with it at the momen and I think because, I was so inexperienced in that field, but I've got great colleagues, such as yourself, to pull from. I have loved it but I wished that I had had somebody at the beginning that could have explained it to me because I spent so long trying to work out how to motivate the children.

		senior phase but has found it very difficult to access senior phase em, she is not getting a senior phase experience in this class at all. The reasons that she found it difficult was the transition, it was very difficult, lots of difference faces, lots of people. She is very much a person who requires a small group of staff and the same people. It felt a little bit like paying lip service and I didn't want it to be a case of I was doing all then work then, oh look here's a photograph pf this person doing this wonderful thing for three seconds. That's not what it's about and if you're doing that then what's the point, you might as well do whatever we want for the rest of the day and for five minutes oh look, it's senior phase. That's not the point of it and that's not the point of any educational experience. It should look like and enjoyable experience, something where they are engaged, they want to be there and they're having a good time. They're also being pushed and they're being challenged.	

		So, one unit is number recognition so for that it's a case of doing counting exercises through sensory stories where they count sounds for example or songs where we count and parachute games where we're counting how many times the parachute goes up and down. That's all number recognition and then. I think uh, again, depends on the pupil but for complex additional support needs I think it's eh, really important for these kids to have enriching experiences so they, you know, they, it's easy to imagine that life can be quite monotonous if you're not able to communicate all your needs and you're not able to express choice and the other things we take for granted. Just now, em, medical complex. Um, em, I feel that perhaps those children should be presented for awards but I'm not too sure that the nationals and sqas are the appropriate certification for those children. Well, that doesn't happen here. Because the certifications that these children are exposed to, you can	

		say, ‘with full support’, with full support. Full support, it’s very teacher led, it’s very hand on hand. You are actually doing for that child. Sorry, sorry, my big question would be in that instance. Why are we doing it? Why aren’t we doing a more sensory based curricular approach. I feel that’s something that we should be looking for, you know, much more forward, to actually hammer this down. For those children The children don’t get to choose the subjects, that’s the bone of contention that I have. So the subject is put upon those children maybe that’s the wrong word, there is no personalisation or choice in it. And I think perhaps the adults decide because, the inexperience is there and number two, you need all hands on deck. You know if you have six complex children like that, how would you actually teach six certifiable subjects? In a 45 minute slot but that’s something that we ‘ll have to look at further down the line When I went into the complex department none of that worked	

		and I had to then step completely back from teaching and say 'where do these children get their stimulation from> What can they understand? I realised that massage was huge with them, they loved it and they responded really well, so instead of thinking about how can I teach maths. It's what can I do through massage? Em, and I've come up with physical movement, massage and movement that are the three big hits with these pupils. So everything that I teach now is really through those three mediums for them. It's very much, I think, a stab in the dark that we are trying to do one thing or another thing or another thing and there's not a cohesive programme that would lead to work experience or would lead to choices. It's almost as if it's not considered necessary for our children, because most learners would follow that route naturally whereas our learners would need to be guided through it. In a progressive way and I don't think that that structure or funding is there. This school is the first time I've actually	

		experienced that, previous schools it's always been a Primary model so they've not been moving around accessing different subjects… So in this school, it's the first time I've seen our complex users being included in it. I think it needs to be at the planning stage, it needs to be fully embedded, it can't just be an add on. Oh, what about these pupils? They should be thrown in as well. We need to go right back to the basics and say let's plan something around our pupils. Sometimes I feel like it's not seen as education, what our pupils do. That needs to change, if anything it's essential, it's the very basic education that our kids are doing, therefore it's more important in some ways. So, it's a bit of awareness raising that needs to happen I think. I think a lot of the content of educational subjects are too abstract for students with CASN. Sometimes we could be including them for the purpose of saying we are including them rather than what is most appropriate to	

		their needs or developmental level. We need to create highly personalised curricula for pupils with areas of learning that make a real difference to them. Curriculum content is inaccessible. In-depth knowledge of their subject and how it can be adapted. Due to class sizes and so many different individual needs in an ASN class it sometimes feels like all you're doing is firefighting or keeping the children at a base level where they can start to access the curriculum. I wonder what your thoughts are on curriculum accessibility, and choice within this, for students with CASN when new assessment materials from Scot Gov focus on literacy and Numeracy with token H&W incorporated? No specific assessment milestones in the pipeline for other curricular areas - is there not a risk that with no assessment pathway for emergent expressive art or science skills and knowledge, that provision of Es&Os in these areas will be less coherent and less	

		well targeted to our most unique learners? Life skills for the future are more important than specific curricular areas. Access to all curricular areas is not always required- life skills can be more important and beneficial to CASN pupils. Some access all the curriculum others don't due to a variety of reasons. What supports may help one teacher and pupil will not help others. Even with all the staffing and resourcing in the world there are pupils in my class that will not and should not access All the curriculum.	

