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A Mixed Method Exploration of the Challenges to Inclusive and
Progressive Education for Students with Dyslexia in the West of
Ireland

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Submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the MEd in
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Declaration

This thesis is submitted in part-fulfilment of the requirements of the Med in Adult and Community Education of the National University of Ireland Maynooth and has not been submitted for any academic assessment to any other university. I confirm that this thesis is my own work. Assistance received has been acknowledged. Permission is given to the National University of Ireland to lend this thesis.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

My Journey

I completed my Leaving Certificate in 2008,
Filling out the CAO I wasn't really sure which way to go,
I applied for many youth, community and social care courses,
Overjoyed when I got my first and second preference,
However, this excitement soon faded when I analysed the course content.

My heart sunk with disappointment and it soon led to fear and worry
As my childhood friends began preparing for college, travel abroad and employment
I applied for a post leaving certificate course in Health and Community Studies
I commuted weekly to Sligo College of Further Education,
With a packed bag of clothing, food and money.

The course content was very varied and the year went by in a flash,
I enjoyed every moment, learning skills in communications, computers and undertaking tasks,
The class sizes were small, with a variety of different teaching methods and assessments,
This met my needs as a dyslexia student and grew my confidence in abundance.

The following year, I applied to IT Sligo,
Armed with knowledge, experience and eight distinctions,
To undertake a degree in Social Care,
To pursue my dreams and fulfil my ambitions.

That year in Further Education,
Will always fondly be remembered,
It opened so many doors of opportunity,
To meet contacts, friends, and progress to Higher Education.

Upon reflection, I feel very lucky, to be writing this poem today

As a qualified Further Education teacher, I would like to say
Early Educational Assessment, without doubt, led to my success today
My parents believed in my ability and supported me every step of the way

This year I have embarked on a Master's thesis, in Adult and Community Education
To improve Dyslexia Support services in Further Education
I believe Learning Support and Assessment should be funded in every centre
To provide support to dyslexic students to reach their full potential.

Over the term, I will search to find answers to the questions I pose today.
I approach this topic with an open mind, an optimistic heart and realistic view that one day,
All Further Education Centres will have access to disability officers, assistive technology and
alternative methods of assessments.
To meet the increasing rise in student dyslexia applications by supporting individual's needs,
supporting abilities and meeting aspirations.

By Carmel Ann Joyce

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Scholarship

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Further Education Disability Support Teacher

The researcher would also like to acknowledge that she is a temporary learning support teacher in the further education centre explored as part of this Master's thesis study. This further education centre did not influence my choice in thesis topic or process during this study. This further education college has always been very approachable and willing to support me in any way during the completion of this thesis.

Parameters of Thesis

This Master's Thesis in Adult and Community Education was concerned between September 2017 and June 2018 academic year. Any additional information received after this date was not included.

Carmel Ann Joyce (June 2017)

Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

AHEAD	Association for Higher Education Access and Disability
AIT	Athlone Institute of Technology
AONTAS	National Adult Education Through Voluntary Unification
ASCENT	Research on Assessment and Support Services report for Students with Specific Learning Difficulties in Higher Education
BDA	British Dyslexia Association
CCFE	Castlebar College of Further Education
CSO	Central Statistics Office
DAI	Dyslexia Association of Ireland
DAM	Dyslexia Association Mayo
DARE	Disability Access Route to Education
DES	Department of Education and Skills
EDA	European Dyslexia Association
EPSEN	Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs
ETB	Education Training Board
ETBI	Education Training Board Ireland
FAS	Focus to Access Distance
FE	Further Education
FEAE	Further Education Adult Educator
FESS	Further Education Support Service
FETAC	Further Education Training Awards Council

FSD	Fund for Students with Disabilities
GMIT	Galway Mayo Institute of Technology
HE	Higher Education
HEA	Higher Education Authority
IEP	Individual Education Plan
IOT	Institute of Technology
ISB	Irish Statute Book
IHRC	Irish Human Rights Consortium
KW ETB	Kildare Wicklow ETB
LYIT	Letterkenny Institute of Technology
MSL ETB	Mayo, Sligo, Leitrim ETB
NADSIHE	National Association for Disabled Students in Higher Education
NCSE	National Council for Special Education
NEPS	National Educational Psychological Service
NUCG	National University College Galway
NEPS	National Educational Psychological Service
PLC	Post Leaving Certificate
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
SENDA	Special Education needs and Disability Act
SESS	Special Educational Support Service
SLD	Specific Learning Difficult
SIT	Sligo Institute of Technology
SLD	Specific Learning Difficulty

SOLAS	Continuing Education Service and Skills
Solas	Seirbhísí Oideachais Leanunaigh Agus Scileanna or Continuing Education Services and Skills
UDL	Universal Design for learning
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VEC	Vocational Education Committee

Abstract

Although there has been many developments towards inclusive and progressive education at primary, post-primary and at higher education level, little improvement or advancement has been made for students with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia accessing learning support services in further education. Current policy, legislation and practices identify the need for inclusive and progressive education for students with dyslexia. However, despite some success in the increase of young people with disabilities remaining in post-compulsory education, the degree of inclusion in training and education envisaged by national and local policies has not been achieved (ANED, 2010). In turn, the further education sector remains largely under developed and inadequately funded in Ireland.

This study explores the challenges to Inclusive and progressive education for students with dyslexia in the west of Ireland. Literature on dyslexia will be examined in order to address the research problem and identify gaps in practice which present. This study is carried out through mixed method qualitative and quantitative research focusing on structured surveys with further education students, structured interviews with adult educators and electronic interviews with national and regional organisational bodies. The surveys will provide a picture of the student population within the further education centre in order to examine why students chose to disclose or not disclose their specific learning difficulty dyslexia. The Electronic Interviews will examine support organisations available nationally and regionally while the structured interviews will provide the experiences of adult educators on training, student supports and improvements necessary in further education. The qualitative data will form the larger study while the quantitative data will provide a secondary database and supportive role in this study (Creswell, 2009, p. 208). The findings from the surveys will be presented in numerical format. While structured and electronic interviews will be presented as thematic text information.

The research presents eight key findings which need to be addressed in order to ensure that further education is inclusive and progressive to students with dyslexia. Issues such as lobbying and campaigning, awareness and support, funding, staff training and progressive education programmes were all identified. Barriers to accessing education assessment, learning support services and reasonable accommodation were also determined as issues which affect students with dyslexia in further education.

Although, the most challenging issues which is preventing inclusive further education is the government's resistance to employ disability officers and provide assistive technology rooms. Moreover, market orientated discourses and employment targets are defining further education with a broad vocational ethos of training for employability (Grummell, 2014, p128) rather than meeting the interests, needs and abilities of the learners. Pragmatism places emphasis upon what is practical, fruitful and satisfying. Education is useless if it does not promote human welfare and so the system of education should be both desirable and beneficial (Singh, 2007). Dewey identifies that education is not preparation for life, education is life itself (Dewey, 1916, p.239). The Universal Design for learning matrix is a progressive curricula model which supports inclusive further education practice. By providing a wide range of flexible learning strategies to enhance teaching and learning (AHEAD, 2017, P.5).

Furthermore, there is currently the lack of legislation specifically pertaining to education for persons with special educational needs in further education. As the current Special Education Needs Act has a predominant primary and post primary focus. Career Paths located in Co. Kildare is the only further education college in the country which offers a dyslexia specific training programme for students. Further dyslexia specific training programmes should be introduced to support students in the west of Ireland. Adult educators also identified concern that they require ongoing training in teaching methodologies needs to be undertaken annually to keep abreast with progressive and inclusive methods of facilitation.

Therefore, Solas must review current policies, funding, training programmes and supports in further education for students who present with specific learning needs. The research highlighted that some of the challenges can be addressed in the further education centre such as adult educator training, small group work with students and flexible with module descriptor teaching methods. Recommendations will lay out key areas of change necessary in order to ensure an progressive and inclusive learning experience for students with dyslexia and areas of further study will be identified.

Structure of Thesis

This thesis is divided into six chapters:

Chapter One: Introduces the research question, a mixed method exploration of the challenges to Inclusive and education for students with dyslexia in the west of Ireland. It examines why I chose this research topic and identifies why this topic is pertinent.

Chapter Two: The Literature review explores the concepts of disability and dyslexia, inclusive and progressive education, origins of dyslexia and history of further education, the legislative and policy context for supporting adult learners with dyslexia and the challenges faced in further education. Dewey's pragmatic approach will be interwoven throughout my research.

Chapter Three: The Methodology carries out practice based research using sequential mixed method conceptual framework demonstrating a triangulation approach of surveys with further education students, structured interviews with adult educators and electronic and phone interviews with national and regional organisation bodies. My ontological and epistemological perspective will be explained and how the methodology influenced my research. The data collection and analysis method will be outlined with the ethical considerations and the limits of the study acknowledged.

Chapter Four: The findings chapter will explore the surveys undertaken with further education students and examine eight key themes that emerged from the structured interviews with adult educators and electronic interviews with national and regional organisational bodies.

Chapter Five: The analysis will discuss the findings that emerged from the research in relation to the material explored in the literature review and will provide an overall context of further education in the west of Ireland.

Chapter Six: A conclusion will be formulated of the strengths and weaknesses of this research, recommendations will be highlighted as well as areas of further research.

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1.0 CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Personal reflection and background

This piece of research was prompted by two distinct experiences. Firstly, it emerged from my own experience of learning, as a dyslexic student in further education. Learning support services were underdeveloped and difficult to access at that time. Secondly, as an adult educator, facilitating a discussion with a group of level five Applied Social students. I asked students to identify the key issues that face young people in a variety of contexts in society today. While reflecting critically on their own experiences and ideas about adolescents, one young student disclosed that he found reading, writing and information recall for exams difficult in secondary school. While two mature students stated that they left school before completing their leaving certificate as they really struggled with reading, spelling and organisation. Two of the three students stated they did not receive any additional support in school. However, they now would like to get educationally assessed to access learning support. Although, no funding is available in further education to undertake an educational assessment.

It was during this class that I learned, little improvement or advances have been made in further education learning support services. They still remain largely underdeveloped and inadequately funded. Furthermore, I learned while many students were registered in the college as having dyslexia and availing of educational supports many more students remained undiagnosed and unsupported. Further education colleges support students who are diagnosed with Dyslexia, by applying to the Department of Education through the fund for students with disabilities. Diagnosed students can avail of assistive technology, learning support classes, exam considerations and alternative methods of assessment. Although, without an educational assessment, undiagnosed students are unable to apply for any funding or receive any educational supports. As a result it is at the discretion of the further education college whether to provide supports with limited resources, without designated disability officer and with no accurate diagnoses of students' needs and abilities.

1.2 Research focus and Rationale

This study explores the challenges to inclusive and progressive further education for students with dyslexia accessing learning support services in one further education training centre in the west of Ireland. I will demonstrate a pragmatic conceptual framework on the 'what' and 'how' of the research problem as central and will apply all approaches to understand the problem (Creswell, 2003, p.11). The research endeavours to address this problem by reviewing relevant literature, current legislation, funding, training and support organisations. Dyslexia in further education is a very topical and current, with increasing numbers of students presenting with progressive dyslexia each year. The researcher will provide a brief historical reference, although its general focus is on present issues. John Dewey's theory of progressive education will be interwoven throughout this research dissertation as will a critique of the social implications of Dewey's ideas and the limits to progressive education.

I could have chosen to carry out research with many different people which would have provided very different perspectives and responses. I could have chosen to prepare a case study of my own experience as a dyslexia student and the barriers I overcame in order to access learning support services in further education. I could have chosen to Interview all sixteen educators exclusively in one further education centre in the west of Ireland. This could have provided me in-depth knowledge into educators experiences of teaching students with dyslexia and the challenge of providing an inclusive learning environment to meet all student's needs. I could also have interviewed students who were educationally assessed for dyslexia and those who were not assessed who presented with reading, writing or spelling difficulties to examine the difference in experience, supports and challenges that presented in further education. Furthermore, I could have chosen to Interview policy makers or a greater number of national and regional organisations.

1.3 Structure of the Thesis

Never the less, I chose to carry out practice based research using sequential mixed method conceptual framework demonstrating a triangulation approach of surveys with further education students, structured interviews with adult educators and electronic and phone interviews with national and regional organisation bodies. I chose this method in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem (Creswell, 2009, p. 18) and gain a

greater sense of the practical issues which need to be addressed in order to provide an inclusive and progressive learning environment for all students in Further Education. I chose a triangulation approach with the primary aim to collect one form of data qualitative and have the other form of data quantitative provide supportive information. Quantitative data will not be connected or integrated across phases, instead it will be embedded as a secondary form within and provide a supportive role to the overall larger study (Creswell, 2009, p.208).

1.4 Further Education and Training Strategy 2014 – 2019

In 2014, for the first time in the history of the state a five-year a further education and training strategy 2014 – 2019 was published. The strategy aimed to reform the further education and training sector and give direction to the FET sector over the next five years. Although, there was progress in acknowledging literacy and numeracy barriers and the need for increased research and investment into FET pedagogy and adult learning (FET Strategy, 2014, p. 20), this strategy holds a dominant employment focus responding to the needs of the economy and market rather than responding to the needs of the learners (Grummell, 2014, p.128). In reality little change has occurred in providing extra learning support to further education students. Solas stated they will sustain literacy and numeracy funding provision until robust evidence exists that will allow literacy and numeracy to be embedded into FET Provision (FET Strategy, 2014, p. 28).

1.5 Universal Design for Learning

The Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach provides a progressive model of teaching in further education as it outlines accessible and inclusive learning methodologies and practices in the design and delivery of courses to benefit students with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia. The UDL model provides a flexible way of looking at education so all students can be included. This approach provides a curriculum design which can be accessed by a diverse group of learners of varying skills and levels of ability. The UDL learning approach offers students a wide range of flexible learning strategies such as portfolio based evidence, self-learning, group learning and alternative methods of assessment. The UDL is in keeping with progressive education as it emphasises the need to learn by doing and students have the opportunity to interact with their environment. Dewey believed that human beings learn through a hands-on

approach and must engage with and enlarge experience (Devendorf, 2016, p.1). Pragmatists also believe that reality must be experienced.

UNESCO, 2005 states 'inclusion involves adapting a broad vision of Education for all students by addressing the spectrum of needs and including those who are vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion'. However, the Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 pertains to primary and secondary level students specifically and does not acknowledge further education. There are few, if any, legislative targeted initiatives to support access, progression and transfer of students with special educational needs in Further Education (National Disability Authority, 2004).

The analysis chapter will draw on the literature in chapter two and findings in chapter four in order to identify where they sit within the context of further education and its practice. I will discuss my perspective prior to undertaking the analysis and discuss what I discovered as the greatest barriers that presented. I will then formulate a conclusion providing an overall account of the research, areas of future study and identify recommendations of improvement necessary to in order to provide inclusive and progressive education for students with dyslexia in further education.

2.0 CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

There are two distinct requirements when writing a thesis – firstly, to relate theory to the research topic and secondly to discuss theory relating to the research process (Antonesa et al, 2006). This chapter will collect and analyse contemporary and traditional literature to create a body of knowledge related to the research topic to establish what knowledge already exists regarding support for dyslexia in further education, to identify inconsistencies in the body of knowledge and provide an understanding of the research problem. It will also allow me the opportunity to examine solutions to problems that present and additional research and legislation required.

John Dewey's theory will be interwoven throughout my literature review. Inclusive and progressive education will also be discussed and the implications of both analysed. Given the broad scope of dyslexia, it would be impossible for me to cover all aspects of this specific learning difficulty. Therefore, I have decided to explore the following five areas: concepts of disability and dyslexia, inclusive and progressive education, origins of dyslexia and history of further education, the legislative and policy context for supporting adult learners with dyslexia and the challenges faced in further education.

The medical and social models of practice have been very dominant throughout the course of history. Most organisations developed and operated a traditional medical model of practice. The medical model of disability focuses on a person's impairment. It operates on the belief that a person with a disability is viewed as having a medical problem and they can only be assisted in a hospital or therapeutic setting. The medical model approach has a tendency of not distinguishing a person from their disability. In this model, services are self-contained, with little or no outside links (Share & Lalor, 2009, p. 335). This was evident when schools were run by religious orders in Ireland. As a result, there was little government policy or legislation to support students or provide special education provision in Ireland (Flood, 2013, p.5).

Thankfully, in the 1970's the medical model was challenged and rejected by people with disabilities. As a result, the social model of disability began to emerge (Doddy, 2015, p.11). The social model recognises that a person may have an impairment and as a result may become passively excluded or disabled by society and excluded from participation. This model locates

the disability not in the person, but in society's response and in the language used to describe the person. Supports are then put in place to ensure the person lives a meaningful life and is empowered to make decisions governing their life (Share & Lalor, 2009, p.336).

O'Brien, 1989, p.20 an American activist developed an alternative model of service delivery that embodies the principals of moving from a traditional medical model to the social model. Rather than containing individuals, teachers should act as facilitators to enable people with disabilities to interact and participate in their communities. O'Brien and O'Brien, 1989 described five valued experiences in which they believe all people should experience. Choice, Contribution, Sharing ordinary places, Dignity and Relationships. They identified that all services should operate in this way in order to ensure people who have disabilities experience these accomplishments. Inclusive education embraces the social model of disability and emphasises the need for structural change to enable people with disabilities to have inclusive and accessible, choice, freedom and support in education (Fiesta, 2012, p.16). The social model of disability is very much in keeping with my views as a pragmatic based researcher and will form the structure of my literature review and also my practice. Felce, 1997, p.143 identifies that it is not the individual limitations of a person of any kind, it is societies failure to provide appropriate services and supports to meet individual needs of students who have a specific learning needs.

2.2 Concepts of Disability and Dyslexia

The Dyslexia task force, 2001, p ix describe dyslexia as a continuum of specific learning difficulties related to basic skills in reading, spelling and or writing. It can be described by inefficient information processing and difficulties with working memory, rapid naming, phonological processing, organisation and motor skills. Although, no single comprehensive definition is available to accurately define dyslexia that covers every difficulty that students face (Salter, 2009, p. 65). There is agreement that dyslexia includes difficulties with reading and writing. However, there is disagreement among academics how prevalent dyslexia is and whether through development or pedagogical intervention they improve (Tonnessen, 2015, p. 1). There are two broad categories of dyslexia acquired and developmental. Acquired dyslexia can occur due to brain injury, car accident or stroke. Developmental dyslexia can be caused by premature birth, lead poisoning or head injury during birth (Huitquist, 2006, p. 17).

Dyslexia is made up of two parts, 'dye' meaning difficult and 'lexia' meaning reading or language. It comes from greek roots and coined by Adolf Kussmaul in the 1870's (Ball, 2011, p.2). A specific learning difficulty is an umbrella term to identify a wide range of conditions such as dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia. Dyslexia is both heritable and familial, it can also be acquired. Siblings are forty percent more likely to have dyslexia if one sibling is diagnosed and children are twenty-seven to forty percent more likely if a parent is dyslexic (Pennington & Gilger, 1996). Grigorenko, 2001, p.94 also indicates that if one member of a family has developmental dyslexia, there is a higher chance of other members will have reading problems.

Handler, 2016, p.1 states that there is no male predominance and it is found equally in girls and boys. However, Flannery et al. 2000 disagrees and determines that dyslexia is two to three times more prevalent in males compared to females. Although, this balance is poorly understood. If the factors causing higher incidence of dyslexia in males was discovered it could help to identify this common reading disability (Evans, 2013, 1041). There is no conclusive research undertaken in Ireland to determine how prevalent dyslexia is, studies from other countries indicate that approximately eight to ten percent of the population have dyslexia (Dyslexia Association of Ireland, 2017). Ball, 2011, p.2 disagrees and believes six to eight percent of the population are affected by dyslexia. It is estimated that at least one in ten Irish citizens have some sort of disability and very likely that the majority of classes will include learners who have dyslexia (AHEAD, 2016, p. 8). More significantly, dyslexia affects over 50% of third level students who present with disabilities (Loftus, 2009, p. i). These statistics highlight the challenges posed on the further education sector. Educationalists now agree that dyslexia is indeed fact, while there is still some argument regarding the prevalence of the learning difficulty nobody questions its existence (Ball et al, 2011, p.1).

Persons with dyslexia can display a number of characteristics such as a slow pace of reading, difficulty spelling and placing thoughts on paper. Confusing left and right, hearing and interpreting language difficulties in organisation, sequencing and motor skills may also be present (Dyslexia Association of Ireland, 2016). Department of Education and Skills 2004 state that people with dyslexia may have difficulty holding, retrieving and storing information especially if it is presented in speech or written format. Students with dyslexia may experience lack of understanding, education failure and bullying (Salter, 2009 p. 72). Further Education Support Services, 2017 provides a visual illustration of the challenges presented by students

with dyslexia. They include writing, listening, motor control, memory difficulties, reading, spelling and spatial-temporal reasoning. A copy of the chart is presented below in figure one.

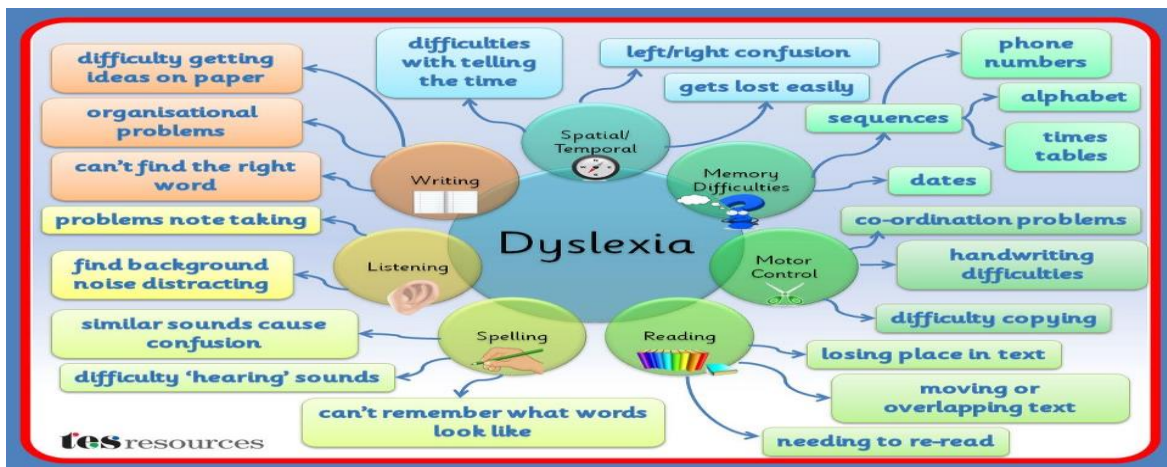


Figure 1: Outlines the different ways dyslexia affects students.

Morton & Frith, 1995, p357 - 390 proposes that dyslexia can be described on three levels: biologically in terms of brain structure, cognitively in terms of brain functioning and behaviourally in terms of actions. According to Shaywitz, 2005, p. 1301 recent advances in functional magnetic imaging has provided evidence of a neurobiological signature, practically a disruption of two left hemisphere posterior brain systems, one located in the parietal lobe and the other in the temporal lobe. As a result, compensatory engagement occurs in the anterior systems around the inferior frontal and parietal -temporal system. Lucid, 2006 identifies that dyslexia is a neurologically-based learning difficulty which interferes with the acquisition of language. It has varying degrees of severity and is manifested by difficulties with expressive and receptive language, including writing, reading spelling and phonological processing.

The British Dyslexia Association, 2017 concurs that dyslexia is a complex neurological condition which may affect many areas of learning and function. In addition, the biology of dyslexia has been investigated using encephalographic recording electro activity in the brain. Post mortem examinations have revealed a range of functional, structural cerebral abnormalities of persons with dyslexia. There is little disagreement that dyslexia is a neurological condition. Although, the exact cognitive and neurological mechanisms are still subject to theoretical research and debate (Lucid, 2006).

The Dyslexia Task Force, 2001 identifies that Individuals with dyslexia are at significant risk of failing at school, leaving school early or underachieving. Learning to read and write is critical to

progress in the education system in the development of self-esteem and to quality of life and wellbeing (Department of Education and Science, 2001, p.2). Hurley, 2013 provides a visual representation of where dyslexia is located in the brain, how people with dyslexia process language and the purpose and function of left and right hemisphere for learning. Please now watch figure two the following video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zafiGBrFkRM>

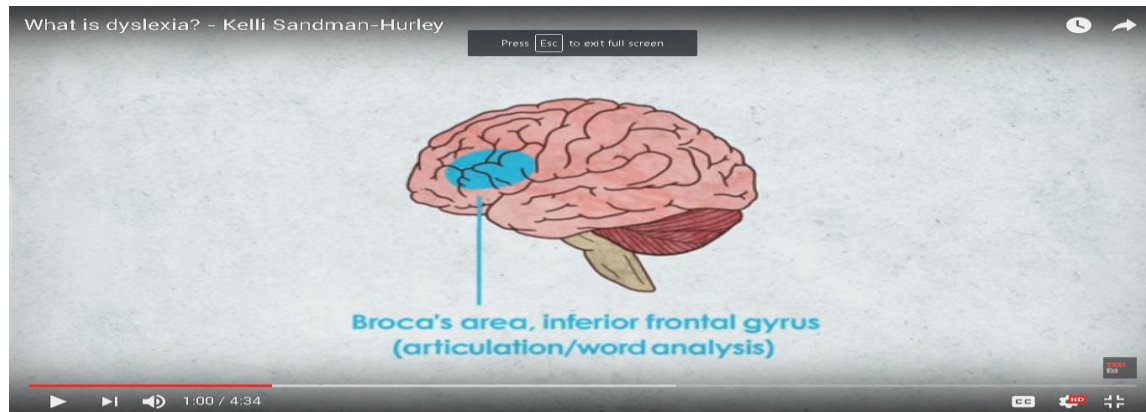


Figure 2: Provides a visual you tube clip of where dyslexia is located in the brain.