	Capability Model	Therapies	Willingness
	It's really important for us to assume that these kids have as much of a complex and meaningful inner life as we do and that they deserve to be enriched as far as we would like our lives to be enriched and then we try to facilitate that. That's what I think. It's more not what they can't do, more what can that pupil do and play to their strengths. I would say. It's not visually impaired, it's very socially aware. Looking at strengths.	This is my first year of having a class were there is complex needs predominantly in the class. It's both behavioural and physical. In terms of physical complex needs it's been a challenge in terms of things like having to liaise with outside agencies, occupational therapy, physio, speech and language which are things that I've never had to do before and also thinking about	I think the big thing for me at the moment is experienced staff, staff who are willing ti work with complex needs children. A lot of people don't have the confidence or the interest. I think it's something that if you're not wanting to do it's it's a huge ask of somebody.

	We all have things that we can't do that we hide really well. Even in mainstream. Everyone should play to their strengths, that's a human aim I think. I think we need to use pupils strengths and interests and in this way they are making decisions around their education. Re. Removing barriers - I take that to mean addressing their sensory needs and providing a meaningful way to communicate - or form strong relationships so that small early communication signals are understood.	how that feeds into the child's education. it's nice to have physiotherapists come in to talk about equipment that we have but it would be much nicer if say, a very experienced teacher stood up and said 'these are ways you can help these pupils to gain access to educational experiences, then that would be great'	

Other interesting quotes:

I will push them and I will listen because you are conscious of the fact that you're an able-bodied person who gets to do all these things every day and they maybe sort of don't so it must be pretty unstimulating for them to be stuck in the one position all the time.

Trying to teach a single, consistent lesson, within which different pupils need to access that learning in totally different ways is always a challenge.

I love it, it's a challenge. I wouldn't work anywhere else and I wouldn't consider mainstream because I feel that I can make such a difference in the field that Im working in just now.

Took those students right up to SQA 2 Maths for talking sake, we had a couple of sauvant autistic children, who let's say were very mathematically minded. That was a huge big achievement because the school had never done it before, those students left with SQA 2s. Which was a hige achievement for everyone.

I love it, it's where my heart lies and I feel that there are children in mainstream that could do with the support that our children get.

A lot of days you feel like you’re not getting anywhere but then the next day you’ll have a tiny wee bit of prigress and that will mean the world to you and your pupil ad then then the next day ypu’ll go back to square one and you’ll think no, I’m not getting anywhere here.

Of course it is right to give students an element of choice but those with complex needs are not able to make significant choices but are able in some cases to state a preference. It is right that they should be exposed to a range of experiences as they may not choose to do this and therefore miss out on enriching experiences.

I feel that the education of CASN students needs to be mainstreamed in that the students shouldn't be taught away from the student body where appropriate and possible.

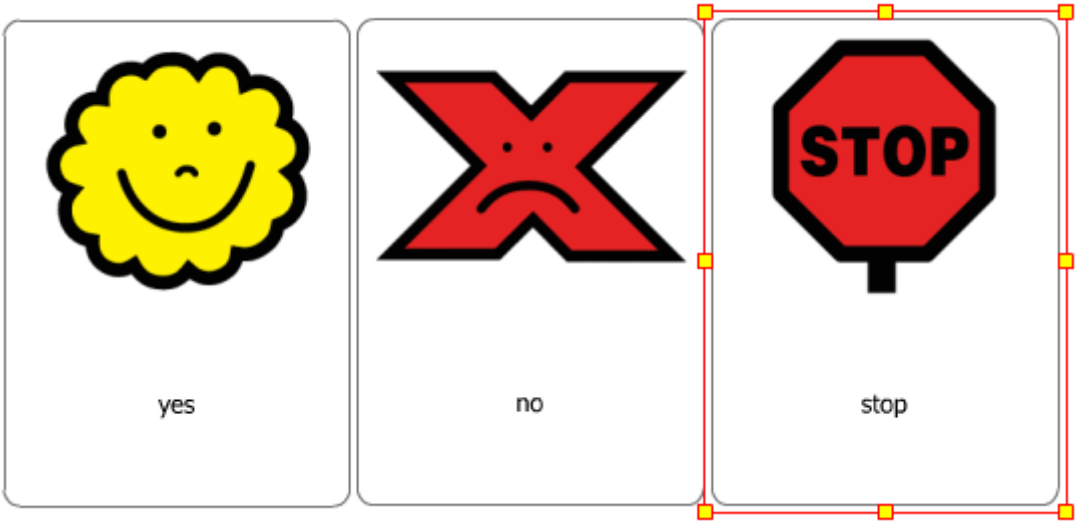
Everyone can make choices, in spite of difference it just takes time, understanding and consistency.