Persons with dyslexia can also have many strengths, despite having learning challenges. Strengths may include creativity, great problem solving, lateral and diverse thinking skills, visual and spatial ability (Sayles, 2012) as well as good oral and interpersonal skills (Dyslexia Association of Ireland Adult booklet, 2016, p. 1 – 8). Dyslexia transcends race, gender, age, and socio-economic groups (Salter, 2009, p. 73). Dyslexia is not linked to intelligence. Students with dyslexia are thought to have average or above average intelligence. Dyslexia affects people in a multitude of ways and to varying degrees and most students develop a range of coping strategies (Association for Higher Education Access Disability, p. 5 - 11).

Noddings, 2007, p23 -24) identified It is highly unlikely that educational reality will remain stable overtime as adult educators today are confronted with issues that did not exist in the past. In turn research enables educators to approach problems in a more informed way. Like Dewey, I will contrast old education with the new in order to lay out the good and bad features of each and denounce a revised vision of education (Noddings, 2007, p.23).

2.3 Inclusive and Progressive Education

Dewey was a pragmatic naturalistic philosopher who sought explanations in terms of natural phenomena, of which objects and events are accessible to our senses. Pragmatic naturalism

conveys both the emphasis on naturalistic explanation and the focus on a method of enquiry that involves hypothesis testing (Nodding's, 2012, p. 25). I have carried out a pragmatic practice-based research approach to seek knowledge that can support and guide decision making (Biesta, 2004, p.2). Not only to find out what is achievable or possible but rather to ask whether what is possible and achievable is desirable from an education point of view for students (Biesta, 2004, p. 109). Dewey stated his concern that student's lives were often systematically sacrificed for future good and education was thought to have a purpose which was beyond the present interests and real purposes of students. Dewey insisted experience is only educative if it produces growth and if students leave with more experience and more capable and interested in engaging in future experience (Nodding's, 2012, p.26).

Inclusive education focuses on the rights of students and how the education system can be transformed to support the diverse needs of learners (Winter & O'Raw, 2010, p.11) This Inclusive education approach strives to identify the barriers to learning and participation, and to implement resources to support students (Ainscow, 2006, p.19). The British Psychological Society, 2002, p.2 defines inclusive education as rethinking and restructuring policies, practices, culture and curricula in college learning environments to ensure the needs of learners are met. The Department of Education, 2007 provide a range of effective inclusive teaching strategies and approaches to enhance learning for students. Teachers are encouraged to provide multi-sensory learning and teaching, clear learning objectives at the beginning of each lesson and appropriate time allocated to reinforce the application of new knowledge.

While progressive education can be defined as the freedom to develop naturally (McNear, 1978, p. 3). Progressive education is the core belief in active, student centred and individualised education which is aimed at the whole student. Dewey advocates for more holistic curricula that moves beyond the basics to meet students psychological, emotional and biological needs (Davis, 2001, p. 271). Kilebard, 1995, xv, states that progressive education encompasses a broad range of contradictory ideas on education. While Cremin, 1961, x, identifies that the reader will search pages in vain to identify a definition of progressive education. Although none exists and none ever will as progressive education has meant different things to different people.

Both Inclusive and progressive education shares three basic connections. The first is that all students must be educated and have active participation in society. Secondly, disability is just one dimension of human diversity and a basic human and civil right. Thirdly, they hold the belief

that inclusive education by its nature requires colleges to be democratic at all levels (Tamor & Peterson, 2001, p. 2). Although, Inclusive and progressive education have benefits. Inclusive education has limits and they are grounded in stigma, marginalisation process, theories of normality and the relationship between agency and structure. There will always be a gap between vision and achievement of inclusion in practice. As a pragmatist I accept this, inclusion in practice will have limits (Hedegaard Hanson, 2009, p.91) in terms of funding, legislation, staff training and resources. However, teachers, students and national organisation need to lobby and campaign to ensure the learning environment for students is inclusive, supportive and engaging. Dewey states that progressive education has problems to, such as what is the place and meaning of subject matter? How does subject matter function and what happens when the materials of experience are not recognised? As a result the general principals of new education do not solve any problems of practical conduct and management. Rather set new problems which have to be worked out based on a new philosophy of experience (Dewey, 1938, p. 21-22).

The UDL model of practice is in keeping with both inclusive and progressive education. The nine principals are encapsulated under three broad terms: multiple means of teaching, multiple means of engagement, multiple means of demonstrating skill and knowledge. It offers a range of techniques and activities that further education teachers should facilitate and incorporate in the classroom to meet dyslexic students' needs and abilities. The UDL model advocates a multi-sensory practical approach to learning such as visual clips, diagrams, demonstrations and participation in tactile activities. Secondly, Using bullet points and clear headings to break information down and making complex topics simple by reducing unnecessary jargon. Mind mapping and assistive technology are also identified as proving useful in supporting dyslexic students (AHEAD, 2017, p.5).

2.4 Origins of Dyslexia and History of Further Education

The first known knowledge of dyslexia was from an english neurologist Sir William Broadbent in 1872. He described cortical damage present in an autopsy of a person with reading difficulties and speech disturbances, acquired from trauma to the brain (Wendling et al 2011). Five years later in 1877, a German neurologist Adolf Kussmaul described a patient with a severe reading disability and identified text blindness may exist. However the power of his sight, the intellect and speech were intact. As a result word blindness was applied and word dyslexia was coined

(Kussmaul, 1877, p.595). In 1885, Dr James Hinshelwood a British ophthalmologist and assistant surgeon carried out an examination on a young boy after a referral from his teacher who discovered that the young man could not read letters. Hinshelwood concluded that his inability to read was not due to any failure of visual power but loss of memory for letters. Today this condition would be coined acquired dyslexia (Hinshelwood 1895 cited in Ott, 1997, p.8).

At the end of the nineteenth century in 1896, William Pringle a general practitioner in Scotland wrote in the British medical journal of a fourteen-year-old boy who had difficulty learning to write and read. Pringle felt he was an intelligent boy, however, written words or print seemed to convey no impression in his mind (Critchley 1970 cited in Ott, 1997, p.6). Morgan believed word blindness was congenital and either inherited or developed in the womb (Ball, 2006, p.13 – 14). Hinshelwood is considered the father ultimate founder and sponsor of the study of dyslexia in the early 1990's. He published a series of reports and articles describing clinical cases and suggesting it has a possible congenital nature. Hinshelwood was an essential contributor in creating social awareness necessary to consider dyslexia as a medical issue of great importance. In 1917 his second monologue the history and development of dyslexia evolved from a mere description of clinical cases into an analysis and discussion of the syndrome and its components.

In the 1920's and 1930's there was favour of environmental explanation and neurological causes proved less favourable. Samuel Torrey Ortan an American neurologist conducted research into language problems associated with people with dyslexia between 1925 and 1948. He studied three thousand children and adult with the disorder and found a correlation between delay in learning to read and factors such as 'left-handedness' and 'left eyeness' (Guardiola, 2001, p.10). He also suggested a deficit for letters. Although nowadays these theories have been contradicted and more recent experimental data is available (Guardiola, 2001, p. 11 – 12).

In Britain the study of dyslexia was largely undeveloped until the 1960's. Maisie Holt a psychologist and Alfred White Franklin a paediatrician started teaching students with dyslexia by following the Gillingham and Stallman approach and later Bev Hornsby created the Alpha and Omega method (Hornsby & Shear, 1975, p.12). The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 referenced acute dyslexia. This was the first legal legislation of the term dyslexia in Britain. Although, In Ireland the government did not consider education of students with special needs as necessary and perceived them in a purely medical capacity. (Guardiola, 2001, p. 11 – 12). In

the early 1990's all education and care was carried out under religious orders in Ireland. This remained largely the case until religious orders declined and the school system was taken over by the state. In 1991 the first comprehensive report of special education was carried out which provided a definition of special needs and recommended that students should have access to educational assessment, full integration in schools and teacher training in special needs (Flood,2003, p. 7-8).

Although it wasn't until 1998, that the first green paper on the history of the state was published in Adult Education with mention to disability in adult education. It set out the role of adult education as an important component of lifelong learning. The aim of the paper was to promote awareness of the role of adult education, to place adult education in the overall educational developments in Ireland and the EU (Aontas, 2008, p.2). General disabilities are mentioned briefly in the report under section 4.16, which identifies that adult education needs to be underpinned by principles of equality in terms of providing for the needs of students on programmes and exposing participants to a broad range of choices. Barriers need to be removed to enable those with disabilities access and adult education needs to provide more inclusive teaching approaches, methodologies and classroom practices appropriate to the relevant target group. Staff development strategies need to be implemented which promote awareness of difficulties experienced and strategies to overcome them and financial barriers need to be removed (Department of Education and Skills, 1998, p. 84).

The Department of Education state that a number of significant developments have been made since the publication of the green paper in Ireland. The programme for prosperity and fairness 2000 has been published which emphasis the opportunities, challenges and capabilities of choice (Department of Education, 2000, p.8). Although, this report focuses on employment and economic conditions with no mention to improving disability or learning specific support in adult education. Brady, 2001 cited in Fleming, 200, p. 28 identifies that the Green Paper saw the purpose of Adult Education exclusively in economic terms and believes the white paper was a welcomed development.

In July 2000, The White Paper on Adult Education was published. The White Paper underpinned three core principles: Equality, Lifelong learning as a systematic approach and Inter- culturalism (Department of Education and Skills, 2000, p.30). The White Paper advocates a national programme of adult education within its overall framework of lifelong learning and its

contribution to six key priorities which include: Citizenship, Cohesion, Competitiveness, Conscious raising, Cultural Development and Community building. Section 8.11 of the White Paper entitled people with disabilities stated that no specific arrangements had been made to until recently to support students with disabilities in further education. The report recommended that existing third level funding for supports such as adaptive technology, readers and interpreters are expanded and made available to cover all aspects of adult education. Disability awareness training should be developed and provided to all staff to promote awareness of the barriers facing students with disabilities and to create dialogue with participants and disability groups as to how programmes can be adapted to their needs. Furthermore, a pilot action project was created to facilitate people with disabilities to participate in FAS programmes (Department of Education, 2000, p. 169). Funding to implement assistive technology support has been enforced as students with dyslexia can apply to the fund for students with disabilities in order to access readers, scribes and assistive technology. Disability training for adult educators has somewhat improved, although the majority of courses are located in the east and south of the country. While FAS courses have been disbanded.

Bailey, 2001 cited in Fleming 2001 suggests that the White Paper was a huge development in Adult Education. Murtagh, 2009, p. 30 concurs that the White Paper led to the development of the sector by widening provision, increasing funding and the number of full-time staff. Although, suggests that the White Paper on the FET structure is deeply flawed as the government was unable and unwilling to accept the competing interests of the department of education and its executive agency FAS. The institutional architecture of adult education was developed in a piecemeal fashion over the years and Murphy believes that the White Paper did not contribute to improving the organisation of further education in the education domain, as it failed to address the issue of an integrated, effective or institutional architecture.

History of Further Education

Further education is defined as education and training which occurs after school level schooling, although, is not part of the third level system (DES cited in Murray, 2014, p. 128). The Further accounts for no higher than level six on the national framework of qualifications. Similarly, the Further Education and Training Strategy, p.51 – 52 state further education and training sector is a key provider of Quality and Qualification Ireland (QQI) accredited programmes at level One to

Six on the National Framework of Qualifications. Further education and training have held many different names throughout history. Grummell & Murray, 2015, p.2 suggests that further education is in a 'vacuum like position defined by its absence or lack of being'. It is clearly 'defined by what it is not and always reliant and reactive to other sectors of education'.

Adult Education has held many different titles throughout history, Continuing Education, Lifelong Learning, Community Education and most recently Further Education (Murray et al, 2015, p.3). Further Education programmes include Post Leaving Certificate Courses, Youth Reach, Vocational Training Opportunity Schemes, Adult Literacy, Community Education, and Back to Education Initiative (Department of Education and Skills, 2017). The term further education is relatively new in Ireland. However, this type of provision has a long history (Ryan et al 2009, p.1). FET learners come from a variety of backgrounds with different life experiences. They may be school leavers, single parents, unemployed, carers or may have a disability. Brine, 2006, p.108 identifies that over the last ten years key differences in low-skilled workers and high knowledge skilled workers have emerged and further education is positioned in the low-skilled worker category. This accounts for problematic terminology and raises questions about class reproduction in Further Education (Apple, 2004, cited in Grummell & Murray, 2015 p. 7).

In 2013, The Education and Training Act were signed into law in Ireland. This provided for the dissolution of FAS and the establishment of Solas. Solas operates under the Department of Education and Skills and in conjunction with sixteen education and training boards across the country. They are responsible for the coordination, integration and funding of a wide range of further education and training programmes. Solas is required by the Act to propose and create a five-year strategy provision for the provision of further education. This Solas Action Plan is tasked to ensure the high quality of FET programmes which meet the needs of learners and the changing economy (Further Education and Training Strategy, 2014). In 2016, there was 22, 000 further education and training courses on offer to students over sixteen years. 339,000 students are undertaking these courses across sixteen education and training boards at a cost of €634 million euro (Solas, 2016).

On the 1st of July 2013, Sixteen Education and Training Boards were established across Ireland. These replaced thirty-three Vocational Education Committees (VEC's). The Education and Training boards were established under the 2013 ETB act. This paved the way for the establishment of Solas, the dissolution of FAS and transfer the training functions to the newly

formed education and training boards. The Irish Vocational Education Authority changed its name to the Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) (Department of Education, 2016). The parameters of the literature review preclude me from providing depth in detail of the history of Further Education. Be that as it may, I have attempted to provide a brief overview of the history which has been in acted over time and provide some clarity as to where further education has progressed to today.

‘The FET Training Strategy 2014 – 2019 was published in May 2014 which provides a road map for better co-ordination and delivery in education and training’ (ETBI, 2014, P. 2). The five strategic goals identified for the strategy include: Skills for the economy, Active Inclusion, Quality Provision, Enhanced standing of FET and Integrated planning and funding. Section six of the strategy identifies Active Inclusion, which outlines that every citizen including those with barriers to the labour market such as people with disabilities should be fully able to participate in society and access education and training. Furthermore, it states that the FET sector should increase levels of inclusion through providing accessible and flexible education programmes and supports ‘suited to the individual needs of the individual’ (Department of Education and Skills, 2014, p. 26 – 27). The Solas Action Plan identifies the need to provide basic literacy and numeracy skills to disadvantaged adults, the need to realign various strands of policy and provision to provide a more efficient and effective system. Furthermore, the plan also identifies the need to promote access to programmes for persons with disabilities which are learner centred, outcome based, integrated and coordinated (Department of Education, 2014, p.8 - 9). The Solas action plan has some what achieved this and identified that inclusive and progressive learning for all students is their priority.

2.5 Further Education College in the West of Ireland

The further education centre in the west of Ireland which was the sight for this study currently employs sixteen teachers, a director, one caretaker and canteen assistant, two part-time office staff and a part-time computer assistant and a temporary learning support teacher. The further education college has the same role number as one local secondary school. Three hundred and sixty students enrolled in the 2016/2017 academic year. Twelve students presented with educational and clinical psychological reports and applied for support under the fund for students with disabilities. This further education centre combine’s education, training and work

experience. Each academic year is divided into two semesters. Semester one is from September to December and semester two is January to May. The centre is open five days per week with students having on average 20 hours classes per week depending on the course and level of study. This centre offers students Quality and Qualification Ireland FETAC level five and six accredited courses which ensure National and International EU standards and recognition (Further Education College, 2015).

Adult educators in this further education centre are very compassionate, hardworking and dedicated. They strive to ensure they are providing the most contemporary methods of facilitation which meet learning outcomes of modules and support the needs and abilities of all learners. Staff in this centre came from two distinct tracks, trained teachers in the second level system and teachers who have worked in industry before moving into further education (Robson, 1998, p.81). Many are qualified to honours and master level. One staff member has a doctorate degree. Three staff members have undertaken training in how to apply to the higher education Fund for students with disabilities. Two more staff undertook training in the Universal Design for learning model by the Association for Higher Education Access to Education. Although this may be true, in reality, the majority of teachers have twenty-two contact teaching hours per week with students, as well as correcting, organising work placement and preparing lesson plans, it is very difficult for teachers to provide extra learning support classes and apply to the fund for disabilities on behalf of students.

Dyslexia has been defined, the history of further education has been explored and a sense of context regarding organisation studied has been outlined. In the next section, I will explore the legislative and policy context of dyslexia.

2.6 The legislative and policy context for supporting adult learners with dyslexia

Over the last ten years, there has been considerable improvement in inclusive and progressive education with the introduction of new laws, legislation and policies in Ireland. Key legislative changes have ensured that the fundamental rights of people with disabilities have the same access to services, buildings and information as other citizens (AHEAD, 2011, p. 3). Employers, service providers and institutions now have a legal responsibility to support students with learning, specific and sensory disabilities by ensuring the curriculum and campus are accessible. (Ahead, 2016). For the purpose of this dissertation, I will focus on how the law protects students

with disabilities by definition, equal educational opportunities and alternative methods of instruction and assessment. On occasion, specific learning legislation pertaining to secondary and higher education will be outlined when similar legislation is not available in further education. In order, to highlight the need for additional legislation required. I have chosen to focus on the following areas: UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education, The Education Act 1998, The Equal Status Act 2000, Employment Equality Act 1998 – 2011, The Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004, The Disability Act 2005, The Bologna Process and the Report on the Task Force for Dyslexia.

The UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education was adapted by the general conference of the United Nations on the 14th December 1960 and entered into force on 14 December 1962. The Convention defines discrimination as ‘any limitation or preference or impairing equality of treatment in Education’ (UNESCO, 1960, p.4). In particular, depriving any person access to education of a type or at any level or limiting a person to education of an inferior standard, or inflicting conditions which are incompatible to the dignity of man (United Nations, 1960, p. 4). Through a rights-based approach, UNESCO promotes inclusive education policy, programmes and practices to ensure equal educational opportunities. This is undertaken by the establishment of international partnerships by the education task force for children with disabilities. Its aim is to strengthen countries development of guidelines and tools to help build inclusive learning environment, teacher training and advocating for the right to education for persons with disabilities at the yearly UNESCO events (UNESCO, 2016).

The Education Act was passed in 1998 and operational from December 2000. Article 21 states the board of management must prepare a school plan which includes objectives of provision of students with disabilities or who have special educational needs. Under section 30 the act lays out that the school may provide other courses of instruction provided the curriculum is taught. Section 32 stipulates that an educational disadvantage committee should be set up to identify and correct educational disadvantage (Department of Education, 2000). The provision of the act also lays out that the school should provide education for students appropriate to their abilities and needs. Furthermore that the school shall use available resources to ensure the educational needs of student’s disabilities or special educational needs are provided for (Ball, 2006 p.49). I am aware this act focuses on the second level system. However, this further education centre has the same role number as the local secondary school. As a result, they abide by the same

policies and procedures. McIver, 2003 identifies that while a great number of PLC courses are in specialised further education centres, the control and operation of courses remain within the second level schools.

The Bologna process was launched with the Bologna declaration in 1999 (European Higher Education area, 2015). It was a collective effort between universities, teachers, public authorities, international organisations, the European Commission and quality assurance agencies to enhance the quality and relevance of learning and teaching and increased compatibility between education systems making it easier for students to move within Europe and have their qualifications recognised (European Commission, 2016). After the initial social dimension aims of the process expanded to include lifelong learning, Erasmus exchange and diverse student equality of opportunity (AHEAD, 2016).

Equal Status Act 2000 aims to promote equality and bans discrimination under nine grounds. Gender, Civil Status, Family Status, Sexual Orientation, Religion, Age, Race, Travelling community or disability. On the ground of disability a person is entitled to equal treatment. The act applies to anyone who attends or manages a school, college or educational establishment. Or uses or provides a service available to the public. Under the act discrimination is defined as 'receiving less favourable treatment than other people because of who they are'. Disability and reasonable accommodation mean providing a specific treatment or facilities to enable a person with a disability to avail of a good, service or housing. However, people and organisations do not have to provide special facilities or treatment if it is more than a nominal cost. Educational establishments may not discriminate on the grounds of admission the terms and conditions of admission, access to any student on a course or facility or condition of participation. A school or institution may not keep a student with a disability in the school if they can show that it would make it impossible or extremely difficult to teach other students. (Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, 2000-2012, p. 4-26).

The Report on the Task force for Dyslexia was set up in 2001 to examine current provision for children and young people from nursery school to further education. This report identifies the training needs, training opportunities and indicators of good practice for teachers. It also recommends a model of provision and consistency of approach in service delivery across all border areas from north to south (Department of Education, 2001). The DES should support students in post-primary schools by providing learning support which is flexible and appropriate

to the needs of dyslexic students. Furthermore a national learning support co-ordinator should be appointed and fifty regional learning support advisors to provide post-primary level with advice and support. Intensive career development courses on dyslexia, different teaching styles and program planning and implementation should be arranged for all teachers on an ongoing basis (Report on the task force of Dyslexia, 2001 p. 98 - 103).

The Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004, identifies that a child with specific educational needs shall be educated in an inclusive educational environment for children who do not have needs. Nevertheless when the nature or degree of the child's needs are such that it would be in the best interest of the child, an assessment should be carried out. Effective provision of education for children with whom the child is been educated should also be taken into account (Irish Statute Book, 2004). Key elements of the act outline the establishment of a national council for special education to assist schools in planning and delivering support services for students with educational needs (SEN) who will work directly with schools. Each school is required to prepare an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for students who have been educationally assessed as having special educational needs. Under section thirteen it places responsibility on the Minister of Education to make resources available for preparation and implementation of education plans (Association of Secondary School Teachers of Ireland, 2016).

The Disability Act 2005, enables for provision to be made for the assessment of educational and health needs of persons with disabilities (Irish Statute Book, 2005). Under the Act, disability refers to a substantial restriction in a person carrying out a profession or occupation. It also identifies a restriction to participate in cultural and social life by reason of sensory, intellectual, physical or mental health impairment (AHEAD,2015). The Disability Act is designed to underpin the protection of people with disabilities in society by placing an obligation on public bodies to be proactive in employing people with disabilities (Department of justice, equality and law reform, 2005). Under the work equipment adaption grant companies and employers can apply for funding to support employees with dyslexia. This can ensure the workplace more accessible by providing i.e. assistive technology (Dyslexia Association of Ireland 2016).

Europe 2020 is the European Union's ten-year jobs and growth strategy. Its aim is to provide an inclusive economy which delivers high levels of productivity, social cohesion, employment (European Commission, 2010, p.5) and to create conditions for sustainable, smart and inclusive

growth. Five targets were agreed for the European Union to achieve by 2020. They include research and development, social inclusion, poverty reduction, employment and education (Europe 2020, 2017). The National Skills Strategy target for 2020 for further education identifies that forty-five percent people should obtain a National Framework qualification level four or five. Moreover, the remaining seven percent will have a qualification of levels one to three on the national framework of qualifications (Aontas, 2011 cited in Murray, 2014, p.126). Grummell, 2014, p. 128 has clearly outlined that market orientated discourses refine further education and the vocational ethos to targeted training for employment. This is problematic for further education as it does not provide progressive education which is focused on the needs, interests and past experiences of learners.

The above legislation, policies and practices outlined determine that organisations have a duty of care to make reasonable accommodations with regard to practices and procedures as well as physical access to ensure people with disabilities are enabled in education, training and employment and treated fairly (AHEAD, 2017). Although the legislation to protect persons with disability is vast, it is clear that a lot of the legislation pertains to primary, secondary or higher education. The notable exception here is that task force on dyslexia does pertain to the Further Education Sector. Additional specific further education policy needs to be created which pertains to specific education needs in further education. In order to fill the current substantive gaps in legislation regarding the employment of disability officers, availability of educational assessments and funding to provide adequate assistive technology rooms and learning support assistances in Further Education centres. Furthermore, the United Nations identify that any limitation or preference or impairing equality of treatment in Education' is seen as discriminatory (UNESCO, 2016, p.11). I would argue that the government is discriminating against students in further education as they are providing only part of a full service that is available to higher education students. Figure three outlines that supporting students with specific learning difficulties in further education benefits all students.



Figure 3: Outlines that supporting students with dyslexia and providing inclusive and progressive educational practices benefits all students in the classroom and promotes inclusion. (Ofiesh, 2016, p. 20)

2.7 Statistics on Disability in Further and Higher Education

Ahead published a report in 2015/2016 on the number of students with disabilities studying in Higher Education. This survey was carried out by AHEAD in collaboration with the Disability/Access Officers from twenty-seven Universities and Institutions across the country. These institutions were selected on the basis that they are funded by the Higher Education Authority and therefore included in the HEA Annual Statistics on the total student population. The twenty-five responding institutions identified eleven thousand, two hundred and forty-four students with disabilities participated in Higher Education in the 2015/2016 academic year. Ten thousand, two hundred and thirteen of which were studying at undergraduate level and one thousand and thirty one at post graduate level. This represents over five percent of the student population. Specific Learning Difficulties accounted for over forty-five percent of the total disability population when broken down into category of primary disability (Ahead, 2016, p. 12 – 14). ‘Given the diverse and often localised nature of further education and the lack of a central application process, it is difficult to quantify the extent of participation of students with specific learning needs within this education sector (Solas, 2016, p.29 – 30).

The fund for students with disabilities states that In the 2015/2016 academic year, one thousand, three hundred and sixty two students applied to the fund for students with

disabilities in further education. Specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia and dyspraxia accounted for four hundred and forty-three applications, the highest beneficiary in the disability category. Statistics for the 2016/2017 year will not be compiled and available until the end of September 2017 (Ryan, 2017).

2.8 Structures and processes supporting adult learners with dyslexia

The International Dyslexia Association was founded in 1920 with direct roots to Doctor Orton who carried out pioneering studies in the field of reading research and multisensory teaching. The Orton-Gillingham approach primarily focused on supporting people who have difficulty with reading, writing and spelling. Orton believed when his approach was undertaken in the hands of a well trained and experienced instructor, it was a powerful tool which offered depth and flexibility. This approach provides a one to one teacher student instrumental model which focuses the need on the learning needs of the individual student. Orton identified that persons with dyslexia need more help than most people to sort, recognise and organise raw materials such as language for thinking and use. After Doctor Orton's death in 1949, the Orton Society was formalised by Orton's wife and Colleague to continue to train teachers and publish instrumental materials. (Academy of Orton-Gillingham practitioners and Educators, 2012)

Dyslexia Association of Ireland (DAI) was founded in Dublin in 1972. DAI works with people of all ages affected by dyslexia. They provide educational assessments to people of all ages at a cost of €490. There is currently no state funding provision, even for persons on social welfare or who have a medical card. In exceptional circumstances, a subsidy of €245 may be granted by DAI. However, DAI is a charity and only offer limited subsidies through fundraising. The assessment waiting list is four months for those able to pay the full fee and six to eight months for those requiring funding. DAI provided forty subsidised educational assessments in 2016, to support disadvantaged adults who are unemployed and low paid young people to access further education and training. DAI also provide an outreach programme and information service for adults with dyslexia. DAI designs, develops and distributes information and posters to create awareness of adult dyslexia and supports available as well as providing specialist literacy training to learners attending Career paths a further education centre located in County Kildare (Solas, 2016,p.58)

Michelle Kinsella is the development and support office facilitator employed by DAI to provide dyslexia awareness training workshops for adult educators and adults with specific learning needs across Ireland. The DAI website is very user-friendly and accessible. The home page provides pastel coloured backgrounds, change in font and voice reading software to provide inclusive information for people of all literacy levels and abilities (Dyslexia Association of Ireland, 2016).

National Association of Disabled Students in Higher Education (NADSHE) was founded by Professor John Kelly, a former Dean of Engineering at University College Dublin in the 1980's. As a direct result of witnessing that no facilities existed to support students with physical, learning or sensory disabilities in the University. Rising out of this a Student Association was formed to give students a voice. A National Association was then formed called (NADSIHE) National Association for Disabled students in Higher Education. This organisation gained traction when Cork and Galway began to implement supports in the respected colleges, in the late 1980's the name was changed to the Association for Higher Education Access and Disability, commonly known as AHEAD today.

In 1994 the government introduced mechanisms to enable colleges to apply for funding to provide Educational Supports for Students with disabilities. Initially funding was only made to Higher Education, However with the introduction of the green paper in 2000, funding was subsequently made to include Further Education. The fund was initially administered by Ahead on behalf of the state. However it became too large a task and was placed under the Higher Education Authority. AHEAD also provides willing able mentoring programmes which are a paid work placement for students with learning and intellectual disabilities with private and public organisations. The aim to promote access to the labour market for third level graduates with disabilities. To date, 250 placements have been undertaken through this programme (AHEAD, 2016).

Further Education Support Service (FESS) was established in 1997. FESS provides a wide variety of training courses for teachers working in further education colleges across Ireland. These courses offer wide diversity of abilities and experiences of learners with various levels of motivation. These courses offer practical strategies to help equip teachers with knowledge of how to support students with dyslexia. It also provides a platform for teachers to learn from

each other. Courses on offer include: motivating and engaging learners in FET; developing academic writing skills and techniques to support students with learning difficulties.

Publications and online courses for teachers are also available which provide industry standard certification. This support service is a full-time year around service which operates through the Education and Training Boards (ETB's). There are four regional offices based in Cavan and Monaghan ETB, Kildare and Wicklow ETB, Tipperary ETB and City of Dublin ETB (Further Education Support Service 2016).

UR ABILITY

UR Ability was set up in 2013 by James Northridge from Cloyne in County Cork. This company offers summer camps, Saturday training sessions for parents and training for teachers in schools on assistive technology to support children and adults with dyslexia. A range of Assistive Technology can also be purchased from their online shop. Two full time and four part-time staff are currently employed with the company. This year, however, they are not supplying and selling assistive technology to further and higher education bodies, as James is away in Boston carrying out research into tech for children that are non-verbal. Their training and support workshops for staff on assistive technology, however, are run on a needs basis (UR Ability, 2016). I do believe it is unfortunate that they are not selling assistive technology as it can be very difficult to secure correct technology in Ireland and moreover, the postal fee to import is considerable.

Disability Access Route to Education

Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) is a third level alternative admissions scheme for school leavers with disabilities. DARE offers students third level courses at reduced points to those who have experienced challenges in second level Education. Students with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia are eligible to apply. Students must be under the age of twenty-three years, have an educational psychological assessment and an educational impact statement to meet the specific criteria necessary. Applications are then assessed in the higher education institutions who have knowledge and experience of the impact of the disability on educational attainment. Students who complete a further education course and are under the age of twenty three years can apply to DARE. This enables students to have two entry routes

into third level education, the first by obtaining the required number of distinctions necessary to apply for the course and the second is the DARE scheme to reduce the number of points necessary (Disability Access Route to Education, 2014).

Career Paths Kildare

Career Paths is a nine months full time further education programme for adults with dyslexia located in New Bridge, Co. Kildare. The modules are FETAC accredited level three major awards. The course aims to develop literacy skills and gain experience to re-enter the workforce. The course teaches career preparation, computers, maths and work placement. This is the only dyslexia targeted further education Program in Ireland. All teachers are fully trained in working with adults with dyslexia.

Dyslexia Association Mayo

Mayo Dyslexia Association began in 1997 when a concerned parent Marita Murtagh a qualified primary teacher placed an advertisement in the local newspaper the Mayo News, requesting parents who had a son or daughter with reading, writing or spelling difficulties to come together and form a group. On the first night, there were four parents present. On the second night there were eleven parents present and after the third meeting with over twenty parents present funding was sought from the Dyslexia Association and the Department of Education.

Out of this, the mayo dyslexia association was founded. Funding was secured and weekly dyslexia workshops by qualified teachers trained in dyslexia commenced. The workshops ran in line with the academic year for students aged eight to fifteen. The workshop costs families €250 per term, with two terms in each year. Class sizes are groups of four and students are divided into classes according to their age. These workshops offer immense benefit to young people as they meet students who have similar learning difficulties to them, they learn through visual, auditory, motor and linguistic forms of teaching they learn to read, write and spell in turn enabling them to keep up with their peers in school. Parents also benefit as they are part of a support network of parents who they can speak to who are experiencing similar challenges and issues (M. Murtagh, personal communication, December 01, 2016).

The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) was established as an interim measure in 2001 to meet the demand for assessments in schools. While NEPS assigns a psychologist to a group of schools, access to an educational assessment is based on numerical allocation, depending on the number of pupils enrolled in a school, rather than demands and needs of the child. For every fifty pupils enrolled at a particular school, the school is entitled to one education assessment by an educational psychologist. In turn, the principal has to prioritise between one pupil and another as to who will have the assessment. *'Research has shown that early diagnosis is crucial – learning difficulties are not curable but they are certainly treatable'* (Ascent, 2007).

NEPS mission is to work with others to support the personal, social, educational and emotional development of all children through the application of psychological theory and practice in Education. Particularly in regard to children with special educational needs. NEPS in a school-based service in both primary and second schools and referrals are made by the principal each school through a consultative process. A NEPS psychologist will identify if an educational assessment is deemed necessary and this is usually carried out in the school setting. On occasion onward referral to other agencies/services may be necessary (Special Education Support Services, 2016).

NEPS focus is on empowering teachers to intervene effectively with pupils whose needs range from mild, moderate and severe. NEPS encourage schools to take responsibility for initial assessment, educational planning and remedial support by following the special education needs teacher resource pack and staying in contact with the NEPS service (Department of Education and Skills, 2016). Drawing this back to Further Education, It must be noted that NEPS was not established when many mature learners attended primary or secondary school. As a result, many mature learners went undiagnosed and unsupported.

Although, the above literature identifies a range of services to support students with specific learning difficulties. The vast majority pertain to secondary and higher education. Furthermore, services such as UR Ability which provide assistive technology to further education centres was selling and distributing software this year. This places added pressure on further education centres to source software from England as there is a very limited supply of assistive technology distributors in Ireland. It is also worth noting, that career paths in County Kildare is the only further education college in the country to provide a specific dyslexia targeted training programme for dyslexic learners in Ireland. It may be necessary to provide additional training

programmes to meet dyslexic learners needs as the literature above outlined that one in eight students have dyslexia. The next section will examine how funding is allocated and how to apply to the fund for students with disabilities.

2.9 Funding in Further Education

In 2007 Ascent Regional Assessment and Resource Centre published a publication on assessment and support services for students with specific learning difficulties in higher education. Five colleges participated: AIT Athlone Institute of Technology, GMIT Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology, LYIT Letterkenny Institute of Technology, Sligo Institute of Technology and NUIG Galway National University College Galway. The objective of the study is to gain an understanding of accommodation and support services offered by colleges to students with specific learning difficulties (SPLD's) in five third level Institutions across Ireland. In all five colleges, full time staff were employed under the title Access Officer or Disability Service Officer. In three of the Institutions funding applications and support services are supported by an Access Officer while a further two colleges funding is supported by the Disability Service Officer (Ascent, 2007). In further education there is no Disability Officer employed to apply to the fund for students with disabilities.

The fund for students with Disabilities (FSD) has been in place since 1994. Initially AHEAD supported fifty students and sixteen higher education institutions at a total cost of eight thousand euro. However, the demand soon grew and it moved on and became too large a task for AHEAD. In 2003 The Higher Education Authority took over to manage the fund on behalf of the Department of Education AHEAD, 2016). The fund now supports over six thousand students with disabilities and specific learning difficulties in higher education across Ireland. The FSD amount varies annually depending on the overall grant available and number of students who apply during the academic year. In 2016/2017 the further education sector was allocated two point four million euro in funding. The colleges then receive a block amount of the eligible students that apply for supports (Mawaire, M. 2017 Personal Communication Higher Education Authority). The FSD supports students with disabilities attending approved further and higher education courses from further education to doctorate level. The purpose of this scheme is to provide students with disability assistance and equipment to participate and complete their course of study (Ahead, 2016).

A claim under the fund is made on behalf of an eligible student by their institution following an assessment of need. Students with dyslexia wishing to apply to the fund are required to have an educational psychological report undertaken by a registered educational psychologist. As part of the implementation of the National Access Plan 2015-2019 the HEA have commissioned a review of the fund and this process is ongoing. Subject to the final report of the review we expect recommendations for the development of the fund will be published in late 2017 (Higher Education Authority, 2016).

At primary and secondary level the National Education Psychological Service is allocated funding to carry out educational psychological assessments on students who present with learning difficulties in school. Likewise at third level the disability or access officer support students by providing an educational assessment and screening tests to determine the nature of learning difficulty at first and then provide strategies to implement thereafter in order to accommodate the student's needs (Ascent, 2007). However in further education, there is no funding allocated for students to access an educational assessment by a trained educational psychologist. Students who wish to undertake assessment do so privately at a cost of €490 and are placed on a waiting list for up to four months. This in turn means that once a student has their educational assessment in hand and presents with a specific learning difficulty, they have missed the deadline for receipt of fund for students with disability to access funding for assistive technology and various other learning supports.

In the 2017/2018 academic school year the Department of Education is offering a new combined postgraduate diploma programme of continued professional development to assist all schools and educational services in meeting the needs of students requiring learning support and teaching students of students with special educational needs. The one-year programme will provide substantial theoretical and practical work as well as completion of tasks and written assignments. Eight-week release from schools is required for attendance on the programme and the remainder of the year will involve teaching in participants own educational setting. These postgraduate diplomas are available throughout the country in five Universities: University College Dublin, Mary Immaculate College Limerick, National University College Galway, University College Cork and Dublin City University (Department of Education and Skills, 2017, p. 1 – 20).

2.10 Challenges Facing Further Education Centre

Further Education currently faces many challenges as it was evident throughout the course of the literature review that the vast majority of legislation, policy and practice pertain to secondary and higher education. Furthermore, when supporting organisations are listed they seem vast, although the reality is that gaps exist in accessing assistive technology software. Moreover, Career Paths in County Kildare is the only further education college in Ireland specifically providing targeted training courses for dyslexic students. I find this astonishing as the literature review identified that one in eight students present with some degree of dyslexia. It must be also identified that educational assessment is not funded for students in further education. Staff training was also identified and the importance of providing inclusive and progressive education practices to meet the needs of all learners. These challenges presented, once coupled together highlight large gaps in service provision and identify the need for ongoing adult education review in policy, practice, funding and training.

2.11 Conclusion

This literature review chapter examined the concepts of disability and dyslexia, the different types, causes and challenges that may present. It also stated that dyslexia is hereditary and genetic. Inclusive and progressive education was outlined as was John Dewey's theory of pragmatism which underpins this Masters thesis. The legislative and policy context for supporting adult learners with dyslexia was explored and UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education, The Education Act 1998, The Equal Status Act 2000, Employment Equality Act 1998 – 2011, The Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004, The Disability Act 2005, The Bologna Process and the Report on the Task Force for Dyslexia was discussed. Moreover, the challenges facing further education were also acknowledged and social model of practice was promoted. The next chapter, the Methodology will provide an outline my ontological and epistemological perspective as well as identifying the methods and methodology framework undertaken within this thesis dissertation.

3.0 CHAPTER THREE - METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes my research philosophy and my ontological and epistemological stance. I will give an explanation and justification of the methods and methodology framework that was utilised in conducting my research (Doody, 2015, p.29). I have chosen to undertake a sequential mixed method, quantitative and qualitative research approach in order to gain a broad perspective of dyslexia Further Education. I am demonstrating a triangulation method of research, consisting of surveys with further education students, interviews with further education staff and web based email Interviews with a follow up phone call with organisational bodies. I have chosen to divide the research into three distinct sections to enable clarity, structure and flow. I acknowledge at this point that there were numerous approaches I could have taken, therefore, I will endeavour to provide an explanation and rationale for the mixed method research approach initiated. I will also provide an outline of the objectives of this research. I have chosen to use the pragmatic paradigm which is consistent with the progressive education position that I outlined in my literature review. Rossman & Wilson, 1985 outlines that instead of focusing on methods, emphasises should be placed on the research problem. In turn, I will demonstrate sequential qualitative and quantitative mixed method approach to derive knowledge.

I also acknowledge that I am a large part of this research process and that my experiences and world view are central in the inception, approach and design of this research project (Murphy, 2015, p. 26). In recognising this, I will outline my past experiences and my reasoning for choosing this thesis topic. I will then discuss the methods and methodology used in this research, the data collection process, ethical considerations, challenges I encountered and limitations of this study. The triangulation sequential mixed method approach will be discussed and an overall perspective will then be formed merging the research together to provide an overall conclusion.

The specific objective of this research is:

- The surveys will provide a picture of the student population within the further education centre in order to examine how many students presented with specific learning

difficulties and why they chose to disclose or not disclose their specific learning difficulty dyslexia.

- The electronic interviews explore in depth the challenges and the opportunities facing national and regional organisations.
- The structured interviews will examine the experiences of adult educators on training, student supports and improvements necessary in further education.

3.2 Ontological Perspective

My socially constructed ontological perspective has undoubtedly influenced my decision in approaching this research (Doody, 2015, p.29) within a pragmatic paradigm. I have chosen to research dyslexia in further education because I myself grew up having dyslexia and experienced challenges accessing educational and learning supports in the further education system. Furthermore, I am now a qualified further education teacher who has dyslexia and believe I am in a position to highlight the challenges which are presented by students and identify possible solutions. Being filtered through a 'personal lenses, the personal self, in turn, becomes the researcher-self' (Creswell, 2007, p.181). Representing honesty, openness and acknowledgement that all inquiry is laden with values (Creswell, 2007, p.182). My way of interacting in the world is in many ways defined by my dyslexia. In the way I think, carry out tasks and in the way in which I interact with people.

I believe that the further education sector is excluding students with dyslexia by not funding educational assessments, absence of dedicated disability officers, learning support and assistive technology services in further education. Powell, 2001, p.884 cited in Anderson, 2013, p 38 state a pragmatist is not to find the truth or reality, the existence of which are perpetually in dispute, but to facilitate human problem-solving. As an advocate for students with dyslexia, I believe dyslexia in further education needs to be explored further to identify why these challenges exist and examine ways to find solutions in order to provide an inclusive and progressive further education centre which would benefit not just students with dyslexia but the wider general student population and adult educators. I have personally experienced and witnessed the benefit learning support has on supporting, motivating and empowering students in further education to reach their full potential and process to further study and indeed employment.

3.3 Epistemological Stance

As a researcher, I would like to find out what constitutes valid knowledge, how can it be obtained and how does my view of reality underpin the theoretical perspective demonstrated and the mixed method research undertaken. 'Dewey's epistemology practice revolves around a practice based concept of judgement, whose most relevant trait is its temporally extended, articulate and transformative nature' (Frega, 2010, p.607). 'We reason with and identify the most significant traits of a situation and discriminate right from wrong reasons, examining the present situation in light of previous ones and assess coherence with each in respect to our understanding of ourselves. In turn trying to find out what the advantages are and the broader meaning of these for our existence as responsible agents' (Frega, 2010, p.608). I acknowledge, that my epistemological perspective is interwoven throughout this research and is very difficult to be separated (Doddy, 2015, p.30). I openly acknowledge to participants that I have dyslexia and that this was one of the core motivating factors in choosing this topic.

3.4 Mixed Methods Research Design and Methodology

Mixed methods research involves integration of qualitative and quantitative methods in a single study in order to obtain a fuller picture and a deeper understanding of a phenomenon (Chen cited in Johnson, 2007, p. 119). Newman, 2003, p.190 states combining qualitative and quantitative procedures should reflect the research question better than each can independently. While Preskill, 2007 identifies that all mixed methods research hold bias and weakness, nevertheless, using a mixed methods approach increases the likelihood that data collected would be more meaningful, richer and more useful answering the research question. Quantitative research can be defined as numerical representation and manipulation of observations for the purpose of describing or explaining phenomena. While qualitative is provides a non-numerical examination and interpretation for the purpose of discovering underlining meaning and patterns of relationships (Casebeer & Verhoef, 1997, p. 4).

I chose to use both qualitative and quantitative approach in order to consider multiple viewpoints, perspectives standpoints and positions (Johnson, 2007, p. 113). While also to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem (Creswell, 2009, p. 18) from the perspective of students, adult educators and national organisations and to gain a greater sense

of the practical issues which need to be addressed to ensure inclusive and progressive learning environment for all students in Further Education.

In researching my topic, I found there was a great variety of options to choose from. However, choosing the most suitable approach, method and strategy was difficult. I choose a research methodology in keeping with my epistemology, my way of knowing and my ontology, my way of being in the world. (Doddy, 2015, p.30). Pragmatism focuses on what will make a difference as well as connecting abstract issues on the epistemological and methodology levels (Arnon & Reichel, 2009).

I chose a sequential mixed method triangulation approach to research with the primary aim to collect one form of data qualitative and have the other form of data quantitative provide supportive information. Quantitative data will not be connected or integrated across phases, instead, it will be embedded as a secondary form within and provide a supportive role to the overall larger study (Creswell, 2009, p.209). As a result of both forms of data are not equal in size and rigour this enables that study to be reduced in scope and manageable for the time and resources available (Creswell, 2009, p.216). Triangulation was necessary because of ethical need to confirm the validity of the process involved and was achieved by using multiple sources of data (Yin, 2003, p.6).

Quantitative data was gathered through surveys to examine how many students had a dyslexia diagnoses in the centre and to identify why students chose to disclose or not disclose their specific learning difficulty. While qualitative structured Interviews examined the experiences of adult educators teaching students with dyslexia and identified learning support and training opportunities undertaken. Electronic Interviews and follow up phone interview analysed support organisations available regionally and nationally. Pragmatism involves creating shared meanings and joint action (Morgon, 2007, p. 67). There is an emphasis on communication and shared meaning making in order to create practical solutions to social problems, with primary focus on the research question (Tashakkori & Teddie, 2003). The findings from the surveys will be presented in numerical format. While structured and electronic interviews will be presented as thematic text information. Newman & Benz, 1998, p.3 identifies qualitative and quantitative approaches should not be viewed as polar opposites; they should represent different ends on a continuum. As a result of demonstrating a mixed method approach, challenges and themes emerged as a lens to study and analysis findings (Mertens, 2003).

3.5 Pragmatic Paradigm

Paradigms may be described as worldviews or belief systems that guide researchers (Guba & Lincoln, 1994 cited in Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, p.12). 'Paradigm is a set of propositions that explain how the world is perceived, It contains a worldview, a way of breaking down the complexity of the world and telling researchers what is important, what is reasonable and what is legitimate' (Patton, 1990, p.72). Pragmatism as a world view arises out of actions, situations and consequences. It is concerned with applications of what works and solutions to problems (Patton, 1990). Pragmatism is underpinned mixed methods studies and focuses attention on the research problem in social science and then uses pluralistic approaches to derive knowledge about the problem (Creswell, 2007, p.10). Pragmatism derives from John Dewey (Cherry Holmes, 1992), Dewey's theory was discussed earlier in the literature review and will later be compared and contrast in the analysis section of this dissertation. The researcher was drawn to pragmatism as a theory as I do not see the world in absolute unity. I wished to highlight different world views and assumptions as well as collecting different forms of data and analysis. The pragmatic theory enabled me freedom of choice to choose the methods, techniques and procedures which would be meet the needs and purposes of this research.

Methods

3.6 Surveys

I carried out quantitative research using surveys with students in one further education centre in Co. Mayo. Quantitative research is a way of testing objective theories and examining the relationship among variables. 'Measurement is typically on instruments and analysed using statistical procedures' (Creswell, 2007, p. 4). The majority of survey questions were closed where respondents were asked to choose from a fixed number of options. This ensured that data was easy to collect code and analyse. While some survey questions were open to invite respondents to provide information in free text format (O'Cathain & Thomas, 2004, p.1). I chose surveys as I wanted to find out why students did not reveal their learning difficulty and I also wished to create a baseline picture of dyslexia in further education setting as there was very little institutional knowledge about that in the centre. In consultation with the class teachers, they suggested handing out the surveys to their own class groups. As each class was at a different

stage in the academic year, some students were out on work placement, while others were finishing assignments and obtaining feedback from previous work submitted.

I did have reservations about teachers handing out surveys, as I wanted to ensure students were fully informed and comfortable in filling out the surveys prior to participation. However, I was also conscious that surveys should be carried out at a time and venue that suited the participants. All surveys were carried out in this further education centre between the 11th January 2017 and 15th February 2017. I did ensure that staff were fully briefed on the survey and aware of the purpose and collection method. I also provided my work contact details to staff and students if they had any queries regarding my research. One staff member requested that I hand out the surveys to her class group to ensure students were correctly informed of the aim, objective and process of the study. I was very happy to do so and I arranged a time which suited the class teacher to distribute and collect the surveys.

I handed out two hundred surveys to sixteen teachers in January 2017, to enable all students in the college the opportunity to participate. I also wished to obtain a balanced view of results across all disciplines. Prior to students agreeing to participate in the survey, each proposed participant received a letter of consent outlining the purpose of the study (See Appendix A). Each student was advised of the procedure and data collection method of each survey. Teachers assured confidentiality, as students were not required to write their name on the survey. Surveys were shuffled by a class student prior to collection and placed in a brown sealed box to which I had sole access. Students were also given a copy of the survey questions to read which provided an overview of the ten questions to be answered. Students were then given the opportunity to reflect on the questions and ask for additional information prior to filling out the survey. A self-selection process was demonstrated, where students were given the opportunity to decide whether they would like to participate in the survey or not. All students were then given fifteen minutes to fill out the survey and to sign the consent form attached to acknowledge they were happy to participate in this research. Students who chose not to participate were asked to just submit a blank response.

Data Collection

The survey was carried out over a five week period to enable flexibility for class teachers to distribute and collect responses. Students who participated in this research were from the Department of Business and Administration, Health Studies, Information Technology, Social Studies, Music and Sports Studies. I received one hundred and forty written responses and four non-responses on 15th February 2017. Some students were absent due to sickness, some were undertaking work placement or had departed the course. This accounted for the fifty-eight surplus survey's remaining. The research questions were targeted to identify the age, gender, class group, ability, challenges, supports, interests, future aspirations and greatest learning for each student. The research questions offered multiple choice answers and in turn I obtained very varied responses.

The data generated was analysed numerically. Each question was taken in turn and divided into piles to identify responses chosen by the students. Each pile was then counted and recounted to ensure accuracy. Pie and bar charts were then created, colour coded and labelled to display results and present findings. The process of data analysis took five hours from commencement to completion to analyse and create the charts. Most responses obtained were very clear and legible. However due to the style of some students handwriting it was very difficult to read responses, which on occasion led to feedback becoming invalid. I presented the findings of the survey on the student notice board in the college, with the consent of the college director to enable students the opportunity to examine the results and to contact me if they had any further questions. The winner of the afternoon tea voucher was also announced at this time.

Ethical Considerations

- I work as a learning support and substitute teacher in this further education college. I ensured I obtained consent from the college director and all staff prior to handing out the surveys for students to complete. The college did not influence my questions or findings in this research.
- I ensured that a brown sealed box was available for students to submit survey responses. This was to prevent students from feeling that their opinions would affect their grade or that they would be identified.