A presumption of mainstream is useful for some but a cost - saving cruelty for others. Individual needs should be carefully assessed and decisions made according to these, not finance or parents' desire for their child to be "like the others" when that is an unreasonable expectation. (I have seen this more than once).

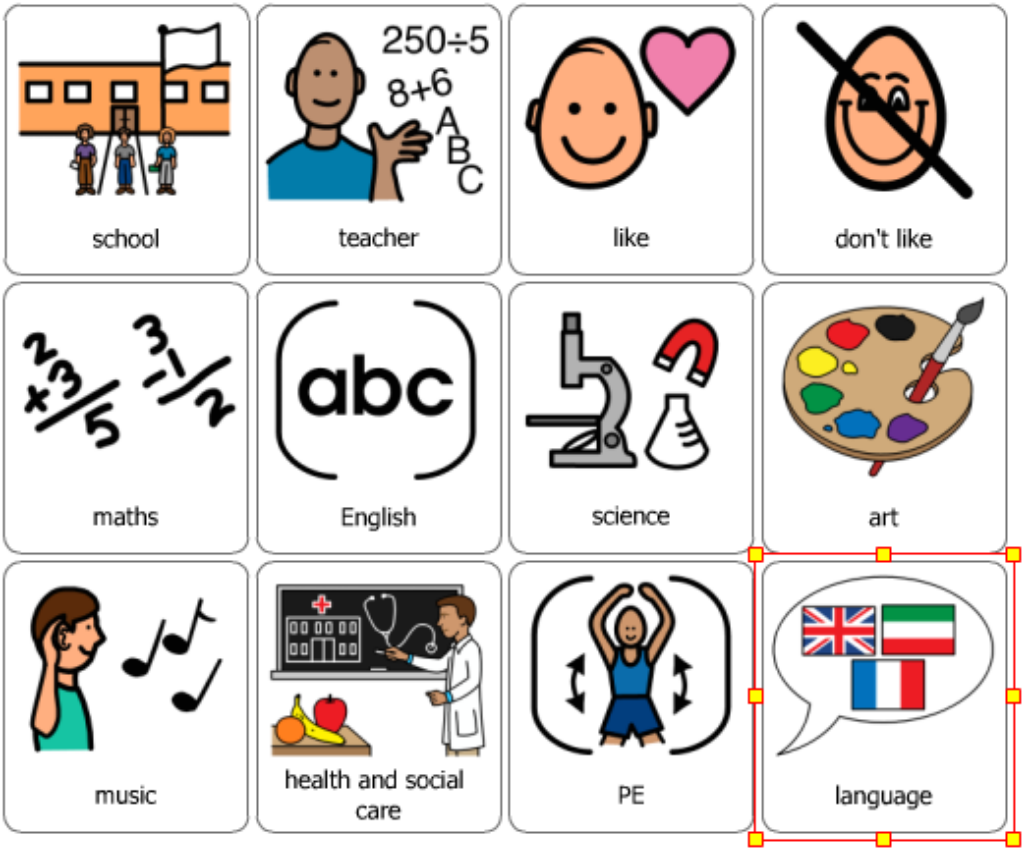
To hold something with both hands instead of casting it aside. People might think that that’s not learning, but for her, it is learning. She’s going to go into adult services next year and if she keeps casting away whatever people are giving her then people are eventually going to stop giving her things. They think she doesn’t want it. It’s not that she doesn’t want it, it’s just that she hasn’t yet learned how to hold and explore an object. You need to help her for the first minute or two but after that you can take your hands off. She will hold it for a couple of seconds and for her that’s progress