- I observed that students were very trusting and willing to sign their consent to the survey prior to reading it. I was concerned by this as I did not feel students were making informed consent. I reiterated the importance of reading the proposal letter, the list of questions and the consent form prior to answering the questions and applying their signature.
- All students who participated in the survey were entered into a draw to win afternoon tea for two people in a four star-hotel in the West of Ireland. The conditions of the incentive were communicated to the respondents openly and the deadline for inclusion was posted in advance. I drew up a list of students who participated from those who signed consent forms. Using an incentive to encourage students to fill out the surveys was a difficult ethical decision to make as I wanted to encourage but not affect responses in any way (Cobanoglu, 2002, p. 475).
- I ensured students remained anonymous as I asked students not to write their names on the survey forms and I kept all responses in a locked filing cabinet in my home.

Challenges I encountered

- After the first set of surveys were distributed and collected by the class teacher. The teacher discussed a student's question regarding number seven in the survey. This student was unclear whether to tick the box indicating all relevant challenges or number boxes one to ten. One being most challenging and ten least challenging. In turn, I created and distributed a short note to class teachers who had not yet handed out the remaining surveys to make them aware of the change to question seven and to request that students label question seven from one to ten.

Limitations

- Surveys were printed in paper format as I did not have access the students email addresses. It would have been more cost effective and less labour intensive if I had used online surveys. Pie and bar charts would have been automatically formed if I used the online method.
- This is a very busy further education centre. I carried out my quantitative surveys in January as many students were undertaking placement, training and Interviews for third

level courses in early February. This was a limitation as I had not yet covered the entire research method module as part of my taught Masters programme.

- I would have liked to have undertaken workshops with the students to outline the findings of my research and obtain feedback, although, due to the large sample of participants and the limited time frame, I opted to present my findings visually using pie and bar charts on the student's notice board for them to view. I also left a copy of my work contact phone number if students had any additional information they would like to ask.

3.7 Using Email as web-based Interviewing

I carried out three qualitative structured email interviews with organisational bodies across Ireland, who provide services for children and adults with specific learning difficulties. Qualitative research is a means for examining and 'understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a human or social problem' (Creswell, 2009, p. 4). The purpose of this research was to explore the national and regional services available to support students with dyslexia in further education in Ireland. I wished to explore the services, supports, challenges and funding available for students. Email interviewing the researcher believed would allow facilitation of in-depth interviewing, especially as all our participants had ready access to email and were familiar with using it in their professional lives (Henson et al, 2000, p. 188 – 190). I chose the email interview approach as my participants were located at a distance from me (James & Buster, 2006, p.405). I live in the west of Ireland and the interviewee participants who worked in Dublin and Cork. 'A distinctive feature of e-mail interviewing is that it allows participants to take their time in answering questions and to take part in the interviews in a familiar environment which may make them feel more relaxed expressing themselves and in responding when they feel comfortable' (Kennedy, 2000).

All email interviews took place online using my work email account and followed up with a phone call using my work mobile phone. Bowker & Tuffin, 2004 identifies that email interviewing can be empowering to participants as it essentially allows them to be in control of the flow of the Interview. It is also convenience as It provides an opportunity for reflection and editing of messages prior to sending them (Kennedy, 2000). All e-mail and phone interviews were carried out from 21st November 2016 till the 15th March 2017. I undertook and completed

one email Interview at a time, to ensure I was learning and adapting questions as they presented for future email interviews. Out of the four Interviews requested, I have three complete as one respondent and organisation did not wish to be interviewed. Two participants requested the email interview approach due to their busy schedules and expressed a desire to read over the questions, fill them in and have time to process information prior to submitting a response. While the other one respondents were happy to participate in the electronic and phone interviews once requested. Appendix B outlines a sample copy of the consent for which participants signed prior to undertaking the Email Interview questions. A copy of the electronic interview questions is also provided.

Data Collection

All email interview questions were provided one week in advance to enable participant's time to prepare. If interviewees agreed, they were firstly requested to sign and return the consent form to identify that they were happy to participate in the study. Participants then typed up and emailed their responses once complete for the researcher to read, in order to identify any additional questions or gaps of information that presented. A short thirty-minute phone interview then ensued which enabled both the Interviewee and interviewer time to ask any additional questions. A transcript of the final e-mail and phone interviews were then typed up by the interviewer and forwarded back to the interviewee within one week for consideration. This enabled him/her to make desired changes or omissions where necessary. A final draft Interview was then created which took into account the interviewees responses. A final copy of the interview was then stored safely on a password-protected laptop computer owned by the Interviewer. To ensure anonymity, all participants' names were omitted and just the name of the organisation was identified. Qualitative data was collected and analysed into themes labelled one to three (Crewell, 2009, p.184). The data analysis involved reading and rereading the interviews to make sense of the main themes that emerged in the data. All interviews were then colour coded and cut into piles of the eight themes that emerged. Emerging themes will be outlined in the findings section of this thesis and discussed as part of the analysis chapter later.

Ethical Considerations

- In order to protect the privacy and identity of participants during the email interviewing process. Names, email addresses and personal identifiers were omitted and replaced

with generic numbers to maximise confidentiality prior to downloading and storing the Interviews on my password protected laptop computer (Kraut et al, 2004, p. 1289).

- I ensured that email interview participants were provided with detailed information about the research and understood fully what the participation entailed including any possible risks prior to filling out the Interview questions and submitting consent (Kraut et al, 2004, p. 1290). They were also informed that they could withdraw from the study any time before 20th June 2017.
- Due to the geographical distance between participants and I. There were practical and ethical constraints in undertaking this research. Such as time, costs associated with travel, venue, and data transcription. I conducted the interviews necessary in a manner that replicated as closely as possible, given these constraints, the normal process of qualitative face to face interviewing (James & Buster, 2006, p. 405). The web-based interview was followed up with telephone interviewing as an alternative approach to access hard to reach participants (Struges and Handrahan, 2004).

Challenges

- Recruiting participants was a challenge as organisations were multi-layered and organisation contact details were not readily available. On occasion, I was passed from one department to another before gaining contact with relevant personal.
- The time period involved in collecting data took several weeks to complete, as some respondents were slow to reply to email messages.
- Email interviews pose a challenge to the Interviewer as it is not possible to read facial expressions, body language, make eye contact, or hear voice tones of the participants. As a result, I was concerned visual or non-visual cues online would be missed that would have been observed during face to face data collection (Selwyn & Robson, 1998).
- One organisation requested the perspective Interviewers receive approval from their management department prior to interviewing any organisational staff personnel. This was a time consuming and lengthy process as an interviewer had to fill in a five-page document outlining the title, purpose, rationale, description, recruitment method, cost and time involved by an organisation member. Once the information was imputed into

the document my supervisor had to countersign that the information was accurate and correct.

Limitations

One respondent had difficulty attaching the email response once complete. The email was received however, there was no attached document. The respondent resent the document to a different email address owned by the Interviewer and the exchange was successful. If the research was carrying out this method of research again I would request that respondents place questions and answers in the main body of the email rather than embedding them in an attachment (Dommeyer & Moriarty, 2000).

3.8 Structured Interviews

I undertook three qualitative structured one to one interviews with further education staff in one education and training board in County Mayo. Featherman, 2004, xi identified that structured Interviews typically gather a variety of data and information about respondents opinions, attitudes, characterises and knowledge. The purpose of this research was to examine the role of this further education centre is supporting students with dyslexia. I also wished to learn about the supports offered to students and the challenges the organisation face in developing and expanding services. I placed all sixteen adult educators into a hat and picked out two names to ensure all staff members had an equal chance of participation. This was the method I used to distinguish which two adult educators I Interviewed. Appendix C outlines a sample copy of the consent form and questions undertaken by participants. I also interviewed the director of the college. Appendix D lays out a sample copy of the consent form and interview undertaken.

I chose this particular group as I had access to participants, as I work in the centre and I believed structured Interviews enabled me to identify gaps of information which presented in the literature. Structured interviews may be more valid than other forms of research as a great deal of work has gone into perfecting measures of respondents subjective realities, as well as their behaviours, attitudes and opinions (Featherman, 2004, xi). The interviews took place in the further education centre at a time that suited each participant. Interviews were carried out from 12th March 2017 to the 24th April 2017.

Data Collection

Once I had a sample group nominated and assured the research was conducted in keeping with the professional code of ethics, I was ready to begin. The interview questions were provided one week in advance, to enable each participant time to decide if they would like to participate in the study. If they agreed to take part, they were first asked to sign the consent form and a short thirty minute interview then took place. I commenced the interview by firstly talking a little bit about the purpose of the interview, her background and answered any questions the interviewee had regarding the process. I then asked each interviewee to share a little about themselves such as their teaching role and their hobbies and interests. This technique created a comfortable environment and enabled both the researcher and interviewee to become more relaxed. Once, this relationship was established, the interview was ready to commence. The researcher ensured that interview had two key features 'it flowed naturally' and it was 'rich in detail' and the researcher remembered to listen and not just speak (Dornyei, 2007, p.140).

The questions were asked by me and plenty time was given for participants to share their experiences. Prior to the interview finishing participants were asked if they had any questions. Talmy, 2010 states that participants should be given a chance to bring up comments or ask questions. I then re-expressed my gratitude for the interview and discussed future contact (Creswell, 2009). During the Interview the researcher took brief notes and after the Interview finished, the research spent thirty minutes writing up the Interview responses in her car while they were fresh in her mind. The interview transcript has then returned to the interviewee within one week via email. This enabled each participant to make desired changes or omissions where necessary. A final draft Interview was then created which took into account the interviewees responses. Finally copies of the Interviews were then printed and stored in the interviewer's home in a locked filing cabinet. To ensure anonymity, all participants' names were omitted and replaced with numbers from one to three.

During the coding stage, each Interview was taken in turn and memos were made to note re-occurring themes. Coloured highlighters were then used to identify the different themes listed one to eight. After all three Interviews were completed, a great amount of time was spent reading the transcripts and to become familiar with participant responses, moving deeper into

understanding the data, representing the data and the larger meaning of the data (Creswell, 2009, p. 183).

Ethical Considerations

- As I knew the staff in this further education centre from working there. I did not want the teachers to feel pressured in participating in the Interview because I am their colleague. I approached each participant twice once to ask if they were happy to participate in this study and second time to follow up to see if they were ready for Interview.
- I was concerned that the director of the college would not have the same level of anonymity as students or other teachers, as they have a specific job within the college which is identifiable. I returned a typed Interview to the director to ensure they were happy with the content of the Interview and requested that they highlight any area they would like omitted prior to a final draft been created.

Challenges

- Teachers were very busy setting and correcting assignments, teaching classes and supporting students applying through the Central Applications Office and University College Admissions Service. A challenge was receiving responses in the four-week time frame initially allocated. I extended the Interviews by three weeks in order to obtain responses. If I was undertaking this research again I would have undertaken Interviews in January, rather than starting them in February.

Limitations

- Time constraints prevented me from interviewing a much larger sample of further education teachers. As well as the time needed to reflect on responses and analyse the data (Doddy, 2015, p. 37). This may or may not have generated a greater amount themes, findings, analyses and discussions. Although, this may also have affected the order of the data and the coding. As a result a much richer thesis may have been produced (Murphy, 2015, p. 38).

- Structured Interview questions did elicit rational responses; however, it did overlook the emotional dimension (Prokos & H, 2007, p. 22).
- This study was limited as the researcher was only available on a Tuesday to undertake Interviews due to college and work commitments. Therefore, this limited the times in which the research could carry out Interviews with participants as they taught classes during the day. As a result lunch time Interviews were undertaken.

3.9 Finding and Analysis

The sequential mixed model surveys responses identified both quantitative and qualitative forms of data which provided for very interesting and thought provoking results. Sequential data collection involved collecting data in phase one to contribute to the data collected in phase two the structured and electronic interviews (Creswell & Clarke, 2007, p.121). Question four was of particular interest as twenty-three students identified that they were diagnosed with a specific learning difficulty although only sixteen disclosed their learning difficulty to the further Education College. While Question five asked participants their reason for disclosing or not disclosing. Students did not disclose in the majority of cases because they felt their learning difficulty was private, they did not feel they needed support or were not offered support in secondary school so did not see the benefit of applying in further education. However, students did disclose as they wanted to receive learning support and special considerations in exams.

Question seven asked students what their greatest challenge and forty-nine students identified undertaking written assignments as their greatest challenge. According to Dewey, 1938, p.18 the progressive philosophy of education emphasises participation of the learner in forming the purpose and direction of his activities and the learning process. Teachers should have aims for their activities and students should be involved in setting their own objectives for learning (Nodding's, 2007, p.29). As a result, this qualitative/quantitate mix of survey questions greatly supported the formulation of questions to ask adult educators and national organisations during the interview process. A combination of opened and closed questions were driven by my desire to offer respondents the opportunity to voice their opinion, feelings, attitudes and understanding of the subject. Also, open questions may address the power imbalance between

researcher and research participants and yield more candid information (O’Cathain & Thomas, 2004, p.3).

The participant’s responses to the structured interviews with adult educators and electronic and phone interviews with national and regional organisations identified eight key themes. They included: lobbying and campaigning, awareness and support, funding, staff training and progressive education programmes, barriers to accessing education assessment, learning support services and reasonable accommodation. I first carried out one interview with adult educator and one electronic Interview with national organisation. These interviews generated rich data which enabled the researcher to adapt and include new questions in subsequent interviews in keeping with the research question and at the core of current issues which presented in keeping with the pragmatic approach. Pragmatism offers a practical and outcome orientated method of inquiry that is based on leads and action, iteratively to further action and the elimination of doubt and can help the researcher better many of the research questions (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2017, p. 6).

I believe adapting subsequent Interviews enabled fruitful and interesting themes to emerge as well as saving time undertaking follow-up Interviews at a later stage. Furthermore, the research found through the Structured Interview with a national organisation that there remit and funding included two organisations chosen as part of this research. As a result of prior preparation, both sets of questions were able to be answered in the one interview. This proved of great benefit to the research process as it saved time undertaking a fourth interview as well as sourcing the relevant staff. The participant’s responses from the structured Interviews and Electronic interviews formed the basis of the data analysis.

3.10 Dyslexia Friendly Font and Pastel Coloured Overlays

I am aware that part of my research involves creating a thesis book which will be placed in Maynooth University library for future students and lecturers to read. Therefore, I have ensured that the text in this thesis is dyslexia friendly using calibri light and I have provided two pastel coloured overlays at the end of this thesis to support students who present with visual dyslexia. This id to ensure my thesis is accessible and inclusive of all students with or without a specific learning difficulty. As I has visual dyslexia, using calibri light and a yellow screen colour enhanced

my ability to maintain better concentration and study for longer periods of time throughout typing this thesis.

The presentation of text has significant effect on the reading speed of students with dyslexia (Rello & Baeza –Yates, 2017, p.32). Although, some students with experience visual distress such as blurred letters and words out of focus when reading from a white background. Many students with dyslexia do not (Dyslexia Ireland, 2017). Meares -Irlen syndrome is a condition characterised by symptoms of visual stress and visual perceptual distortion which can be alleviated by using prescribed coloured filters (Kriss, 2005, p. 350). It can occur in good readers but said to be particularly prevalent in people diagnosed with dyslexia (Irlen, 1997). Evans, 2001 identifies that different people need different colours and colours need to be defined with precision. Wilkins et al, 1994 states that a double masked placebo control trial indicated coloured filters brought a significant reduction in symptoms of eye strain and headaches.

According to Arnold Wilkins claim coloured overlays reduce the symptoms of visual stress and increase reading fluency in about 20 percent of students and increase the speed of reading by over 25 percent. They also make people more comfortable and can read for longer periods of time, relaxing your eyes (Wyman, 2013). As a result the researcher has provided pastel coloured overlays inside the front cover of this thesis in two colours to enable inclusive reading for all students with or without visual dyslexia or Irlen Syndrome. Furthermore, the researcher has also used a dyslexia friendly font as font types have a significant impact on readability for people with dyslexia. Fonts such as Helvetica, Courier, Arial, Calibri light and Verdana are considered good and clear fonts to read for dyslexic students, however, Arial It and italic fonts did not (Rello & Bieta- Yates, 2013). Please view figure four to experience the challenge presented to visual dyslexic students when they read from white paper. Figure five shows different font types.

Read Regular is created without copying or mirroring shapes. Therefore the frequency of repeated shapes in a text is decreased. This results in a minimum chance of visual distortions (swirl-effect). The aim is to create interesting typography that will maintain the readers' interest and will prevent them from getting bored or frustrated. Diversity in text knows many variations. We must understand the fact that typography for a novel is different from a magazine or a publication for education. Even so a novel has the potential to be clear and interesting. This can be achieved in any level of creativity, thinking on type size; leading, the amount of words on a sentence and the character/paper combination.

Figure 4: Experience of visual dyslexia students reading from white paper (British Dyslexia Association, 2017)

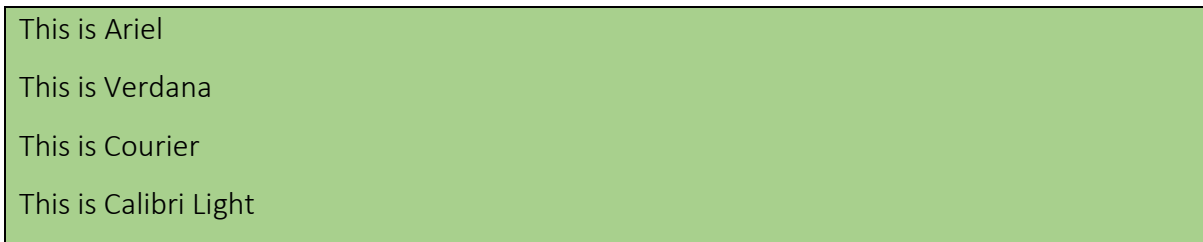


Figure 5: Provides samples of dyslexia friendly fonts (Rello & Bieta- Yates, 2013)

3.11 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has described the background to my research philosophy and ontological and epistemological stance as a researcher. I have provided an explanation and justification of the methods and methodological framework demonstrated. I identified my approach within the pragmatism paradigm and justified my reasoning for undertaking mixed methods research. My ethical considerations, limitations and challenges encountered have been highlighted. The following chapters will identify the findings, discussion and analysis of this research study comparing the literature with the emerging themes in order to explore the research problem and identify possible solutions.

CHAPTER FOUR - FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The research findings presented in this chapter are categorised to reflect the sequence of information as it emerged from this sequential mixed methods research study. This research embedded one smaller form of data, student surveys with another larger data collection of structured interviews and electronic interviews in order to identify teacher's experiences supporting students with dyslexia in the classroom (Creswell, 2009, p. 15). Surveys undertaken with one hundred and forty students will firstly be presented. Each question is restated and where necessary, the statistical data is presented in written and diagram form (McGrath, 2004, p.40) using pie and bar graphs. Some survey questions are both qualitative and quantitative in nature. Data differs in terms of open or closed responses in order to obtain more in-depth information (Creswell, 2009, p. 216). The survey's findings are based on the age, gender, class, specific learning difficulty, most favoured learning method, the biggest challenge, the college supports, progression route and greatest learning in further education. The surveys were issued to sixteen teachers on the 11th of January 2017 and returned by 15th of February 2017. All teachers returned complete and some incomplete surveys. Some surveys were incomplete as some respondents were inaccessible due to absence (Becker, 1989, p.299) while other class groups were on work placement.

Thematic data analysis will then be undertaken from three electronic interviews carried out with national organisational bodies between 21st of November 2016 and the 15th of March 2017. The National Organisational body name will be identified however the Interviewee will not in order to safeguard the participants. Three structured interviews were undertaken from the 12th of March 2017 to the 26th of April 2017 with further education staff. The staff will be distinguished as further education staff numbered one to three to protect their identities. Findings will be divided and presented into eight distinct themes which emerged from the research. They included, Lobbying and Campaigning, Awareness and Support, Funding, Staff Training, Education programmes, Barriers to Assessment and Accessing Support Services, Reasonable Accommodation and Legislation. A more detailed analysis will be presented in Chapter five.

As previous research of student, teachers and organisational experiences of Dyslexia in Further Education in the West of Ireland did not exist, it was necessary to complete original data collection for this thesis. Question one to three of the Survey will seek information of a general nature from student participants. It attempts to assess the gender, age and class of students. Question three to five attempted to gain information on how many students have been diagnosed with a learning difficulty, which particular type of learning difficulty and whether they disclosed the learning difficulty to the further education college to access learning supports. Question six to eight attempts to identify the best methods of learning for students, the challenges they face in college and the supports they can access within the further education college. Finally, question nine to ten attempts to assess the progression of students in 2018 and their greatest learning moment in this further education college in the west of Ireland.

4.2 Quantitative Findings – Pie and Bar Charts from Surveys

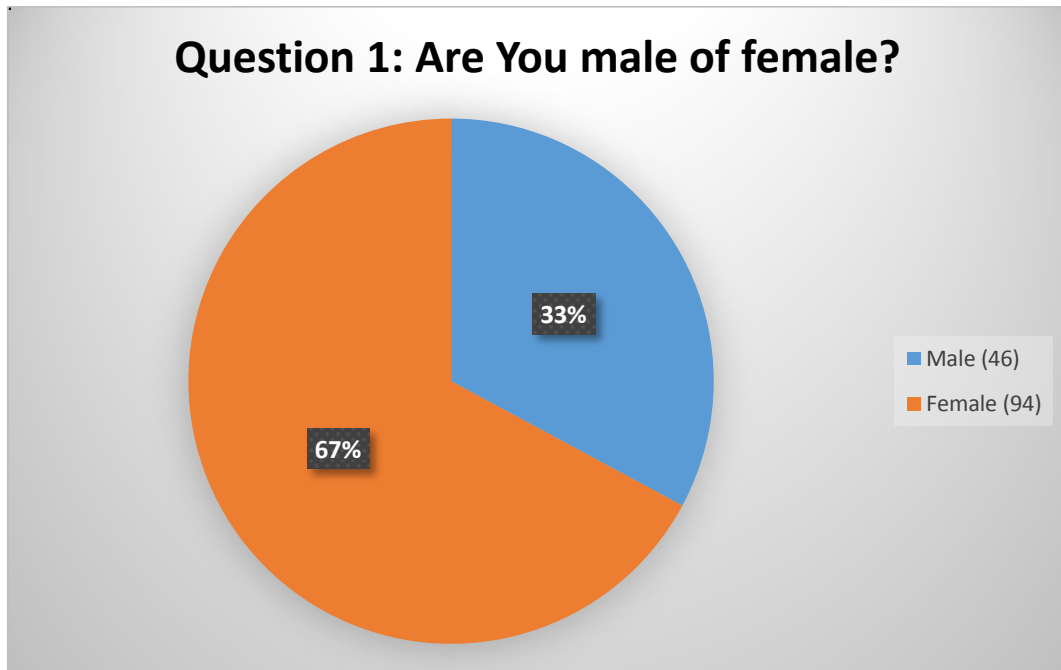


Figure 1: Pie chart indicates the gender of participants

Question One: Ninety-four females and forty-six males participated in this survey. Accounting for one hundred and forty participants overall. Sixty-seven percent (67%) were female and (33%) were male.

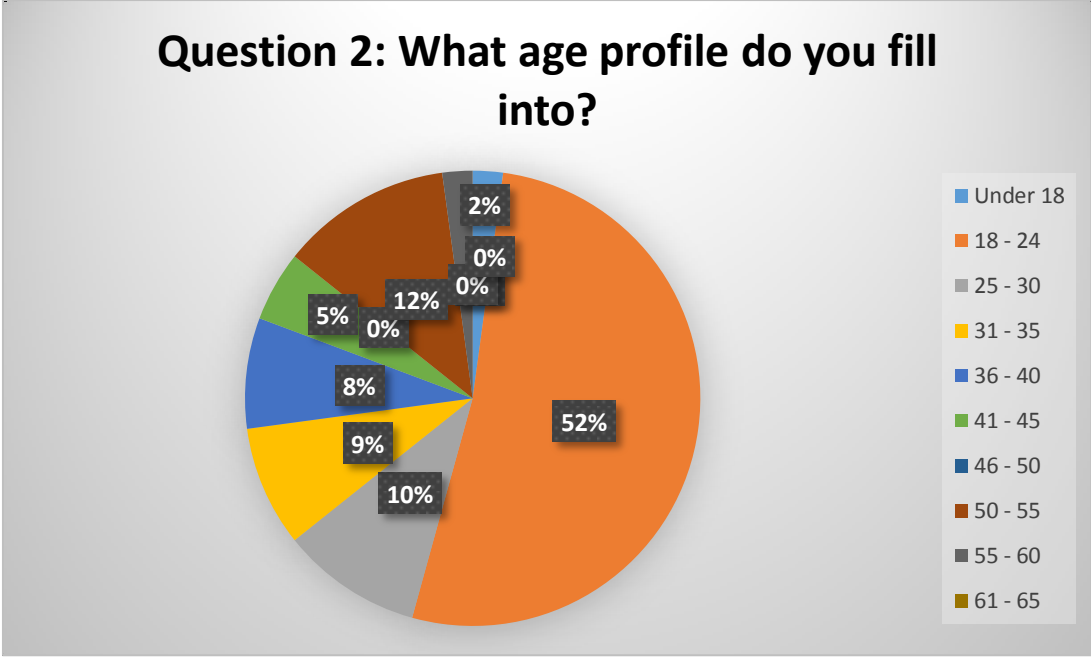


Figure 2: Pie chart identifies the age profile of students who participated in this survey.

Question Two: Of those who commented, the majority were between eighteen and twenty four years accounting for seventy three students or fifty-two percent (52%) of the overall result. Seventeen participants were aged between fifty one and fifty five making up twelve percent (12%). Fourteen were between twenty-five and thirty equating to ten percent (10%). Twelve were between thirty-one and thirty-five making up nine percent (9%) of the survey. Eleven were between thirty-six and forty making up eight percent (8%). Seven were between forty-one and forty-five making five percent (5%). Three students were under the age of eighteen years accounting for two percent (2%) of the overall surveyed group. No participants over the age of forty-two years who participated in this survey.

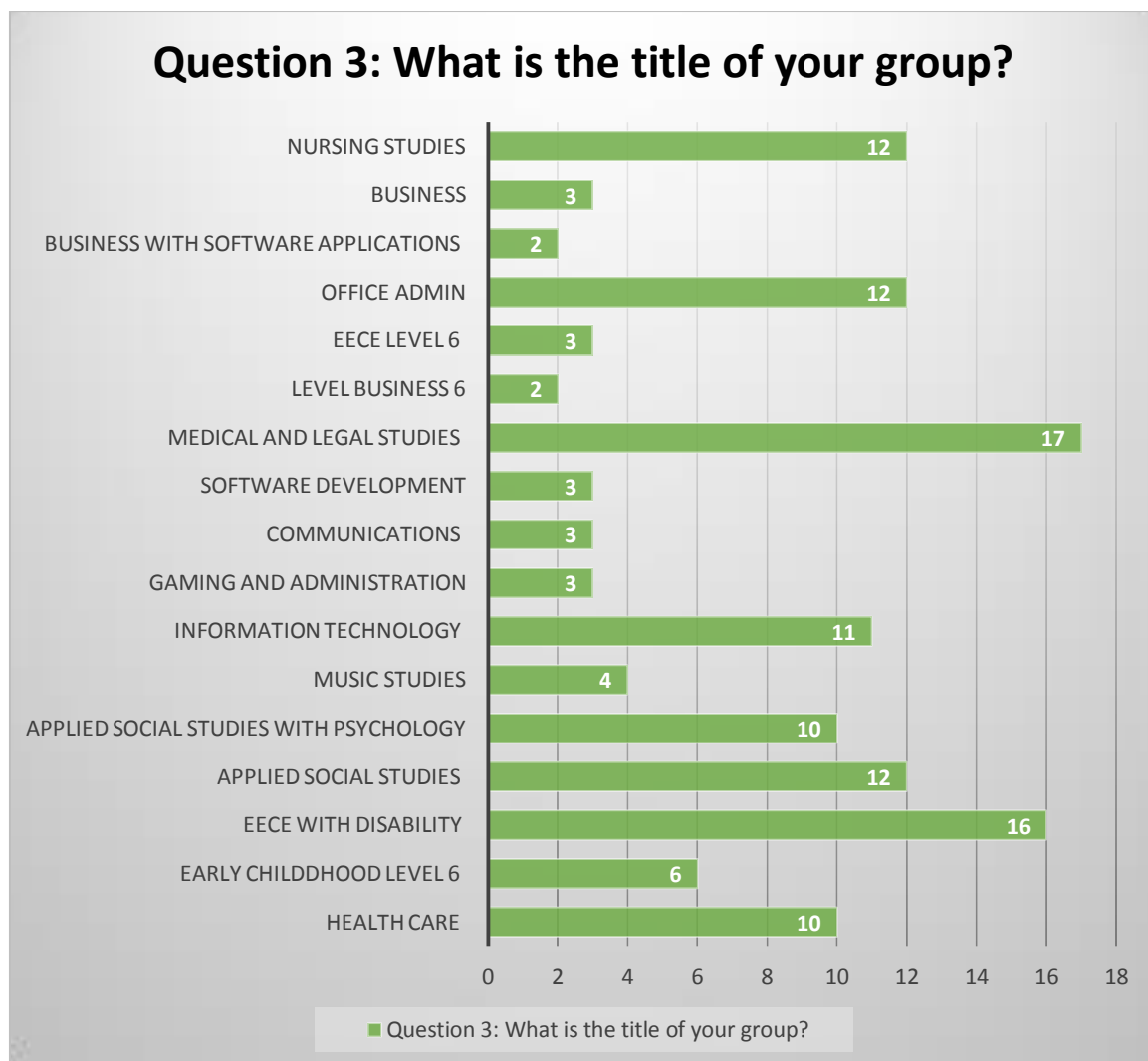


Figure 3: This bar chart examines the class group of students who participated in this survey.

Question Three: Seventeen students were from the medical and legal studies class accounting for the largest class group who participated in this survey. Sixteen students were from Early Childhood Care and Education. Twelve students were from Office Administration, Applied Social Studies and Nursing Studies respectively. Eleven students were from Information Technology. Ten students were from Health Care and Applied Social Studies with Psychology. Six students were from Early Childhood Level six. Four were from Music studies. Three students each were from Business level 5, Early Childhood Care and Education level six, Software Development, Communications and Gaming and Administration. While two students were from Business Level six and Business with Software Applications.

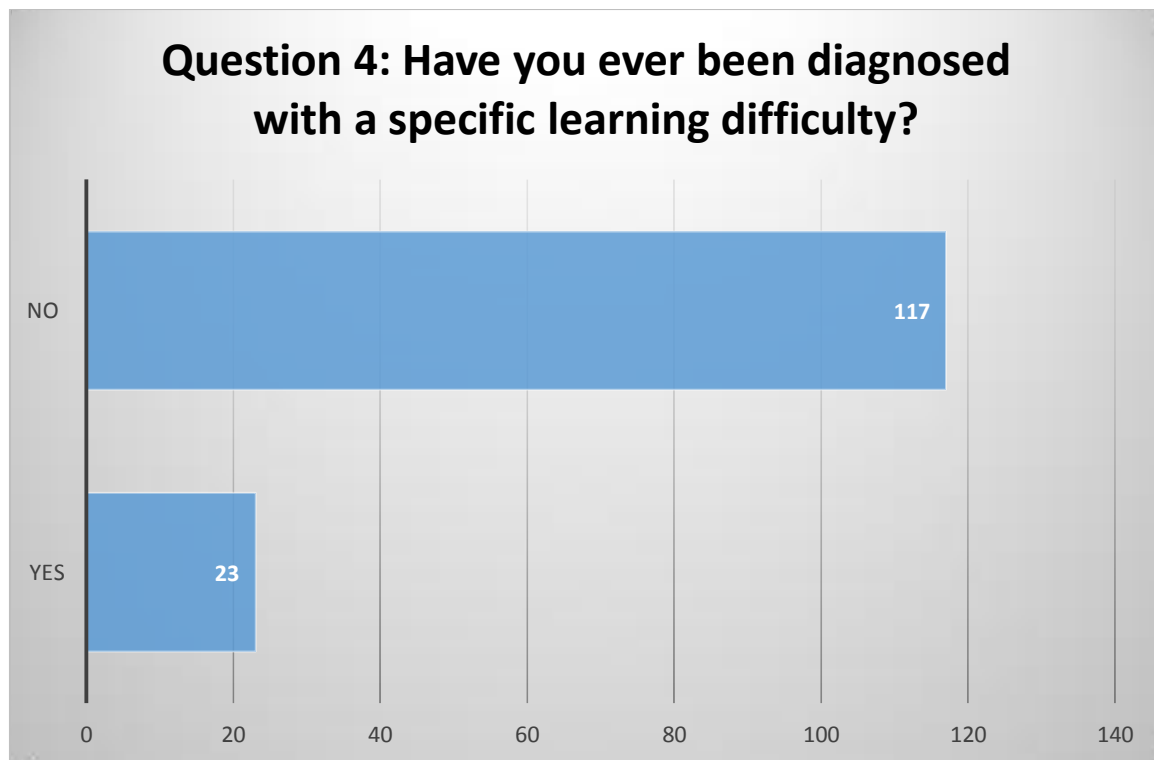


Figure 4: This bar chart explores how many students have been diagnosed with a specific learning difficulty

Question four: One hundred and seventeen students were not diagnosed with a specific learning difficulty. While twenty three students were diagnosed was a specific learning difficulty.

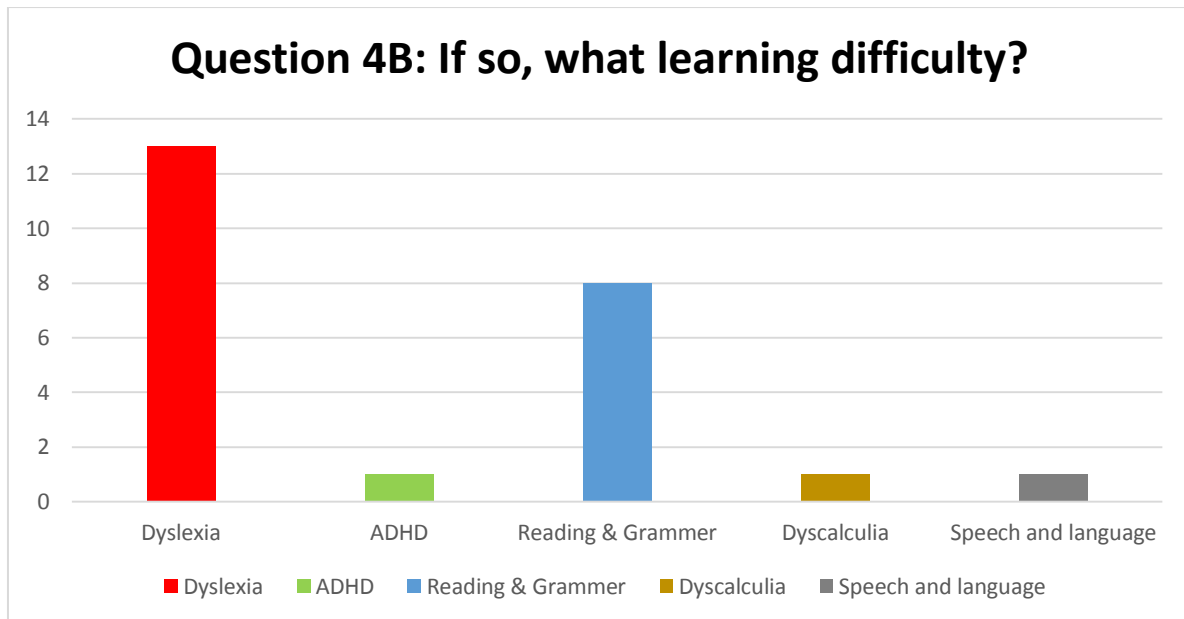


Figure 4B: This bar chart establishes what specific learning difficulty students have been diagnosed

Question Four B: Thirteen students were diagnosed with dyslexia accounting for the highest learning difficulty presented. One student was diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactive disorder. Eight students were diagnosed with a reading and grammar learning difficulties. One student had dyscalculia, while one student had a speech and language learning difficulty.

Question 5: If you answered yes to question 4, did you disclose your learning difficulty to the centre?

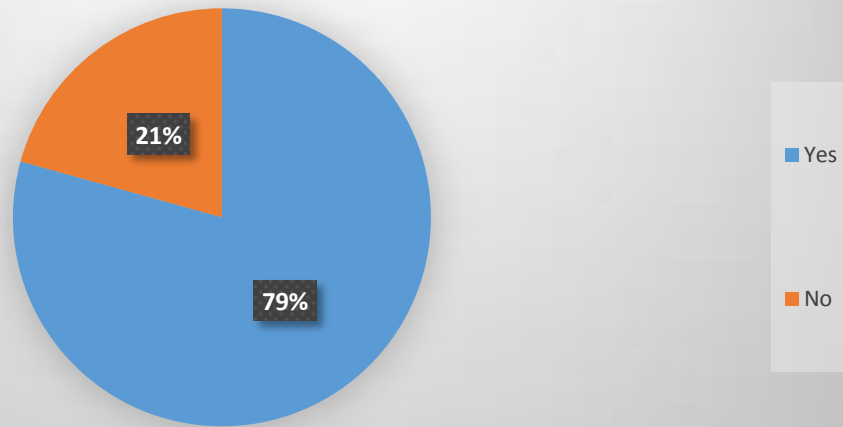


Figure 5: This pie chart outlines whether students with the specific learning difficulties disclosed their learning difficulty to the centre.

Question Five: Twenty-three students did disclose they have a learning difficulty accounting for 79% of the results. While six students did not disclose their learning difficulty accounting for 21%. Both quantitative and qualitative analysis was collected during this survey question. A closed question was firstly initiated by asking how many students disclosed their learning difficulty to the further education college. An open ended question then followed to identify the reasons why students chose to disclose or not discuss respectively.

Reason for not disclosing: Two students left this qualitative question blank. One student felt their learning difficulty was private. While another student felt they would have to be re-diagnosed as their educational assessment was out of date. Two students did not disclose their learning difficulty as they felt they did not need support. One student did not disclose as they did not receive any support in primary or secondary school and felt it would be the same in further education.

Reason for disclosing: Seven students left their reason for disclosing blank. Six students disclosed their learning difficulty in order to access learning support and special considerations for exams. Three students disclosed their learning difficulty to get a spelling and grammar waiver. While one student did disclose a learning difficulty but felt there was no service to get help.

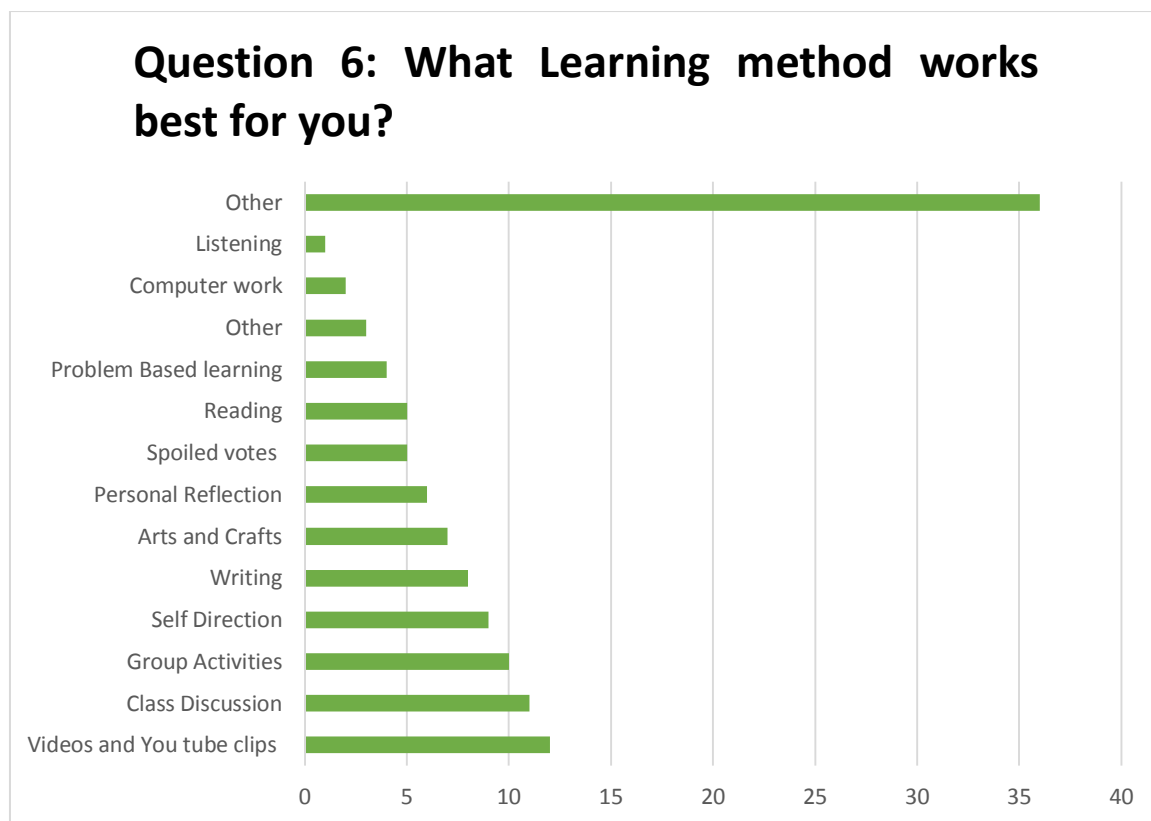


Figure 6: This bar chart recognises what learning method works best for students

Question Six: Thirty-six students identified other as their best method of learning. This qualitative question was presented by leaving a blank line for students to fill in their best method of learning if it was not present in the list provided. The pie chart below identifies the results obtained. Other, accounted for the most popular vote in this survey question. Twelve students felt video and you-tube clips were the learning methods that worked best for them. Eleven students choose class discussion while ten chose group activities. Nine students enjoyed self-directed activities best while eight identified writing was the best method of learning for them. Seven students identified art and crafts while six students chose personal reflection. There were five spoiled votes in this survey as some students ticked boxes rather than numbering them. While other responses were spoiled due to illegible writing. Five students identified writing as their best form of learning and four students enjoyed problem-based learning best. Two students identified computer work as the method which works best for them. While one student felt listening in class was the best method of learning. Listening accounted for the least popular response.

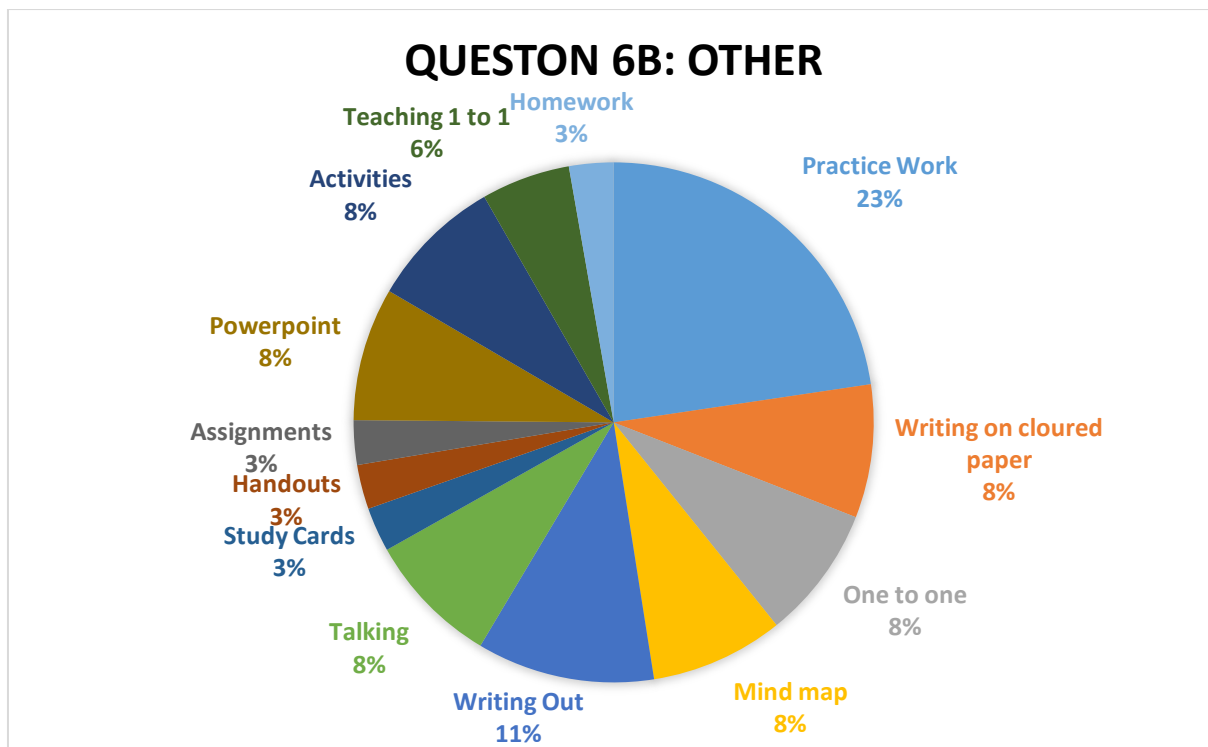


Figure 6B: This pie chart identifies other forms of learning students chose that worked best for them

Question Six B: Eight students identified practical work as the learning method which worked best for them, accounting for twenty-three percent (23%) of the overall result. This was the most popular result from this survey question. Four students felt writing out material worked best for them accounting for eleven percent (11%). Coloured paper, working one to one, mind mapping, talking through material and class activities were all chosen by three students each accounting for (8%) per activity. One student each chose study cards, handouts and homework as the best method of learning for them accounting for (3%) per activity.

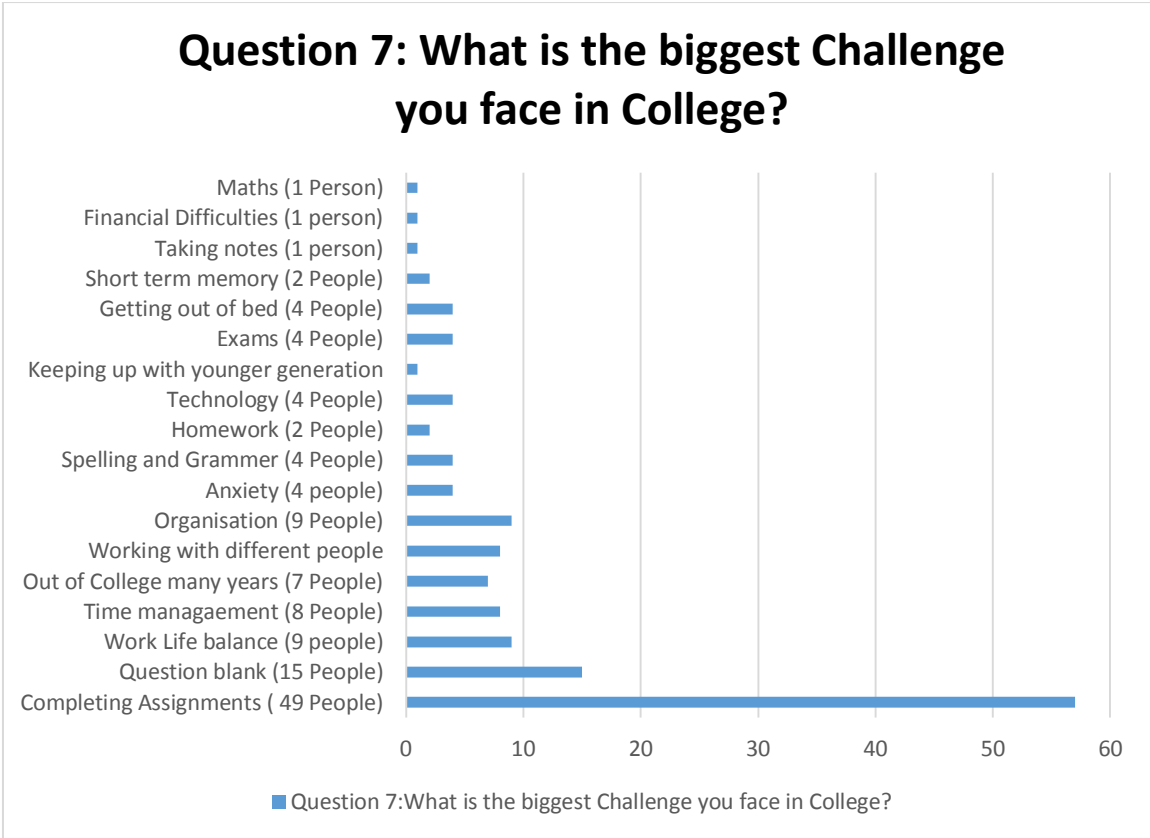


Figure 7: This bar chart identifies the biggest challenges students face in Further Education

Question Seven: Is also qualitative and open in nature to enable students to express the biggest challenge they experience in College. Forty-nine students identified completing assignments was their biggest challenge. This was the most popular result from this survey question. Fifteen students left this question blank. Nine students each felt the work life balance and organisation was their biggest challenge. While eight students felt time management and seven students identified returning to college after many years out was a challenge. Four students each chose anxiety, getting out of bed, technology and spelling and grammar as their biggest challenges. Two students identified that their short term memory was their biggest challenge. One student each chose mathematics, financial issues and taking notes in class was the biggest challenge they face in Further Education. Maths, financial issues and notes accounted for the least identified challenges experienced by students in this survey question.

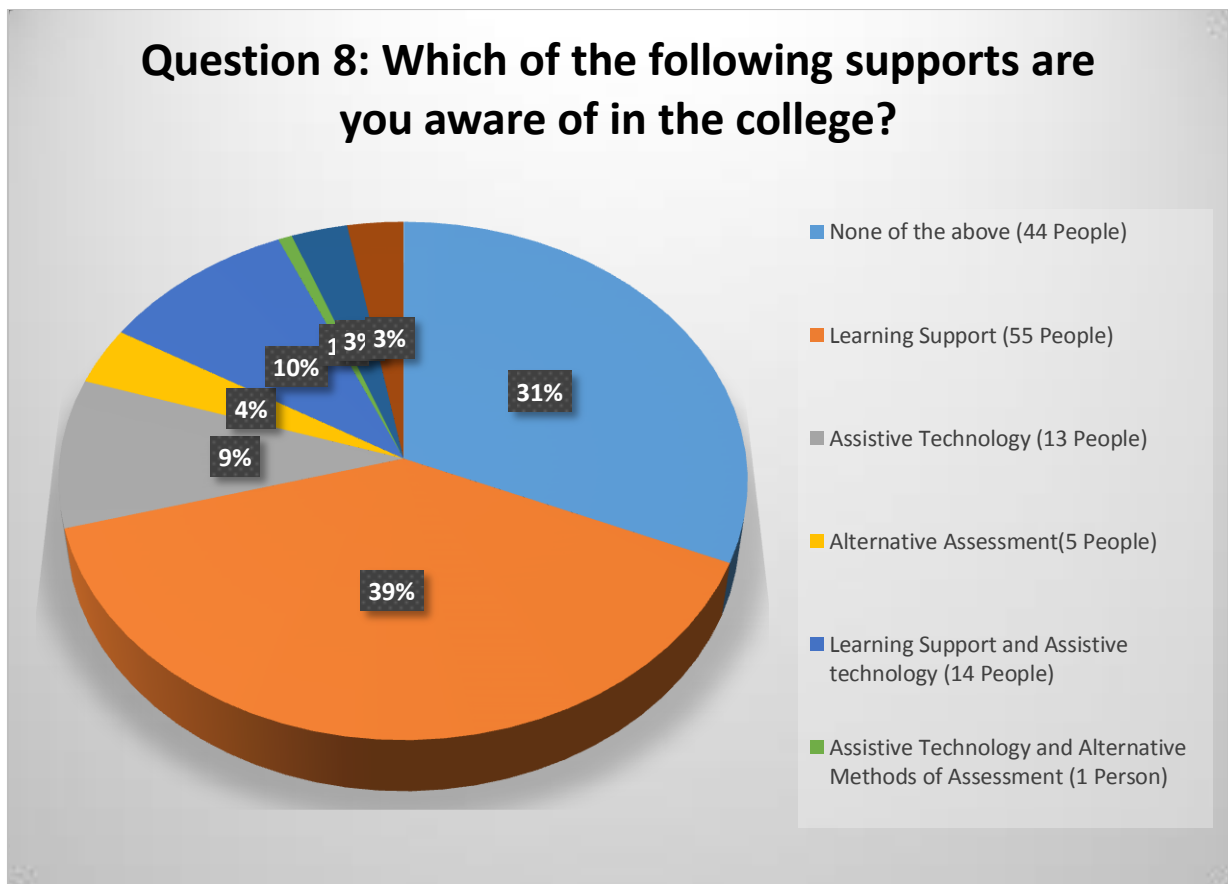


Figure 8: This pie chart explores what assistive supports students were aware of within in the Further Education College

Question Eight: Fifty five students were aware of learning support equating for thirty-nine percent (39%) of the overall result. Forty-four students were not aware of learning support, alternative assessment or assistive technology supports offered in the college accounting for thirty-one percent (31%). Thirteen students were aware of assistive technology accounting for thirteen percent (13%). Fourteen students were aware of learning support and assistive technology accounting for ten percent (10%). While five students were aware of alternative assessment accounting for four percent (4%) of the overall result. One student was aware of assistive technology and alternative methods of assessment accounting for three percent (3%) of the overall result.