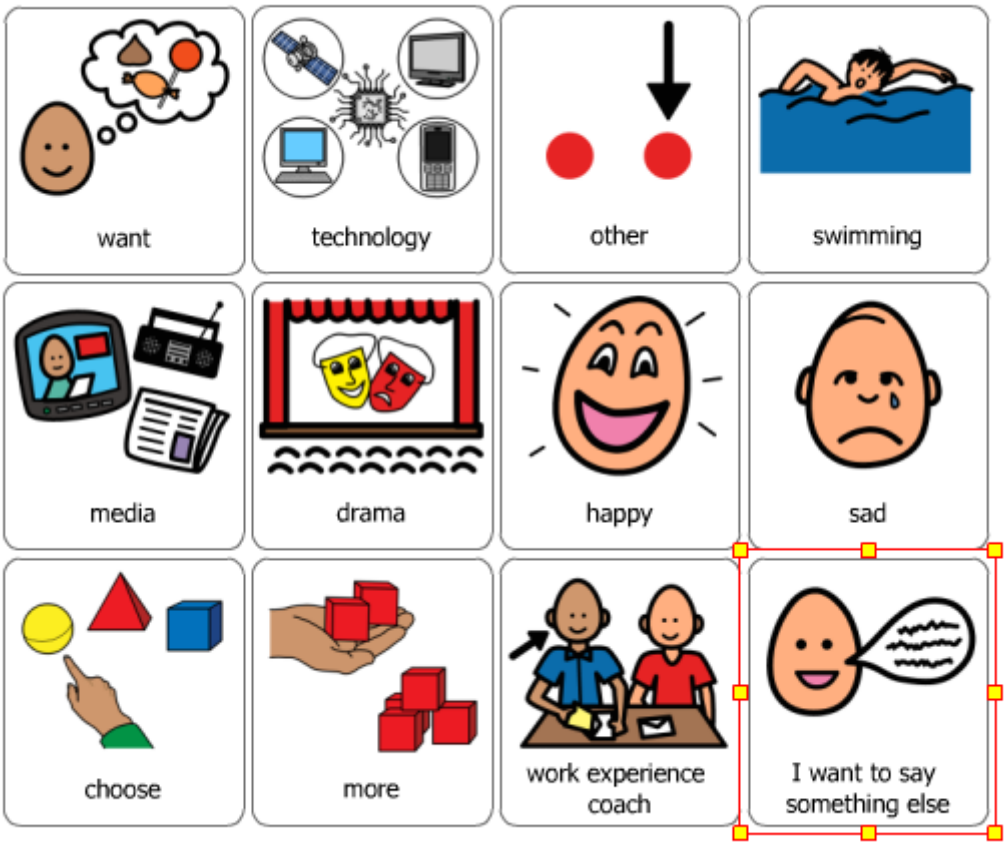
Appendix 5: Communication Supports for Students

These symbols were used to support the consent and withdrawal options:



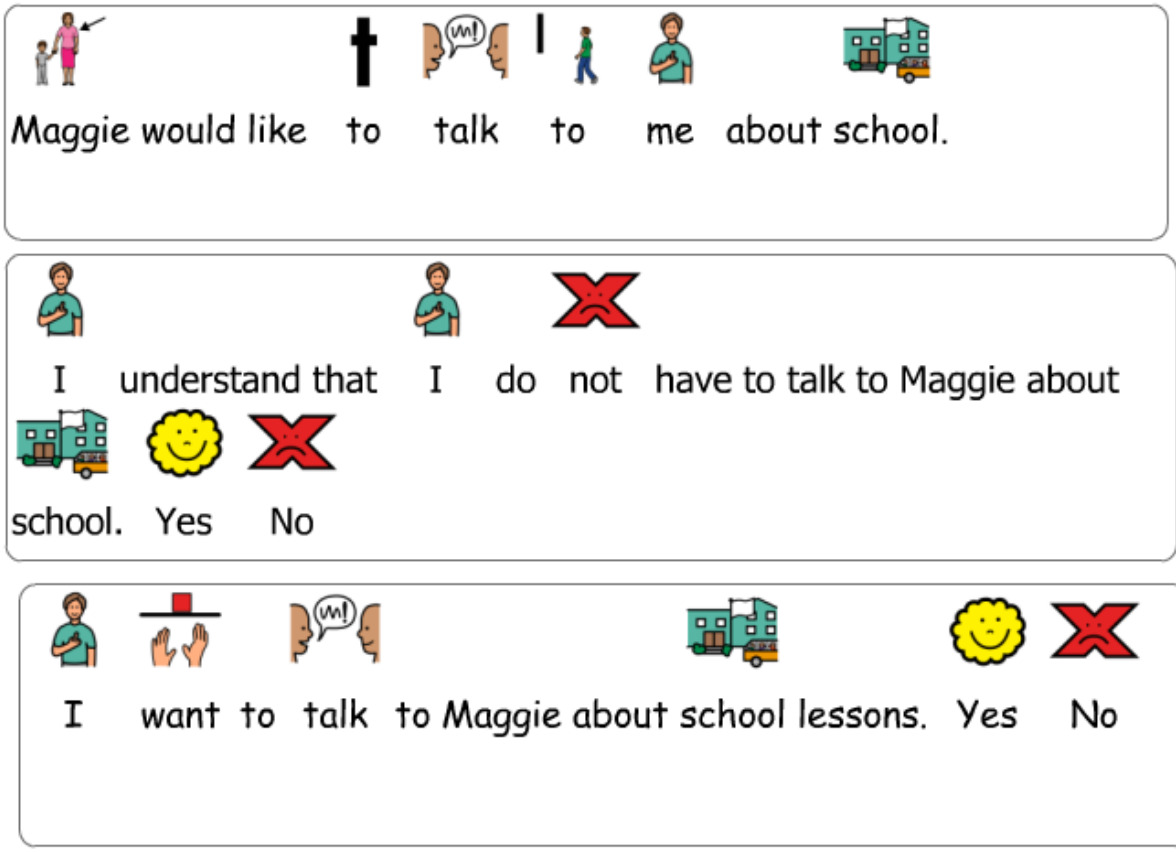
These symbols were used to support and develop understanding and expression in the discussion process during the interview:

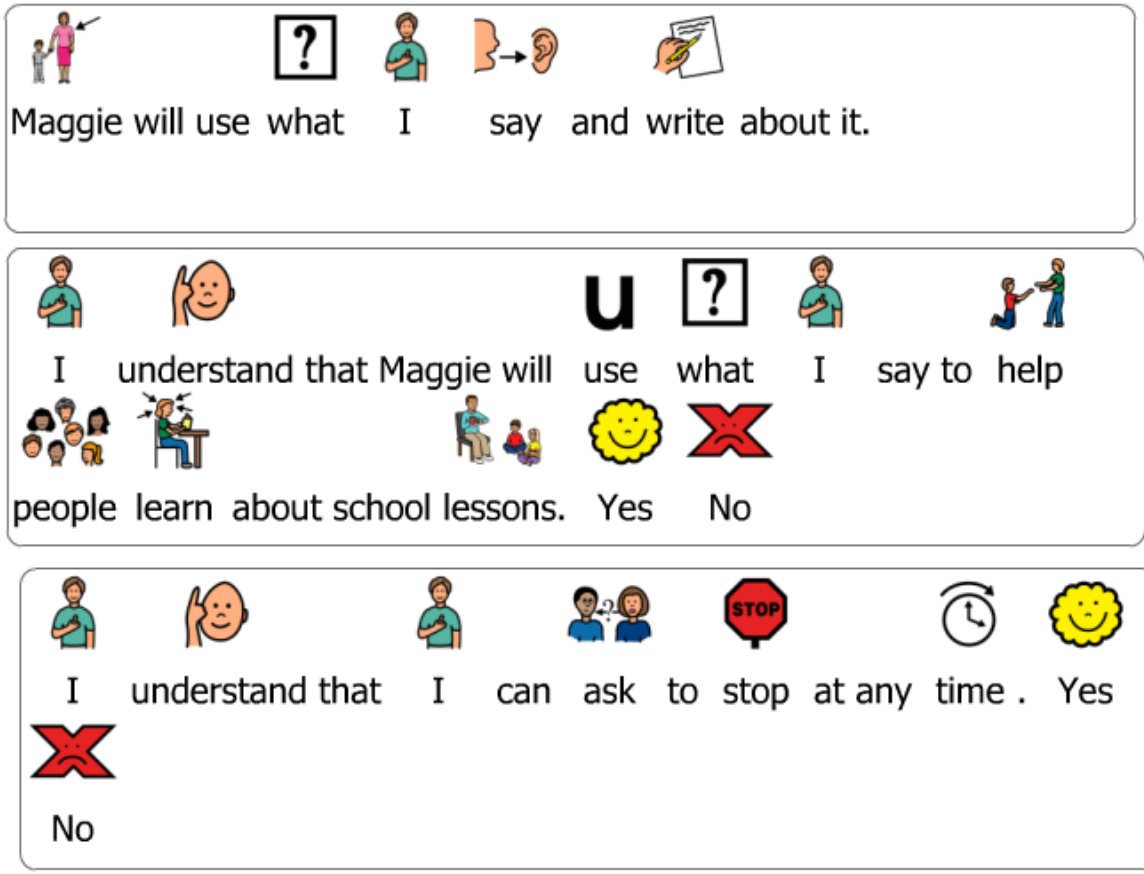



want
technology
other
swimming
media
drama
happy
sad
choose
more
work experience coach
I want to say something else

Appendix 6: Symbolised Pupil Consent

This symbolised version of the consent for was used with students.





My interview will take 20 minutes.

Appendix 7: Interview with H/3/20

(**bold** - Pupil, Helen, non-bold - Maggie).

H comes into room very willingly (and is very smiley/appears excited).

Hello Helen, how are you today? **Shows thumb up for good and smiles/vocalises.**

Do you remember that we are doing some special talking about your feelings about school today? (During this part I show Helen the symbolised consent and remind her that she can stop the conversation at any time, using the stop symbol. I go through all of the symbols available to support).

Clapping our names ice breaker activity- seems excited to take part.

So Helen, we are going to talk about school now, ok? **Thumbs up**. Have you had a good morning in class? **Points to symbol for yes and nods emphatically, making a hmm sound.**

Do you like your school? **Points to symbol for yes and makes an emphatic hmm noise. Points emphatically to symbol for happy.** That's great you really like school hmm, H? **Nods**

Why do you like your school, Helen? What is good about it? **Points to symbols for teacher and English, makes hmm noise and bounces in seat. Points to friends symbol and claps hands.** I see, so you like your teacher and English? **Hmm noise.**

What other things do you like at school, Helen**? Points again to English then to love, making hmm noise emphatically.** Wow, you really love English! What is good about English? **Points to like symbol.**

Is there anything you don't like at school? **Points to music.** So music is not your favourite? **Shakes head**. Why do you not like it? (Found this tricky to answer so I used yes or no symbols and Helen indicated **music, no**) Ok, thanks Helen. Let's have a wee think about your favourite things in school.

Do you have a favourite subject or lesson in school that you do? **Points to swimming, English.** Wow, you get to do a lot of cool work, what is good about swimming and English? **Points to love and smiles. Again, points to swimming and love symbols. Bounces in seat.** Thanks H, we'll have a wee think about everything you do in school now, Ok? **Nods**

How do you feel about all the different things you learn about in school at the moment? **Points to symbol for ok, calmly.**

Are there any things that you would like to study or do work on in school that you don't do already? **Nods, scans symbols and points to work experience and dance.**

Why do you want to do that**? Looks excited and points to symbol for fun, whilst nodding.**

Helen, does school help you to do the things that you want to? **Thumbs up and nod.**

Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about school? **Points to symbol for love and makes emphatic hmm noise, points quickly to symbol for like and smiles, bounces in seat appearing happy.**

During the interview Helen appeared to find the more abstract questions tricky to answer. Therefore, the line in which the questioning developed took this into account.

Appendix 8: Teacher Interview

Bold - **Maggie**, non-bold- teacher interviewee I

Interview with I

Thank you for agreeing to do this interview, so it's about your experience of the education of students with complex additional support needs. Uh huh.

So, what's your experience of teaching these guys? Well it's all, well it's not all, before I was a teacher, I was a support worker and because I had an art degree I was working with adults with very complex support needs. Oh, oh, lovely. So that was my first experience. I was working in a house in XXXX, with four adults. So that was my first experience ever of working with people with very complex needs. Then, obviously when I came here I was given a complex class of pupils and so.

What kind of complex? Physical or behavioural? Uh, well, the most complex classes as you know would be kids who are non-ambulant and have limited or no conventional communication skills and so, a range of complex support needs.