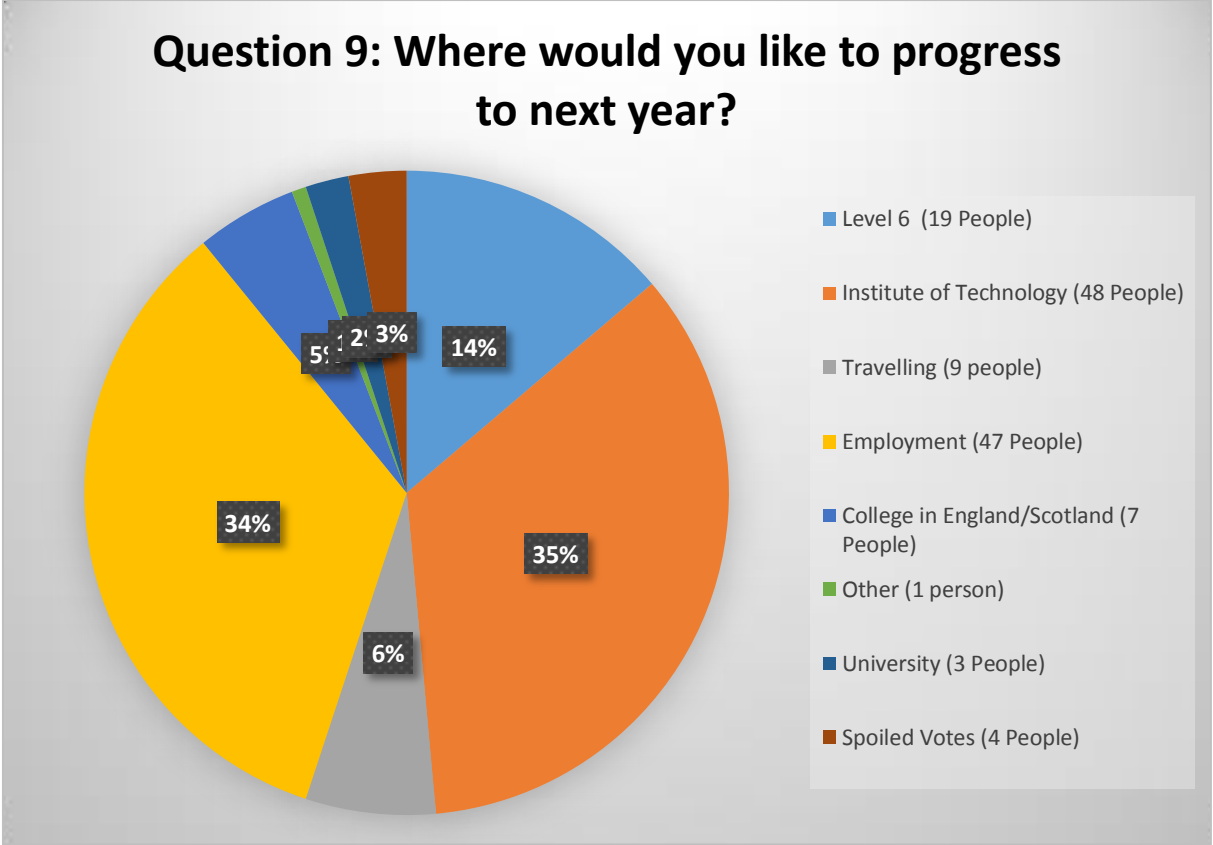


Figure 9: This pie chart examines where students would like to progress to next year

Question Nine: Forty-eight students or thirty five percent (35%) would like to progress to Institutes of Technology. Forty-seven students would like to gain employment accounting for thirty-four percent (34%) of the overall result. Nineteen students or fourteen percent (14%) would like to progress to level six in this further education centre next year. Nine students would like to go travelling accounting for six percent (6%). Seven students would like to go to college in England or Scotland accounting for five percent (5%). There was four spoiled votes as responses were illegible accounting for three percent (3%). While three students would like to go to university next year accounting for two percent (2%) while one student chose other, which was an open qualitative question, accounting for one percent (1%), as they have not decided what they would like to do next year.

Question 10: What was your greatest learning in this Further Education College

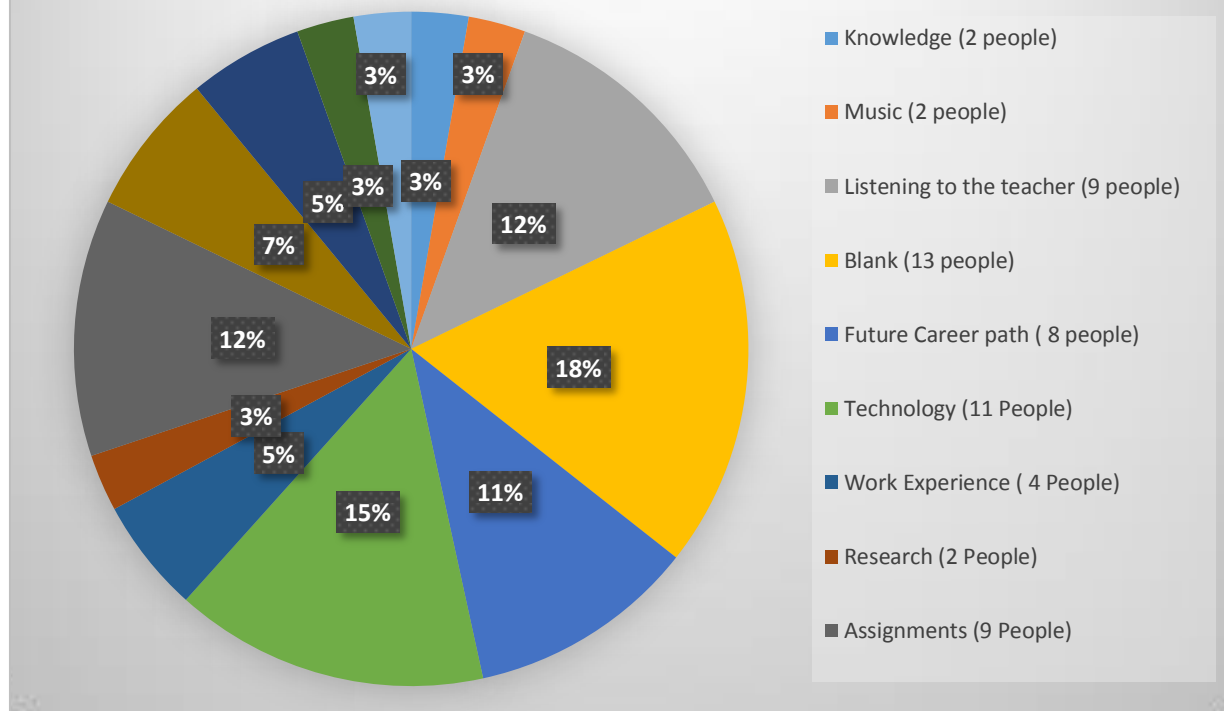


Figure 10: This pie chart indicates the greatest form of learning in Castlebar College of Further Education

Question Ten: This qualitative open question had a variety of different responses. Thirteen students left the question blank accounting for eighteen percent (18%) of the overall result. Eleven students chose technology accounting for fifteen percent (15%). Nine students stated assignments accounting for twelve percent (12%) while eight students found learning about their future career path was their greatest learning accounting for eleven percent (11%). Nine students found their greatest learning was from listening to their teacher equating for nine percent (9%). Four students chose work experience, (5%) of the overall result. While two students each chose to learn new knowledge, music and research accounting for 3% each.

4.3 Qualitative Findings - Emerging Themes from Electronic Interviews and Structured Interviews

In this section, I will organise the findings into eight themes which emerged across both the electronic and structured interviews. They included: Lobbying and Campaigning, Awareness and Support, Funding, Staff Training, Education Programmes, Barriers to Assessment and Accessing Support Services, Reasonable Accommodation and Legislation.

Lobbying and Campaigning:

Dyslexia Association of Ireland: 'Both local and national campaigning and lobbying are underway in many countries throughout Ireland to increase awareness and improve services for people of all ages with dyslexia'.

Dyslexia Association Mayo: 'Parents who attend dyslexic workshops can better advocate for their children through the education system when presenting the issues as a group. We have linked in with local radio to make the public aware of what dyslexia is and how to identify it. We have also written articles on the Connaught Telegraph and Mayo News to describe dyslexia and what can be done to remediate it. We have also had discussions with Mayo Mental Health Association to see how we could make other service providers within the community aware of our existence and the services we provide'.

Awareness and Support:

Dyslexia Association Ireland: 'More awareness amongst tutors of how best to support adults with dyslexia is needed along with the provision of additional literacy classes if necessary'.

Dyslexia Association Mayo: 'Workshops commenced to provide support for parents of dyslexic children and their families by giving the opportunity to meet with other parents and dyslexic children experiencing difficulties and provide support for one another. To ensure parents of children are no longer left in isolation. Educational psychologists in the Mayo area have been aware of our workshops. However, very few psychologists inform parents of newly diagnosed children that our service is available to them'.

Further Education Adult Educator One: 'A number of students attend learning support and I have asked individual students what they require in order to facilitate their learning. One student uses a live scribe pen. I support students to seek out learning support when they are

presenting with difficulties. I am also mindful of the words students find difficult to spell and I often write them down on the board to help with spelling. I also use coloured paper’.

Further Education Adult Educator Two: ‘There needs to be a move towards a Universal design for learning model of practice. Many adult students are not aware they have dyslexia until they encounter difficulties in school or at college. Access to psychologists for further education is essential’.

Further Education Adult Educator Three: ‘Students need more individual attention or teaching in a small group setting to help them complete and submit assignments on time. We have a very high dropout rate in Post Leaving Certificate course sector which is tragic as many of these students have the ability to complete our courses if they had additional support. I feel that dropping out of college has a seriously negative effect on student’s self-esteem and at times their mental health. It also gives them a fear of education and sometimes a lack of respect for the education system which can then be passed on to the next generation’.

Funding:

Dyslexia Association of Ireland: ‘Fundraising is a huge part of Dyslexia Association of Ireland and we are very reliant on fundraising to continue to provide services. One of the main challenges is funding, we raise funds through membership of the Association and also through sponsored events. Without funding, we are unable to provide subsidised assessments’.

Dyslexia Association Mayo: ‘One of the greatest challenges encountered by Dyslexia Mayo is funding to maintain the workshop classes. Costs have increased considerably over the years since the workshop commenced in September 2001.

Disability Access Route to Education: ‘Disability Access Route to Education and Higher Education Access Route was funded by the Higher Education Authority Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF). The Schemes are not funded by the participating Higher Education Institutions’.

Further Education Adult Educator Two: ‘Adequate funding needs to be made available from the fund for students with disabilities to support students with dyslexia in further education. A disability officer also needs to be appointed in further education colleges to support the growing need’.

Staff training:

Dyslexia Association of Ireland: 'At present we are at the development stage of providing supports to students and staff in further education. The workshops and seminars were the initial stages of a broader plan to develop services. Meeting with students and staff has allowed us to gather information as to what the needs are in the sector'.

Dyslexia Association Mayo: 'Training teachers to identify dyslexia in their own students and then teach dyslexic children and adults to read using multi-sensory teaching methods should be adapted in their own schools and colleges with their own classes as well as in dyslexia workshop classes. The cycle of illiteracy is still being within some families due to lack of support in the education system'.

'Dyslexia Ireland provides training courses for workshop teachers to support students and also to share the knowledge and skilled they have learned on the course with colleagues in their own schools. Children are not been enabled to reach their full potential as they are sometimes not getting the adequate support in schools due to teachers not been trained to identify and remediate dyslexia'.

Further Education Adult Educator One: 'Due to the positive inclusion of students with additional needs has changed the dynamic of the student cohort, which is welcome. But as teachers are we equipped with appropriate training to offer them the best experience?'

'I successfully completed the Benincasa Diploma in Education which enabled me to apply for a position as a Resource Teacher/Learning Support teacher in a special school. I qualified in 1988. As you can see, it was prior to subsequent legislation that has been enacted since then to protect people in relation to education. I also attended training with AHEAD in August 2016. Ongoing staff training should be available to keep abreast of best practice in the area'.

Further Education Adult Educator Two: 'Training for staff and students is needed in Assistive Technology. Teachers also need more training in methodologies which support UDL and specific needs of learners and multiple intelligence'.

Further Education Adult Educator Three: 'I did a course with Nala fifteen years ago while I worked in Youth Reach but I do not have the time to help students on an individual basis'.

Education Programmes:

Dyslexia Association of Ireland: 'Career Paths based in Leixlip in Co. Kildare is the only centre in the country which offers a full-time major award training course to unemployed adults with dyslexia in Ireland. The aim of this course is to develop knowledge, skills and experience to enable adults to enter the workforce or progress to Further Education'.

Dyslexia Association Mayo: 'Dyslexia workshops in Mayo run one evening per week in a local secondary school for children and teenagers between eight and sixteen years. The workshops provide small group work with one teacher and five students. Students learn through a multi-sensory teaching approach to learn to read more fluently and efficiently by trained teachers. Exam techniques, study skills, reading, writing and spelling are all supported'.

Further Education Adult Educator One: 'A dedicated class for tutorials should be provided with class teachers to iron out difficulties in submitting assignments and to offer a variety of ways of submitting work more than what is available now'.

'Personally, I feel PLC Courses are too academic. We need to develop a much more practical approach to assessment. There should be lots more opportunities for the applied approach to learning and for the teacher to document learning outcomes in various forms. For example, in early years, students need to know how to impart knowledge to children, therefore, by having a teaching-learning lab set up would enable students to have the practical experience working in this system. By recording students in various scenarios and offering them the opportunity to view this footage would enable them to improve practice. We need to have more value given to applied part of learning. Everyone is not academic and by overloading work by recording everything in written formation can eliminate some prospective candidates'.

Further Education Adult Educator Three: 'This year I let students do assignments in class, took them to a computer room and helped them to get their assignments started. I did this for three classes for each assignment and I felt it worked well. If they had any issues with the assignment I helped them as they were doing it. The main challenge with students is their lack of confidence that some of these students show. They tend to give up easily and with the attitude that assignments are too difficult and they do not have resilience to persevere. We need more time to reassure them and help them on an individual and small-group basis'.

Barriers to Assessment and Accessing Support Services:

Dyslexia Association of Ireland: 'Educational assessments are costly, an assessment costs €495. DAI does provide subsidised assessments where possible to people who are experiencing difficult circumstances such as low income. However, subsidised assessments are dependent on funding that is raised from within the DAI and it supports a limited number. The availability of an educational assessment is a change that I would like to see brought about in further education. Having an assessment means an individual has an understanding of their strengths and weaknesses and also what might assist them in learning'.

Dyslexia Association Mayo:' Some families find the fees prohibitive as they cannot afford to pay these fees'.

Disability Access Route to Education: 'In 2014 commissioned an evaluation of their service, it was found that DARE needs to broaden the avenues available to students to provide evidence of their disability so that it is easier and more affordable for them to do so. The process highlighted that a significant number of potential applicants were excluded from consideration as they could not afford or access the required evidence of disability documentation. A general practitioner can now provide a diagnosis to cut down on cost from their consultant'.

Further Education Adult Educator One: 'The most prominent learning difficulty in further education is dyslexia. However, there are a number of students who present with learning difficulties that have no formal assessment. There is always a cohort of students who will require extra intervention'.

'Some students do not have the necessary documentation in relation to specific provision. The cohort of students would have mixed abilities. Class dependent, there is usually a good mix of motivation and confidence. However one particular group would have low attainment and I find in this class there is not a good mix of confidence and motivation'.

'Any student who presents with a difficulty should get the necessary help even if they do not have documentation. More counselling hours should be available as students can lose confidence on receipt of feedback. A dedicated class for tutorials from class co-ordinator to iron out difficulties in submitting assignments'.

Reasonable Accommodation:

Dyslexia Association of Ireland: 'There is no standardised method of implementing reasonable accommodations at present in the FET sector, each ETB makes those decisions for themselves'.

Dyslexia Association Mayo: 'Parents should get tax relief for the fees they pay to the Dyslexia Association. Furthermore, there should be continuous professional development for teachers making them aware of dyslexia and how to support children and teenagers as new information is being researched and developed'.

Disability Access Route to Education: 'Criteria was devised in 2014 to be more holistic by including the impact that disability has on individual educational outcomes of students. In order to compete for a reduced points place, applicants must provide evidence of the impact of their disability on their second level education'.

DARE has also prioritised students on reduced points who are underrepresented in Higher Education. This includes applicants who are eligible for both DARE and HEAR applicants with physical and sensory disabilities are also prioritised.

Further Education Adult Educator One: 'Individual Education Plans are useful as it helps identify individual difference of student cohorts. It also focuses on the strengths of students and helps understand different ways of imparting learning strategies to individual students'.

Further Education Adult Educator Three: 'Most students will achieve more if they have an individual education plan although I feel a small group setting helps them to become less dependent'.

Further Education Adult Educator Two: 'There is no individual education plan in this centre. However, each teacher/ co-ordinator plans how they will help students reach their potential through feedback and one to one support'.

Legislation

Further Education Adult Educator One: 'I qualified in 1998, As you can see, it was prior to subsequent legislation that has been enacted since then to protect people in relation to education'.

Further Education Adult Educator Two: 'When working with students with learning difficulties the following legislation is adhered to the Equal Status Act 2000, Disability Act 2005, Education and Welfare Act 2000, The Data Protection Act 2003 and The Education of Persons with special education needs 2004'.

4.4 Conclusion

This findings chapter has outlined the views and experiences of those who are most familiar with dyslexia in further education. Adult educators, students and national organisations all provided valuable insight and increased awareness of dyslexia in the west of Ireland. Different perspectives were necessary in order to encapsulate a balanced view. Findings from the surveys were restated and where necessary, the statistical data was presented in written and diagram form using pie and bar graphs. The survey's findings were based on the age, gender, class, specific learning difficulty, most favoured learning method, biggest challenge, college supports, progression route and greatest learning in Further Education. The survey findings provided the foundation for the questions asked in the electronic interviews and structured interviews.

Key Findings

It was evident from both the surveys and the analysis of the interview data that there are many factors that affect student and teachers experiences of dyslexia in Further Education. These include the lack of funding to access educational assessments for students or provide adequate educational support with the nominal fee provided by the fund for students with disabilities. Staff training needs to be more readily available to support students with learning difficulties in the classroom and assist with technology. These themes will be analysed in the next chapter and later recommendations will be made on strategies that could be in place to improve dyslexia services for students in further education (Shelly, 2006, p.65 – 66).

5.0 CHAPTER FIVE – ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

The primary focus of this fifth chapter is to gather the threads of the study (Hegerty, 2010, p.65) on the barriers to inclusive and progressive further education for students with dyslexia accessing learning support services in the west of Ireland. Drawing on the literature on chapter two and findings in chapter four respectively in order to identify where they sit within the context of further education and its practice. I would like to acknowledge that the findings and analysis have been generated through a pragmatic approach. While also a personal lens identifying that my ontology and epistemology has influenced how the analysis has been presented (Doddy, 2015, p. 39).

My Initial research in the literature review has revealed a number of gaps in knowledge relating the legislations, funding, training and learning support accommodations. The research endeavours to address this by reviewing relevant literature with that of the structured Interviews with adult educators and national and regional organisations in order to gain a greater sense of the practical issues and the research problem which need to be addressed in order to provide an inclusive and progressive learning environment for all students in further education.

Initially, I believed funding and lack of awareness among further education colleges were the barriers to achieving an inclusive and progressive education. However, I have since discovered that many legislation and practices pertain to primary, secondary or higher education. Although, they are inter-connected with second level as the further education college and secondary school have the same role number and these issues are much more detailed and complex than initially considered. The lack of legislation specifically regarding learning difficulties in further education coupled with the challenge of adult educators accessing continued professional training courses in the West of Ireland was among the greatest barriers presented.

5.2 Lobbying and Campaigning

Lobbying and Campaigning was a theme identified among national organisations which are part public and part private funded. Organisations highlighted the need for increased awareness,

improved services, presenting issues as a group and increased service provision within the community. Dewey identifies that the method of democracy is to bring conflicts out into the open where their claims can be seen, appraised and be judged in light of more inclusive interests then are represented by either organisation separately (Morris & Shapiro, 1993, p.148).

Both local and national campaigning and lobbying are underway in many countries throughout Ireland to increase awareness and improve services for people of all ages with dyslexia (DAI).

Parents who attend dyslexic workshops can better advocate for their children through the education system when presenting the issues as a group (DAM).

The author acknowledges the challenges and barriers parents and organisations face in advocating for their children through the education system and accessing supports. Byrne, cited in O'Brien, 2016 identified that hundreds of schools do not have access to state psychological services and there are alarming gaps affecting vulnerable students through delays in assessment for young people with special needs. This is having a detrimental impact on children's development. The situation is particularly severe in Meath, Mayo and Dublin. As believers in democracy we not only have the right but the duty to question existing mechanisms and say and enquire whether some functional organisation would not serve to formulate and manifest public opinion better than existing methods (Boydston & Cahn, 2008, 175).

It is evident from this report that it pertains to primary and secondary level, although it can be stated that if students do not receive early educational assessment and intervention, it can lead to low self-esteem and working in a low paid employment position. Ravipati, 2017, p. 3 identifies that according to the national centre for learning disabilities report only a small number of students are formally identified with disabilities in schools. As a result they are three times more likely to drop out of school. In turn, adult students who return to education later in life carry with them decide their past negative experiences, fears and educational challenges which hinder their future learning.

5.3 Awareness and Support

The data from both National Organisations and Adult Educator Interviews clearly highlighted the need for learning support classes, assistive technology, stationary, small group work and supporting students emotionally when they lack self-esteem and have mental health difficulties.

More awareness amongst tutors of how best to support adults with dyslexia is needed along with the provision of additional literacy classes if necessary (DAI).

Workshops commenced providing support for parents of dyslexic children and their families by giving the opportunity to meet with other parents and dyslexic children experiencing difficulties and provide support for one another. To ensure parents of children are no longer left in isolation. Educational psychologists in the Mayo area have been aware of our workshops. However, very few psychologist inform parents of newly diagnosed children that our service is available to them (DAM).

A number of students attend learning support and I have asked individual students what they require in order to facilitate their learning. One student uses a live scribe pen. I support students to seek out learning support when they are presenting with difficulties. I am also mindful of the words students find difficult to spell and I often write them down on the board to help with spelling. I also use coloured paper (FEAE1).

Dewey states that everything depends upon the quality of experience which is had (Dewey, 1938, p. 26). When adult educators support the individual needs of students this leads to growth. Adult educators must be able to judge what attitudes are conducive to growth and what are detrimental. Educators should not only be aware of the general principle of shaping of the actual by environing conditions, but also recognise concrete surroundings are conducive to having experiences of growth. Every experience is a moving force and only be judged on the ground of what it moves forward and into (Dewey, 1938, p.38 - 40).

There needs to be a move towards a Universal design for learning model of practice. Many adult students are not aware they have dyslexia until they encounter difficulties in school or at college. Access to psychologists for further education is essential (FEAE2).

Dewey states a teacher is not concerned with adding new facts to the science he teaches, in propounding new philosophies or verifying them. The teacher is concerned with subject matter as 'representing a given stage and phase of the development of experience'. Hence, what concerns teachers is ways in which subject matter may become part of experience. They seek to identify what is present and useable and make reference to it (Dewey, 1990, p.30). Progressive education is in keeping with the universal design for learning as it emphasis, reflection, purposeful learning and freedom. The progressive philosophy emphasis the participation of the learner in forming the purpose and direction of his activities in the learning process (Dewey, 1938, p.17).

Students need more individual attention or teaching in a small group setting to help them complete and submit assignments on time. We have a very high dropout rate in Post Leaving Certificate course sector which is tragic as many of these students have the ability to complete our courses if they had additional support. I feel that dropping out of college has a seriously negative effect on student's self-esteem and at times their mental health. It also gives them a fear of education and sometimes a lack of respect for the education system which can then be passed on to the next generation (FEAE3).

Dewey identifies that all genuine education comes about through experience, this does not mean that all experiences are genuinely educative. Past learning experiences may hinder future learning (Dewey, 1938, p. 25). As a result of students dropping out of further education courses this may increase a person's automatic skill in a particular direction and land him stuck in a groove or a rut, which in turn the effect can narrow the field of further experience.

5.4 Funding

Reflecting on the Interviews, funding was a dominant theme that emerged by both National Organisations and Adult Educators.

Fundraising is a huge part of Dyslexia Association of Ireland and we are very reliant on fundraising to continue to provide services. One of the main challenges is funding, we raise funds through membership of the Association and also through sponsored events. Without funding, we are unable to provide subsidised assessments (DAI).

While Dyslexia Mayo also stated that one of the greatest challenges encountered by dyslexia Mayo is funding to maintain the workshop classes. Costs have increased considerably over the years since the workshop commenced in September 2001. Our greatest expense is tutor payments and ensuring income tax, Pay Related Social Insurance and Universal Social Charge are deducted from term payments (DAM).

Accessing literature regarding funding allocation under the fund for students with disabilities was difficult to access and not readily available for the public to view. The researcher emailed the Higher Education Authority to gain insight into the amount of funding offered to students each year. M. Mawarire, personal communication, June 8, 2017 stated in the 2016/2017 academic year, €2.4 million was allocated to the further education sector to support students who apply to the fund for students with disabilities. The colleges are given a block amount and manage it on behalf of the students who apply for supports. The Higher Education Authority submitted a review report on the Fund for Students with Disabilities in 2016. However this report has not yet been published and is currently in Minister Burton's office for review. (J. Burton, personal communication, June 8, 2017) stated that the report will be published in autumn 2017.

Further Education Adult Educator three identified adequate funding needs to be made available from the fund for students with disabilities to support students with dyslexia in further Education. A disability officer also needs to be appointed in further education colleges to support the growing need (FEAE3).

It could be suggested that adequate funding needs to be made available to meet the growing need of students presenting with dyslexia in further education. An additional staff member needs to be employed as a Disability Office to carry out a needs assessment, manage and apply to the fund for students with disabilities, train students in using assistive technology and provide learning support, exam techniques and support students and teachers when academic challenges present. The 2016 report review on the Fund for Students with disabilities once published may take into account these challenges and possible solutions outlined.

The European Commission 2013, p. 93 identified a number of key findings in the PIAAC survey. Twenty percent of European working age population have low literacy and numeracy skills and as a result are caught in the 'low skills trap' and are less likely to participate in learning activities.

It could be argued that some of this twenty percent may have dyslexia and by placing targeted supportive intervention such as an employed disability officer and extra funding for learning support hours would create a positive learning environment for students who are more willing to progress to higher education with 'sustaining skills which would bring significant positive economic and social outcomes' (Solas, 2014, p.93).

5.5 Staff Training

It was apparent from the Interviews with national organisations and adult educators that staff training was currently a very topical issue. Dyslexia Association of Ireland appointed Michelle Kinsella as Development and Support Officer in 2016, to increase adult service delivery nationwide. To increase provision of training sessions for adult and further education tutors and to provide development and support meetings for adults with dyslexia (Dyslexia Ireland, 2017). Up until 2016, there was no Further or Adult Education officer employed in Dyslexia Ireland.

At present we are at the development stage of providing supports to students and staff in Further Education. The workshops and seminars were the initial stages of a broader plan to develop services. Meeting with students and staff has allowed us to gather information as to what the needs are in the sector (DAI).

The Department of Education and Solas are funding an adult education officer with Dyslexia Ireland and this is a very progressive step forward in acknowledging the need for training for staff and students in further education. Up until 2016, the training programmes and methodologies on offer nationally were tightly focused on second level and higher education.

Dyslexia Mayo identifies that training teachers to identify dyslexia in their own students and then teach dyslexic children and adults to read using multi-sensory teaching methods should be adapted in their own schools and colleges with their own classes as well as in dyslexia workshop classes. The cycle of illiteracy is still being within some families due to lack of support in the education system (DAM).

Teachers all highlighted the need for extra training in order to provide for the student's needs. The following data provides examples of the current issues.

Due to the positive inclusion of students with additional needs has changed the dynamic of the student cohort, which is welcome. But as teachers are we equipped with appropriate training to offer them the best experience? (FEAE1).

I successfully completed the Benincasa Diploma in Education which enabled me to apply for a position as a Resource Teacher/Learning Support teacher in a special school. I qualified in 1988. As you can see, it was prior to subsequent legislation that has been enacted since then to protect people in relation to education. I also attended training with AHEAD in Dublin in August 2016. Ongoing staff training should be available to keep abreast of best practice in the area.

Dewey identifies the need to revise the standardised subject matter in school and replace it with a process of learning which is more experienced based. Teachers who engage in ongoing continued professional development can learn new methodologies in facilitation in order to provide inclusive and progressive practices for all students in the classroom which are engaging and meaningful. Teachers acknowledge that the 'self is not ready made, but something in continuous formation through choices and actions' (Dewey, 1938, 56). Students must engage with different toys, activities and materials which meet their individual interests while also providing activities which provide quite reflection to enable students to have freedom of thought, desire and purpose (Dewey, 1938,p. 61).

It must be acknowledged however, that the majority of continued professional training courses available are located in Dublin or Cork which is a considerable distance away from where these Further Education teachers work and live. As a result, Adult Educators usually have to stay overnight away from their families. Many of these training courses are also during the academic week and as a result teachers must arrange cover for two or more days from their classes in order to attend. The Further Education Support Service should acknowledge this and arrangements should be made to provide training courses to staff in the west and more rural parts of Ireland.

AHEAD is currently leading in this by providing an online training course on a range of different disabilities which is run twice annually with an optional pre-term seminar, followed by an eighteen to twenty-hour online course completed over a six to eight-week term. This interactive online course is broken into four modules: disability attitudes, legislation and history, understanding disability, supports and reasonable accommodations and needs assessment and

funding. This ahead training course is flexible and inclusive to the needs of further education staff as it can be accessed in any county nationwide. As long as educators have access to the internet and a computer. It can also be undertaken at a time that suits further education adult educators provided it is completed within the eight week time frame. A folder of resources can also be downloaded as part of the online course which adult educators can store for clarification at a later date (AHEAD, 2016, p.3)

Training for staff and students is needed in Assistive Technology. Teachers also need more training in methodologies which support UDL and specific needs of learners and multiple intelligence (FEAE2).

The Universal Design for Learning model is a very dynamic and inclusive approach to teaching students by incorporating flexible learning strategies such as solution focused, self-learning and portfolio based evidence in addition to more traditional methods such as lectures and tutorials (AHEAD,2016). It is currently the most progressive training available for teachers in further education. However, again this workshop was held in Dublin over two days with the course fee was in excess of €250. Teachers who were newly qualified and not employed by a college had to pay this substantial fee in order to attend. Accommodation also cost an additional €120 per night as well as €50 for a return train ticket from the west of Ireland.

As a result, it could would noted that more localised and varied availability of continued professional development programmes in the west of Ireland and more flexible continued professional development (CPD) courses available on weekends to meet the needs of teaching adult educators. The cost of attending these CPD workshops should be reconsidered to be more affordable to further education colleges and newly qualified teachers alike. If all of these factors were taken into account, I would imagine a greater number of adult educators would attend workshops and in turn teachers would be better informed of current legislation and progressive and inclusive teaching methodologies and practices.

5.6 Education Programmes

A number of sub themes emerged within education programmes. Multi-sensory teaching approaches, Post Leaving Certificate courses been to academic, more practical approaches to assessment needed and the importance of a teaching learning lab to provide creative forms of

learning. While Dyslexia Mayo highlighted good practice by working with small groups, having trained dyslexia teachers and providing a multi-sensory learning environment to engage learners.

Dyslexia workshops in Mayo run one evening per week in a local secondary school for children and teenagers between eight and sixteen years. The workshops provide small group work with one teacher and five students. Students learn through a multi-sensory teaching approach to learn to read more fluently and efficiently by a trained teachers. Exam techniques, study skills, reading, writing and spelling are all supported (DAM).

Personally, I feel PLC Courses are too academic. (FEAE1).

Grummell, 2004, p. 122, states that employability is promoted as the principal objective of further education, success is measured by achievement of awards and progression to employment or higher education. Further Education is trapped within constraints of outputs rather than what further education is, actual knowledge claims and learning processes and distinctive characteristics.

We need to develop a much more practical approach to assessment. There should be lots more opportunities for the applied approach to learning and for the teacher to document learning outcomes in various forms (FEAE1).

Grummell, 2004, p. 130 identifies learning outcomes are often separated from the process of learning. The focus is an outcome a learner can produce rather than the learning process and how it applies to life. Dewey, 1956, p. 75-76 argues that from the standpoint of students, a great waste in the school comes from his inability to utilise the experiences he learns outside school in any freeway within school itself. As a result, he is unable to apply in daily life what he is learning in school. Enormous pressure is placed on further education adult educators who struggle to capture the complexity of learning into measurable performance categories of FETAC. Rather than the Education system matching learners needs. 'That is the isolation of school, its isolation from life' (Dewey, 1956, p.76).

Students in turn remove from their mind a large part of their ideas, interests and activities that are a predominate part of their home and family life. Schools are unable to utilise the everyday experiences of students and they set painfully to work on another tack by artificial means to

arouse student's interests in school studies. This remains, a large gap between the everyday experiences of the student and the 'isolated material supplied in large measure in the school (Dewey, 1956, p.76). These market orientated discourses have redefined further education from a broad vocational ethos to targeted training for employability (Grummell, 2004, p. 128).

In early year's classes, students need to know how to impart knowledge to children, therefore, by having a teaching-learning lab set up would enable students to have the practical experience working in this system (FEAE3).

Dewey urged schools should be made into an embryonic social community which was simplified but resembled the social life of the community. Dewey believed the tragic weakness of the school system endeavour to prepare future members of social order in a medium in which the conditions of the social spirit are eminently wanting (Dewey, 1956, p. 14-15).

We need to have more value given to applied part of learning. Everyone is not academic and by overloading work by recording everything in written formation can eliminate some prospective candidates (FEAE1).

Currently, the focus is on individual responsibility for students own learning. Dewey states that students are told to think things out and work things out for himself, without being supplied with any envioning conditions which are necessary to start and guide thought (Dewey, 1956, p.24). There is over reliance on the individual rather than social movements as an agency of change, this creates a false sense of emancipation (Inglis. 1997, p.6-7). Further Education is stretched in terms of accountability, performativity and professionalism; this reduces the learning culture, knowledge base, pedagogy and structure of further education (Grummell, 2004, p. 134). Dewey. 1938, p. 38 states that an 'experience should arose curiosity, strengthen initiative and set up desires and purposes that are sufficiently intense to carry a person over place in the future'.

While FEAE1 and FEAE3 highlighted similar improvements they would like to see implemented.

A dedicated class for tutorials should be provided with class teachers to iron out difficulties in submitting assignments and to offer a variety of ways of submitting work more than what is available now (FEAE1).

This year I let students do assignments in class, took them to a computer room and helped them to get their assignments started. I did this for three classes for each assignment and I felt it worked well. If they had any issues with the assignment I helped them as they were doing it. The main challenge with students is their lack of confidence that some of these students show. They tend to give up easily and with the attitude that assignments are too difficult and they do not have resilience to persevere. We need more time to reassure them and help them on an individual and small-group basis (FEAE3).

It could be identified that providing tutorials on assignment submission and supporting students with assignments in class greatly alleviates student's fears, confusion and feelings of being overwhelmed. Many students are mature adult learners and have been out of education for many years and are not familiar with the assignment process. Furthermore, students with dyslexia struggle with organisation, structure and time management (Ball, 2011, p. 164 – 166). Therefore teaching student's skills in assignment and exam techniques early in the first semester would greatly enhance student's ability to set assignment deadlines and work towards achieving them.

5.7 Barriers to Assessment and Accessing Learning Support Services

A theme which emerged early in the findings chapter was the barriers to accessing educational assessment and learning support services for students in further education. The cost, accessing supports, time, policy and the child and adult educational scale were the main sub-challenges identified.

Cost:

Dyslexia Ireland stated that the cost associated with providing educational assessment hindered students ability to get assessed.

'Educational assessments are costly, an assessment costs €495. Subsidised assessments for low-income families are dependent on funding and as a result supports a limited number of people'. The availability of an educational assessment is a change that I would like to see brought about in Further Education. Having an assessment means an individual has an understanding of their strengths and weaknesses and also what might assist them in learning' (DAI).

Adults over the age of eighteen years can get assessed in one of two ways. The first is by an educational psychologist from Dyslexia Ireland. Their office is located in Dublin and for people living in the west of Ireland this is over three and a half hours of a journey each way. Many adult students cannot afford travel expenses as well as the educational assessment fee, even with a reduction as the majority of students in further education are unemployed or have part-time positions on the evenings and weekends. The second option is to get educationally assessed locally by a private educational psychologist and a list of psychologists can be obtained on psychological society of Ireland's website (Psychological Society of Ireland, 2017). It should be noted that getting educationally assessed locally can be a more cost and time effective option as there is minimal travel expenses and time involved, especially for parents trying to manage home and college life.

Accessing Supports

Adult educators demonstrated their concerns that students were not receiving the intervention or supports they needed due to not having an educational assessment. The fund does not cover assessment or diagnosis of a disability (Higher Education Authority, 2014, p.6). This prohibited student's accessing learning support services resulting in lack of confidence and motivation. Adult Educators identified the need for change in provision to ensure all students were supported regardless of documentation.

'If a student does not have an educational or clinical assessment, they are not entitled to the fund for students with disabilities from the Department of Education to access learning support services. It is at the discretion of the college to support the student with limited resources' (FEAE2).

'There are a number of students who present with learning difficulties that have no formal assessment. There is always a cohort of students who will require extra intervention. Any student who presents with a difficulty should get the necessary help even if they do not have documentation. One particular group would have low attainment and I find in this class there is not a good mix of confidence and motivation' (FEAE 1).

Time:

Even if students are successful in undertaking an educational psychological assessment at their own expense. Many students miss the two closing dates for submission to apply for the fund for disabilities due to the current educational assessment waiting list of three months or nine months if requiring a subsidised assessment (Dyslexia Ireland, 2016). According to the Higher Education Authority, 2015, p.5 all students who present with additional needs on or before the academic year must meet the initial closing date in early October. There is also a final closing date for colleges to request funding for services and supports under the fund in the middle of December. Although in the event that a student or students present to the disability officer after the middle of December, the institution has the discretion to use the funding already allocated to support the student provided a needs assessment has been undertaken (Higher Education Authority, 2015, p.5).

It appears that the 'nominal cost provided to each student' each year by the fund would be further reduced when divided among additional students and places a great challenge on further education centres to stretch resources to meet student's needs. In general, there is limited literature available on the measures to support adults with disabilities access education or training. In turn, this reflects the limited practice rather than a deficiency in literature (National Council for Special Education, 2013, p. 61). However, the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education in Secondary school carried out research into the policy and practice in inclusive assessment across thirty-two countries and acknowledged the role of diagnosis with assessment procedures. Although, the recommendations highlighted a shift in focus on initial diagnosis to continued assessment conducted by teachers that directly guides and informs teaching and learning (EADSNE, 2005, 47-48)

Policy:

Disability Access Route to Education has acknowledged that more inclusive practices need to be adapted in order to provide inclusion to students accessing lower points in third level education who cannot afford to get educationally assessed. It could be suggested that this is a very welcomed progressive step forward in providing inclusion for students regardless of financial circumstance.

'Disability Access Route to Education commissioned an evaluation of their service, It was found that DARE needs to broaden the avenues available to students to provide evidence of their

disability so that it is easier and more affordable for them to do so. The process highlighted that a significant number of potential applicants were excluded from consideration as they could not afford or access the required evidence of disability documentation. A general practitioner can now provide a diagnosis to cut down on cost from their consultant' (DARE).

The Higher Education Authority completed a review of the fund due to be published at the end of 2016. The purpose was to evaluate the role the fund plays supporting access and participation in further education. It appears that this review as the current provision is prohibiting undiagnosed students from growing, progressing and learning in further education. Due to their inability to apply to the fund for students with disabilities to access learning support services, alternative methods of assessment or equipment as a result of not having an educational assessment. According to the Higher Education Authority, 2015, p.8 the fund is designed to ensure equality of participation in education for people with disabilities. However, the department's purpose is currently not been met as many students who need disability support are not receiving it.

Child and Adult Education Scales:

Alternative more affordable methods of assessment need to be made available to verify disabilities and a change in the department's policy regarding disability documentation required for eligibility need to be undertaken. Currently, a full educational psychological assessment should be carried out within the five years from the date of assessment to apply to the fund. Although, if an assessment was conducted using an adult scales the five years does not apply (Higher Education Authority, 2015, p. 13). However, in reality, many further education students have just completed their secondary education when their educational assessment on the children's scales expired, in this instance, the further education college should be able to carry out a quick scan screening similar to that used in Letterkenny IT, which consists of one hundred online computer questions in order to identify preferred learning styles of students, learning strategies and supplementary support required (Houston cited in ASCENT, 2015, P. 12). In turn this screening programme together with the child scales educational assessment should meet the criteria to be eligible to apply to the fund for students with disabilities rather than being placed on a waiting list and paying an additional €495 for another assessment.

5. 8 Reasonable Accommodations

A great variation in responses emerged from the theme reasonable accommodations. Subthemes identified standardised methods, targeted dyslexia further education programmes, DARE holistic application process, organisations sharing resources and individual education plans.

Standardised methods

'Dyslexia Association of Ireland identified that no standardised method of implementing reasonable accommodations was present in the FET sector, each ETB makes those decisions for themselves'. (DAI)

Currently, no standardised method of implementing reasonable accommodation exists, as each student has a very different set of abilities and needs. A particular barrier for adults with learning disabilities derives from literacy issues and lack of appropriate training materials (Mirfin-Vetch, 2003). To ensure the individual needs of students are met each college undertakes an assessment of need in consultation with students and takes evidence from a clinical or educational psychologist into consideration in order to identify specific support required. Following this assessment a claim for funding is from each college is undertaken on behalf of students (Byrne & Duggan, 2014, p. 37).

Furthermore, all students return assistive technology software each year and as a result the supply can be given to new students the following year once cleaned and anti-virus updated. This enabling further education colleges to provide targeted support such as additional learning support hours, study skill support, note takers, personal assistances or to order newer dynamic technology equipment as needed.

Targeted Dyslexia Training Programmes

According to Dyslexia Association Mayo, Parents should get tax relief for the fees they pay to the Dyslexia Association. Furthermore, there should be continuous professional development for teachers making them aware of dyslexia and how to support children and teenagers as new information is being researched and developed (DAM).

Dyslexia Mayo provides targeted Intervention to students up to eighteen years. However regionally the National Learning Network and National Adult Literacy Agency are the two targeted support services available for Adults with learning or reading difficulties in Co. Mayo. Nationally, Career path, offers a full-time nine-month major Award in Employability Skills, level three for unemployed adults with dyslexia in conjunction with Kildare Wicklow Education and Training Board. This is the only training course in the country which offers target support and training for dyslexic learners (Dyslexia, 2015, p. 3).

It could be argued that further targeted dyslexia programmes should be made available in the west of Ireland to support students in Further Education. Furthermore, The National Learning Network (NLN) should transfer a copy of the fund for students with disabilities application form to the further education centre with the permission of the student, to ensure continuity of support is provided. The NLN and FE centres should share resources such as their educational psychologist as they're both funded by the same funding source. Sharing resources would benefit both providers and enhance service provision.

Disability Access Route to Education has devised a more holistic method of requesting students complete an educational impact statement to identify how their disability impacts on their individual educational outcomes (DARE, 2017, p.3). It is important that the student's voices are heard, however as many students with dyslexia struggle to place their thoughts on paper and express themselves. An Audio-visual recording method should also be available to ensure students with dyslexia can express the impact of their disability effectively.

Individual Education Plan

The Special Education Support Service identifies that an individual education plan (IEP) is a useful tool in developing awareness of a student's need at a level which is useful and usable by staff. An IEP should include a detailed plan of action, a tool for communication and collaboration, a framework of decision making and a record of progress (Special Education Support Service, 2017).

Further Education Staff One identifies individual education plans are useful as they help identify individual difference in the student cohort. It also focuses on the strengths of students and helps understand different ways of imparting learning strategies to individual students (FEAE1).

While Further Education Staff Three states most students will achieve more if they have an individual education plan although I feel a small group setting helps them to become less dependent (FEAE3).

Currently Individual Education plans are not implemented in this further education centre. The National Disability Authority state that under the Education for Persons with Special Needs (EPSEN) Act one of the key provisions is to provide the introduction of individual education plans for children with special education needs (National Disability Authority, 2005, p. 6-7). Although, this legislation pertains to primary and secondary level where full-time adult educators are employed to support students with specific learning needs. Undertaking individual education plans in this further education centre where a temporary part-time disability support teacher is employed would be difficult to achieve.

There is no individual education plan in this centre. However, each teacher plans how they will help students reach their potential through feedback and one to one support (FEAE2).

In turn, the researcher and director of the further education college have created a preview specific learning disability form to identify the needs of students prior to the academic year commencing and to ensure students have the correct educational or clinical assessment in place to apply to the fund for students with disabilities. During college, open days students were also given the opportunity to have a short meeting with the learning support teacher and director to discuss educational supports offered within the further education college and to alleviate any concerns students may have regarding studying in a new centre. The FSD recommends that a draft plan is prepared in advance of the academic year and finalised following discussion of set goals, agreed on actions and targets in key areas such as reasonable accommodation, Integration of technology, strategies of service delivery and specialist supports and resources (Higher Education Authority, 2016, p.3). Please see figure six attached of the sample preview disability form created.

Private and Confidential

Preview – Disability/Specific Learning Difficulty

Applicant Details:

Name of student:			
Address:			
Telephone number:			
Date of Birth:			
Course applying for:			
Educational Assessment: Yes		<input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Report Type:	Educational	<input type="checkbox"/>	OT <input type="checkbox"/> Speech and Language <input type="checkbox"/>
	Clinical	<input type="checkbox"/>	Audiologist <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
Date of last Assessment:			
Diagnosis: > 5 <			
Highest level of education:			
Secondary School/ College Attended:			

Previous support offered in school/ work /college:

How does your specific learning difficulty affect you?

Exam Supports	Yes	No
Learning Support		
Alternative Methods of Assessment		
Reader for exams		
Scribe for exams		
Private room for exams		
Extra ten minutes per hour in exam		
Rest breaks		
Laptop to type exams rather than write		

Assistive Technology	Yes	No
Mind Mapping		
Dragon Easy Speaking/Text Help		
Live Scribe Pen		
Printed teachers notes in advance of class		
Spelling and Grammar waiver		
Other:		

Classroom Supports	Yes	No
Extra time in submitting assignments		
Advanced warning of assignment deadlines		
Group work challenging		
Board work challenging		
Clear instructions for assignments		
Pastel coloured paper		
Power Points in alternative font and colour format		
Colour coded timetable		
Quiet study room on campus during college day		
Computer training		
Teacher support decoding language of modules		
Other:		

Teachers notes:

Teacher Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Figure 6: Sample copy of Preview Learning Disability Form.

5.9 Legislation

Legislation underpins the structure and function of further education. One adult educator identified:

When working with students with learning difficulties the following legislation is adhered to the Equal Status Act 2000, Disability Act 2005, The Data Protection Act 2003 and The Education of Persons with special education needs 2004 (FEAE 2).

The Equal Status Act prohibits discrimination of disability when using services, facilities or attending educational establishments. Section D of this Act protects students with dyslexia ‘a condition or malfunction which results from a person learning differently from a person without the difficulty or malfunction’ (The Equality Authority, 2008, p. 6). Educational establishments must provide reasonable accommodation for ‘without such accommodation it would be unduly difficult to avail of the service’, however the organisation does not have to provide if it is more than a nominal cost (AHEAD, 2000, p.3).

While the Disability Act 2005 provides a strong framework to make significant and long-term improvements to the lives of people with disabilities (Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, 2005, p. 2). The main provision of the act establishes an independent assessment of need and independent redress and enforcement of persons with disabilities. Under section eight to ten of the act, any person who considers that he or she may have a disability is entitled to apply for an independent assessment of need where a substantial restriction results in learning applies. An assessment will be undertaken without regard for cost or capacity to provide a service identified in the assessment (Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, 2005, p.4-5).

The Disability Act 2005 stipulates that assessment should be carried out when a ‘special educational need is identified’ (Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, 2005, p.6), no provision is currently provided in further education to enable students to undertake assessment. This is in great contrast to the service offered in primary, secondary and at third level where fully funded assessments are available to assess students when a specific learning need is suspected. In turn, the government needs to identify the shortcomings offered to students in further education.

Under The Data Protection Act, 2003 colleges are legally obligated to keep students educational reports safe and secure, accurate and up to date and provide a copy of student's personal data to them on request (Data Protection Commission, 2003, p. 6 – 10). The ETB student handbook also identifies that personal information may not be used without consent other than for the purpose for which it is generated. When students sign the application form for a programme learners agree that their data will be shared with consultancy bodies (Education Training Board, 2017). However, students who submit an education assessment will only have their report accessed by teachers who directly teach students on a particular programme.

The function of Education of Persons with Special Education Needs Act 2004 is to provide education to for people with educational needs and where possible should take place in an inclusive environment with those who do not have such needs and assist children with special educational needs to leave school with skills necessary to live independent and fulfilled lives. (Oireachtas, 2017). However, this legislation pertains to students in the pre-primary, primary and post-primary education system. There is no similar Irish legislation available for the further education sector. It may be that further education learning support legislation needs be passed to ensure further education students are protected and Inclusive education is provided which meets student's needs.