Uh, and you've like, how do you feel about that, how was it? Well, at first it was difficult because a lot of staff complain about not having special training about how to educate pupils with support needs of that kind. So it was quite tough, it was good to have experienced colleagues to chat to because for the first few months I felt like I was groping around in the dark, doing some things that were a bit too repetitive and not, I wasn't sufficiently involving the kids in terms of making decisions and making contributions to their own learning so … Talking to other staff gave me some ideas on how to incorporate that kind of experience.

Good, um, so in terms of subject access then, what kind of subjects do you teach with these guys? I teach maths to these pupils. And what kind of activities does that involve? Well, for example, eh, the , for that class I'm hoping to get them two units at national one level. So, one unit is number recognition so for that it's a case of doing counting exercises through sensory stories where they count sounds for example or songs where we count and parachute games where we're counting how many times the parachute goes up and down. That's all number recognition and then there's another national one unit about

shape and for that the kids have been choosing shapes by rolling a ball onto a selection of shapes that have been cut out and then exploring the shapes by walking around them on the floor and counting the corners and squeezing the pupil's shoulder to turn corners and counting corners so it's sort of experiencing shapes by moving around them. In the case of pupils who enjoy a more tactile experience they can actually pick up and hold three dimensional shapes and explore that.

Very good, and so are there any other subjects that you've experienced pupils accessing or is maths your first? Well, I observed staff teaching other subjects.

What kind of subjects then? Well, uh, for example, um, I watched +++ teach drama and songs and he was doing little personalised songs for the pupils. Taking their direction about where it would go, louder and faster or higher so that was quite good. Are there any subjects you've not experienced them accessing for one reason or another? Yeah, loads, I've never seen them in science or cookery, although I did see them at the Spanish celebration the other day which was quite good for those pupils because smells and sounds and lots of these things.

So what do you think then, support wise, teachers need in terms of support to ensure that learners with complex additional support needs can access subjects? I think they need training, because there are really valuable experiences that these kids can have at school but unless you have access to expert knowledge and experienced staff, it's very difficult to just intuit that for yourself. Eh, so, you know, particularly if you've got very little or absolutely no experience of working with people with complex additional support needs uh, so, obviously training. In my opinion, in an environment like this, there's a lot of training for training's sake. So you mean not actually what you need? Well, for example, it's nice to have physiotherapists come in to talk about equipment that we have but it would be much nicer if say, a very experienced teacher stood up and said 'these are ways you can help these pupils to gain access to educational experiences, then that would be great'. We are hoping to do that so that would be good.

Ok, so in terms of subject access for students with complex needs, what do you think the key issues around that are? Well the key issues are for example, Under curriculum for excellence you want as far as possible for pupils to have some autonomy and choice within their own education and for these kids it's not always easy to figure out ways that they can express choice, so that would be a key example because you're talking about people

that communicate in a very unconventional way so to give them a sense that they have any sense of self-determination within their education at all is quite a difficult thing to facilitate. So yeah, choice and how you incorporate choice for humans that don't make choices the way that other humans do.

Ok, so if we are thinking then, what factors do teachers need to consider when teaching their students across the curriculum? **With complex needs**. Um, well, across complex needs in general not just these pupils with very complex support needs, uh, it's just a whole different level of differentiation because, you know in mainstream you're differentiating WORK A bit but it's completely different to be in a school like this. You'll have some very able pupils along with pupils who, for example, don't recognise numbers at all. So trying to teach a single, consistent lesson, within which different pupils need to access that learning in totally different ways is always a challenge. So, it's you know, for example, this week I've been doing time with the pupils so some pupils are very able and can read a clock and manage time. Other pupils won't recognise the numbers, won't know about the hands of the clock so you need to have sort of three lessons going on at once all trying to communicate the same lesson to these pupils. It's just a constant challenge, the differentiation aspect.

Ok, lastly, what's your view then, of education for those with complex additional support needs? What should it look like? I think uh, again, depends on the pupil but for complex additional support needs I think it's eh, really important for these kids to have enriching experiences so they, you know, they, it's easy to imagine that life can be quite monotonous if you're not able to communicate all your needs and you're not able to express choice and the other things we take for granted. So it's really important for us to assume that these kids have as much of a complex and meaningful inner life as we do and that they deserve to be enriched as far as we would like our lives to be enriched and then we try to facilitate that. That's what I think.