5. 10 Conclusion

This chapter drew on the literature from chapter two with the findings in chapter four in order to provide an analysis of the challenges to inclusive and progressive education for students with dyslexia in the west of Ireland. I identify with a pragmatic approach while I acknowledge the play of individual experience of the researcher in the process. I highlighted a number of gaps in funding, legislation and accommodation while also reviewing relevant literature with that of national organisations and adult educators in order to gain a greater sense of the practical issues which need to be addressed. The lack of legislation specifically regarding learning support in further education coupled with the challenge of adult educators accessing continued professional training courses in the west of Ireland was among the greatest barriers presented. Chapter Six, the conclusion will draw together the thesis study and recommendations will be outlined which identify ways to improve future practice.

6.0 CHAPTER SIX – CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research study examined the challenges to Inclusive and progressive education for students with dyslexia in the west of Ireland using a mixed method approach. A pragmatic conceptual framework was demonstrated and Dewey's theory of progressive education was interwoven throughout the dissertation. It was evident from the field research that a number of challenges presented for adult educators, students and regional and national organisations.

Lack of Legislation was identified specifically pertaining to education for persons with special educational needs in further education. The current Special Education Needs Act has a predominant primary and post primary focus. Career Paths located in Co. Kildare is the only further education college in the country which offers a dyslexia specific training programme for students. Having researched dyslexia and identifying that approximately eight to ten percent of the population have dyslexia (Dyslexia Association of Ireland, 2017). Further dyslexia specific training programmes should be introduced to support students in the west of Ireland. Furthermore, all educators and national organisations were in agreement that educational assessment, disability teacher and learning support should be available to students in further education similar to that available in post primary and higher education. Adult Educators also identified concern that they require additional training to ensure positive inclusion of students with specific learning needs. Ongoing training in teaching methodologies needs to be undertaken annually to keep abreast with progressive and inclusive methods of facilitation. Moreover, currently employability is the principal objective of further education with success measured in achievement of awards and progression to higher education and employment. The purpose and focus of further education needs to be reevaluated to identify and determine inclusion, progression and growth and experiences of students overlooked in order to achieve National Skill Strategy targets.

Therefore, Solas must review current policies, funding, training programmes and supports in further education for students who present with specific learning needs. The research highlighted that some of the challenges can be addressed in the further education centre such as adult educator training, small group work with students and flexible with module descriptor

teaching methods. Although, legislation, funding and the availability of assessment is at government level and as a result implementing changes is much more complex. Although, the researcher remains optimistic that one day students with dyslexia will have equal opportunity in accessing inclusive and progressive education in Further Education. 'The road which looks so long when viewed in its entirety, is easily travelled, considered as a series of particular steps' (Dewey, 1990, p. 12).

6.1 Recommendations

1. Legislation should be implemented which pertains specifically to learning difficulties in further education. As the current Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act 2004 holds a primary and post primary focus with little emphasis on further education.
2. Educational Assessment in further education should be available to all students similar to that in Post Primary and Higher Education.
3. Additional funding needs to be secured to provide for the employment of a disability officer and adequate funding to purchase assistive technology to support students.
4. Localised Staff training should be made available to centres in the west of Ireland which offer workshops in learning and teaching methodologies to support a range of learning difficulties experienced by adult educators in the classroom.
5. The Department of Education should widen the parameters of the disability documentation required to apply to the fund for students with disabilities. Where a child's educational diagnoses have been undertaken in the past and is out of date, a quick scan test to update assessment should suffice to be eligible to apply to the fund at further education level. Rather than students paying over €400 to get reassessed.
6. Further dyslexia targeted training programmes should be made available similar to that provided in Career Paths in County Kildare, to serve the needs of dyslexic students in the west of Ireland.
7. Disability Access Route to Education has come a considerable distance in providing a holistic approach to assessment. However an audio-visual presentation should be an acceptable option available to students as many with dyslexia struggle to place their thoughts on paper. In turn this would alleviate the stress associated with providing a written impact statement.

8. The Department of Education has offered a new combined postgraduate diploma programme in special learning needs for staff currently working as adult educators in Further Education. However, current further education teachers in training should have to undertake a mandatory module in specific learning difficulties to ensure they are equipped with the skills and knowledge in inclusive and progressive methodologies to support student's needs upon graduation.
9. The National Learning Network should share their Educational Psychologist with this further education centres as they are funded by the same funding body and sharing supports and expertise would benefit both colleges. Furthermore, students moving from the National Learning Network to a further education centre should have their educational assessment for the fund for disabilities already undertaken to ensure continuity between one training college with another.
10. The Government needs to reassess post leaving certificate courses as they are currently quite academic and focus predominantly on future employment and higher education. While there is some flexibility in course content and alternative methods of assessment, further education should increase its emphasis on self-directed and group learning activities to encourage students to express their creativity, past skills and knowledge and have autonomy and direction over their learning at a pace that meets their individual needs as learners.
11. All students should participate in an Induction workshop prior to commencement on a post leaving certificate course. To teach skills in preparing power point presentations, writing essays, working as a group and dealing with conflict. Furthermore, students should also be taught study skills and how to access free online applications such as grammarly and endnote.
12. The Preview disability form created should be continued in this centre to ensure students who present with learning difficulties are identified early. In turn, this would enable them to the fund for students with disabilities to access the necessary funding and support.

6.2 Areas of Further Study

This research has the capacity to be studied in a much deeper and broader level (Doody, 2015, p.58). This study could be expanded to provide a wider perspective of adult educators and students in further education outside the west of Ireland. Policy makers, national and regional organisations and further education colleges could form a large focus group to identify the challenges to inclusive and progressive further education for students in with dyslexia, and identify and implement possible solutions. This research could also be increased to form a European comparative study to examine funding, practices and training provided to further education adult educators.

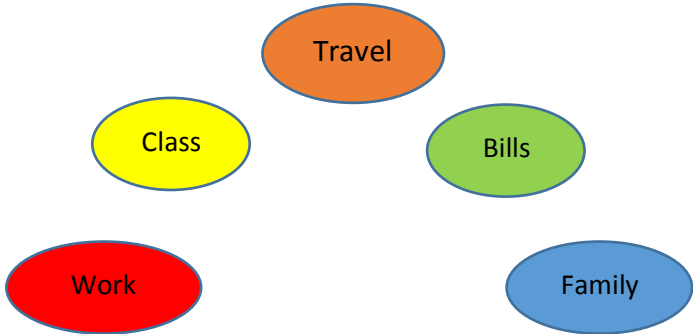
6.3 Reflection

My Growth as a Student

I struggled greatly with keeping a reflection journal initially. I felt my life was so incredibly busy and writing reflections was another task to add to my list. The concept of keeping a journal also jarred with my prior experiences of how to reflect, such as going out for a walk, watching a movie or meeting up with friends and going for a meal. Although, with the lecturers encouragement, I decided to dedicate a journal specifically to reflection. I must admit I did so with reluctance. Initially, I documented tasks I was carrying out each day specifically regarding my thesis. As the weeks progressed, I began recording field research events, supervision meetings and academic readings which I found relevant and meaningful to my thesis topic (Rowland & Barton, 1994, p.371). Over the first term, I found the need to document my experiences, hopes, fears and memories which were flooding my mind and on occasion overwhelming my senses. I felt the stress in my body, my back was aching and my skin was dry as I attempted to juggle work, college and family commitments. My eyes were tired from looking at computer screens and my legs bruised and sore from wheeling my roller suit case on trains, buses and taxis to attend classes throughout the year.

Overtime, I enjoyed writing my journals and finding a quiet place to formulate my thoughts and digest my experiences. This usually occurred on the train when I was surrounded by strangers. I wrapped my oversized navy coat around my body and escaped my busy life with a blue pen, journal and my own thoughts. I found it immensely helpful to feel, unwind and de-stress. It also enabled me to identify issues that need further exploration and question current events,

situations and people. Everything in my life was very structured and organised throughout the academic year. This was important to ensure I successfully managed my relational world (Humphrey's & Ruddle, 2010 cited in McCormack, 2017, p.2) and achieved all my commitments and objectives. However, my journal through caution to the wind and remained largely unstructured with a combination of inspirational quotes, doodles and when the notion took me poems (Bolton, 2014, p.161). Having such freedom was liberating and I did find distance from life and academia made new perspectives possible and enabled me to form deeper levels of insight (Holly, 1989 cited in McCormack, 2017, p.3).



Learning as a facilitator

Freedom of intelligence according to Dewey is of enduring importance. 'Freedom of observation and judgement of purposes that are intrinsically worthwhile' (Dewey, 1938, p61). One bright and sunny morning, I was teaching an early childhood group of students in a spacious art room located at the front of the further education college. The art lesson was with a group of early childhood assistants. The lesson plan was to create a Halloween mask and a 3D Halloween poster. Many saw the benefit of creating masks and acquiring new skills which in turn they could share with others. A lot of mature students had children of their own, while others shared experiences from their placement which occurred the previous week.

I placed all the tables together and layed out all the different materials such as paint, stickers, sponges, pipe cleaners, glue, scissors and stamps. I requested that each student create a mask of their choosing and present it to the class at the end of the session. Great excitement erupted in the room, each student taking materials to create their mask. Within five minutes there was not a sound, each student engrossed in their creation. It was evident student enjoyed having 'freedom of thought, desire and purpose' (Dewey, 1938, p. 61) and relished the opportunity of discussing their art piece. One student took off his socks and shoes and painted his feet to

depict a ghost, once it was turned upside down. I admired his creativity and moreover, growth and onward freedom was evident as he learned new skills which he can practice with his two young daughters. I felt the art activity really enabled quieter students to open up, share their 'thoughts, imaginations and desires' (Dewey, 1938, p.62) in turn, leading to bonding with other students. I also gained a greater awareness and understanding as a facilitator of the importance of self-directed learning and creative play for students to enable them to participate in activities that were meaningful, enjoyable and relatable to their lives. Creativity freed students from the constraints of everyday thinking and situated their minds in a space where meaning is unhinged from its usual moorings (Bleakeley, 2012, p.104).

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6.5 Appendix

Appendix A: Further Education students consent form and survey questions

Appendix B: National organisation consent forms and electronic Interview questions

Appendix c: Further Education adult educators two/three consent form and interview questions

Appendix D Further Education adult educator one consent form and interview and questions

Appendix A



**Maynooth
University**
National University
of Ireland Maynooth

Information and consent form for research participants

Department: Adult and Community Education.

Project Title: Dyslexia in Further Education in the West of Ireland.

Researcher: Carmel Ann Joyce, Westport, Co. Mayo.

Introduction

My name is Carmel Ann Joyce. I am a student on the Masters in Adult and Community Education in Maynooth University. As part of my Master's Degree, I am required to undertake a Dissertation project. I have chosen to research 'Dyslexia in Further Education in Co. Mayo'. The purpose of this research is to explore the international, national and local services available to support students with Dyslexia in Further Education in Ireland. I wish to explore the services, supports, challenges, funding and staff and students experiences in Further Education.

As part of this research I am sending out 200 surveys to students in Castlebar College of Further Education. The survey questions will be handed out by your class teacher. I ask that you read the survey and consent form. If you are happy to participate please provide written personal consent by signing the consent form attached and then spend 10 – 15 minutes filling out the survey. Responses can be submitted in the sealed box located at the top of the class. I will be the only person who will have access to the content of the boxes. You are requested to sign this consent form to enable me to include what I learn from your responses in my research.

The survey is anonymous and your name will not appear in the research. The findings of this research will be displayed in pie chart form in May 2017 on your college notice board.

I am interested in finding out about student's experience of learning difficulties in Further Education. I am particularly interested in hearing about supports offered to students. I am also

interested in learning about challenges you as students face and how staff and the Further Education sector can improve this service to meet your needs. If you have questions at any time relating to the interview, you can contact me on 086 0665893.

Consent for participation in research

Please read the following which outlines your rights. Sign and date if you are happy to do so.

1. I volunteer to participate in a research project conducted by Carmel Ann Joyce from Maynooth University. I understand that this project is designed to gather information about Learning supports and Services in Further Education in Ireland. I will be one of approximately 200 people being surveyed for this research in this centre.
2. My participation in this project is voluntary. I understand I will not be paid for my participation. I may withdraw or discontinue participation from this study at any time up until June 20th 2017. If I decline to participate or withdraw from the study, I will contact the researcher by email: carmelann2@hotmail.com.
3. I understand that this survey may be interesting and thought-provoking. If, however, I feel uncomfortable in any way during completion of this survey, I have the right to decline to answer any question or end the survey. I understand that this survey does not constitute any kind of counselling. If you experience any kind of discomfort or stress as a result of this study, please contact Samaritans on 116 123 or alternatively contact your own general practitioner.
4. I understand that the researcher will not identify me by name in any reports using information obtained from this survey, only the name of the organisation will be identified. The data will be stored secure at all times in a locked filing cabinet. Data is available to subjects at their discretion and notes can be accessed at any time.

5. Subsequent uses of records and data will be subject to standard data use policies which protect the anonymity of individuals and institutions. A copy of the finished thesis will be available on the Maynooth University website in digital format and a hard copy in Maynooth University library in 2018.

6. Faculty and administrators from my campus will neither be present at the survey nor have access to raw notes or transcripts. This precaution will prevent my individual comments from having any negative repercussions.

7. I understand that this research study has been reviewed and approved by the Researchers Supervision team in the Department of Adult and Community Education in Maynooth University.

8. I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

9. If during your participation in this study you feel the information and guidelines that you were given have been neglected or disregarded in any way, or if you are unhappy about the process please contact: Dr Jerry O'Neill, Department of Adult and Community Education, Maynooth University jerry.oneill@nuim.ie 01 7083308. Please be assured that your concerns will be dealt with in a sensitive manner.

10. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

Signed: _____ Date: _____



**Maynooth
University**

National University
of Ireland Maynooth

Department: Adult and Community Education, Maynooth University, Co. Kildare.

Survey on Research Project: on Dyslexia in Further Education in Co. Mayo.

Researcher: Carmel Ann Joyce, Westport, Co. Mayo.

Please do not write your name on this form

Survey for Students

1. Are you male or female?

Male Female

2. What age profile do you fall into?

18 - 24 25 - 30 31 - 35 36 - 40 41 - 45 46 - 50
50 - 55 56 - 60 61 - 65 65 +

3. What is the title of your class group?

4. Have you ever been diagnosed with a Learning difficulty (In reading, writing, spelling, grammar or other)?

Yes No If so, what learning difficulty _____

5. If you answered yes to Question 4, did you disclose your learning difficulty to CCFE?

Yes No Reason _____

Please turn over

6. What Learning methods best work best for you?

Please rank in order of preference one to ten.

Videos/You tube Clips	<input type="text"/>	Writing from the board	<input type="text"/>	Readings	<input type="text"/>
Class discussion	<input type="text"/>	Art or Drama	<input type="text"/>	Computer work	<input type="text"/>
Group activities	<input type="text"/>	listening in class	<input type="text"/>	Problem based learning	<input type="text"/>
Personal Reflection	<input type="text"/>	Self direction	<input type="text"/>	Other _____	<input type="text"/>

7. What is the biggest challenge you face in College?

8. Which of the following supports are you aware of in the college?

Learning Support	<input type="text"/>
Assistive Technology	<input type="text"/>
Alternative method of assessment	<input type="text"/>

9. Where would you like to progress to next year? Please list in order of preference 1 – 6

Level 6 in CCFE	<input type="text"/>	Employment	<input type="text"/>
Institute of Technology Degree	<input type="text"/>	College in England/ Scotland	<input type="text"/>
Travelling	<input type="text"/>	Other	<input type="text"/> _____

10. What was the greatest learning for you in Castlebar College of Further Education?

Thank you for participating in my survey.

Appendix B



Information and consent form for research participants

Department: Adult and Community Education.

Project Title: Dyslexia in Further Education in the West of Ireland.

Researcher: Carmel Ann Joyce, Westport, Co. Mayo.

Introduction

My name is Carmel Ann Joyce. I am a student on the Masters in Adult and Community Education in Maynooth University. As part of my Master's Degree, I am required to undertake a Dissertation project. I have chosen to research 'Dyslexia in Further Education in Co. Mayo'. The purpose of this research is to explore the national and local services available to support students with Dyslexia in Further Education in Ireland. I wish to explore the services, supports, challenges, funding and experiences in Further Education. The electronic interview questions will be provided one week in advance, to enable each participant time to prepare. If you agree to take part, you will firstly be asked to provide personal written consent and send both the consent form signed and a copy of your Interview answers back to the researcher the day before the phone interview takes place. A short thirty minute follow up phone call will then take place. A transcript of the Interview can be forwarded to you within one week. You will then be given four weeks to make changes or omissions.

I am interested in talking to you about your role and the work of your organisation in supporting students with dyslexia. I am particularly interested in hearing about supports for students in

Further Education. I am also interested in some of the challenges which your organisation face in developing and expanding services.

I have prepared a number of questions which might be a good starting point for us to explore these issues. Please find attached a list of the questions for you to view. If you have questions at any time relating to the interview, you can contact me on 086 0665893.

Please read the following and, if you are happy to do so, sign at the bottom to express your informed consent to participation:

1. I volunteer to participate in a research project conducted by Carmel Ann Joyce from Maynooth University. I understand that this project is designed to gather information about Dyslexia supports and services in Further Education in Ireland.
2. My participation in this project is voluntary. I understand I will not be paid for my participation. I may withdraw or discontinue participation from this study at any time up until June 20th 2017. If I decline to participate or withdraw from the study, I will contact the researcher by email: carmelann2@hotmail.com.
3. I understand that most interviewees will find the discussion interesting and thought-provoking. If, however, I feel uncomfortable in any way during the interview session, I have the right to decline to answer any question or to end the interview. I understand that this interview does not constitute and kind of counselling. If you experience any kind of discomfort or stress as a result, please contact Samaritans on 116 123 or alternatively contact your own general practitioner.
4. I understand that the researcher will not identify me by name in any reports using information obtained from this interview, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. The data will be stored securely at all times in a locked filing cabinet. To ensure anonymity, all participants' names will be omitted and just the name of the organisation will be identified. Data is available to subjects at their discretion and can be accessed at any time.

5. Subsequent uses of records and data will be subject to standard data use policies which protect the anonymity of individuals and institutions. A copy of the finished thesis will be available on the Maynooth University website in digital format and in hard copy in Maynooth University library in 2018.
6. Faculty and administrators from my organisation will neither be present at the interview nor have access to raw notes or transcripts. This precaution will prevent my individual comments from having any negative repercussions.
7. I understand that this research study has been reviewed and approved by the researcher's supervision team in the Department of Adult and Community Education in Maynooth University.
8. I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.
9. If during your participation in this study you feel the information and guidelines that you were given have been neglected or disregarded in any way, or if you are unhappy about the Process please contact: Dr Jerry O'Neill, Department of Adult and Community Education, Maynooth University jerry.oneill@nuim.ie 01 7083308. Please be assured that your concerns will be dealt with in a sensitive manner.
10. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

National Education Psychological Service:

1. What year did National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) Commence?
2. What supports do you offer students with Dyslexia?
3. What are the Challenges facing NEPS in supporting students with dyslexia in post primary education?
4. How is NEPS funded?
5. How many staff work with NEPS in Secondary school /Further education?
6. What kind of changes are needed in the secondary/Further Education sector to facilitate the support for students with a specific learning difficulty.
7. Is there any additional information you would like to ask?

Disability Access Route to Education

1. What is Disability Access Route to Education (DARE)?
2. Which Learning Difficulties are supported under the DARE scheme?
3. If students with specific learning difficulties are not eligible for DARE, do third level institutions offer any educational support?
4. How should a student with a specific learning difficulty apply to DARE?
5. Do you have many students which progress from Further Education to Higher Education?
6. Is DARE voluntary funded or is it public funded?
7. How many staff/ Colleges are working with DARE?
8. What colleges participate in Disability Access Route to Education?
9. What organisations bodies do you work with?
10. What are the best ways to support staff in institutions when working with Students with specific learning difficulties?
11. What are the Challenges experienced by DARE?

Dyslexia Association of Ireland

1. What is the role of an Adult Support Coordinator in Dyslexia Association Ireland (DAI)?
2. How does DAI support Students/Staff in Further Education?
3. What challenges are experienced by Dyslexia Association of Ireland?
4. What kind of changes are needed in the FE sector to facilitate the support for students with disability.
5. What other public bodies does Dyslexia Association of Ireland liaise with?

Dyslexia Association Mayo

1. What year did Dyslexia workshops start in Co. Mayo?
2. Why did the formation of these workshops commence?
3. How many students and teachers were present in year one of the workshops?
4. How many students are enrolled for the 2016/2017 academic year?
5. What is the student/teacher ratio?
6. What are the qualifications of staff members working in Dyslexia Mayo?
7. What are the challenges of Dyslexia Mayo?
8. What other organisations does Dyslexia Mayo link in with?
9. What changes or further developments would you like to see for Dyslexia in Co. Mayo.

Appendix C



**Maynooth
University**
National University
of Ireland Maynooth

Information and consent form for research participants

Department: Adult and Community Education.

Project Title: Dyslexia in Further Education in the West of Ireland (MED).

Researcher: Carmel Ann Joyce, Westport, Co. Mayo.

Introduction

My name is Carmel Ann Joyce. I am a student on the Masters in Adult and Community Education in Maynooth University. As part of my Master's Degree, I am required to undertake a Dissertation project. I have chosen to research 'Dyslexia in Further Education in Co. Mayo'. The purpose of this research is to explore the international, national and local services available to support students with Dyslexia in Further Education in Ireland. I wish to explore the services, supports, challenges, funding and experiences in Further Education. The interview questions will be provided one week in advance, to enable each participant time to prepare. If you agree to take part, you will firstly be asked to provide personal written consent followed by a short thirty minute Interview. A transcript of the Interview can be forwarded to you if you so wish. You will then be given four weeks to make changes or omissions.

I am interested in talking to you about your role and the work of your organisation in supporting students with dyslexia. I am particularly interested in hearing about supports for students in Further Education. I am also interested in some of the challenges which your organisation face in developing and expanding services.

I have prepared a number of questions which might be a good starting point for us to explore these issues. Please find attached a list of the questions for you to view.

The interview will be conducted in person and should last no more than 30 minutes. If you have questions at any time relating to the interview, you can contact me on 086 0665893.

Please read the following and, if you are happy to do so, sign at the bottom to express your informed consent to participation:

1. I volunteer to participate in this research project conducted by Carmel Ann Joyce from Maynooth University. I understand that this project is designed to gather information about Dyslexia supports and services in Further Education in Ireland. I will be one of approximately 3 people being interviewed for this research in this centre.
2. My participation in this project is voluntary. I understand I will not be paid for my participation. I may withdraw or discontinue participation from this study at any time up until June 20th 2017. If I decline to participate or withdraw from the study, I will contact the researcher by email: carmelann2@hotmail.com.
3. I understand that most interviewees will find the discussion interesting and thought-provoking. If, however, I feel uncomfortable in any way during the interview session, I have the right to decline to answer any question or to end the interview. I understand that this interview does not constitute any kind of counselling. If you experience any kind of discomfort or stress as a result of this study, please contact Samaritans on 116 123 or alternatively contact your own general practitioner.
4. I understand that the researcher will not identify me by name in any reports using information obtained from this interview, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. The data will be stored secure at all times in a locked filing cabinet. To ensure anonymity, all participants' names will be omitted and just

the name of the organisation will be identified. Data is available to subjects at their discretion and can be accessed at any time.

5. Subsequent uses of records and data will be subject to standard data use policies which protect the anonymity of individuals and institutions. A copy of the finished thesis will be available on the Maynooth University website in digital format and in hard copy in Maynooth University library in 2018.
6. Faculty and administrators from my campus will neither be present at the interview nor have access to raw notes or transcripts. This precaution will prevent my individual comments from having any negative repercussions.
7. I understand that this research study has been reviewed and approved by the researcher's supervision team in the Department of Adult and Community Education in Maynooth University.
8. I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.
9. If during your participation in this study you feel the information and guidelines that you were given have been neglected or disregarded in any way, or if you are unhappy about the process please contact: Dr Jerry O'Neill, Department of Adult and Community Education, Maynooth University jerry.oneill@nuim.ie 01 7083308. Please be assured that your concerns will be dealt with in a sensitive manner.
10. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Questions for Adult Educators two and three

1. What specific learning difficulties would be most prominent in the students you teach?
1. What are the challenges working as a Teacher in Further Education supporting students with Dyslexia?
2. What training if any, have you undertaken that relates to supporting students with specific learning difficulties?
3. What kind of supports if any, do you use when working with students with specific learning difficulties?
4. What future improvements would you like to see implemented in Further Education to support students with specific learning difficulties?
5. In what way are individual education plans useful?
6. Is there anything you would like to add?

Appendix D



**Maynooth
University**
National University
of Ireland Maynooth

Information and consent form for research participants

Department: Adult and Community Education.

Project Title: Dyslexia in Further Education in the West of Ireland.

Researcher: Carmel Ann Joyce, Westport, Co. Mayo.

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Signed: _____ Date: _____

Questions for Staff One

1. How many students are enrolled in this Further Education College for the 2016/2017 academic year?
2. What current supports are in place for students with Dyslexia in Future Education?
3. What legislation, Policies and Procedures are followed when working with students with learning difficulties?
4. What future improvements would you like to see implemented in Further Education to support students with learning difficulties?
5. What is included in a student's educational plan and how is it distributed to class teachers?
6. What ways can CPD be enhanced to support staff in developing their capacity in to support students with specific learning difficulties?
7. Is there anything you would like to add?

