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### **Perceptions of support for secondary school learners with dyslexia in France and in Wales case study analyses**

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**Perceptions of support for secondary school  
learners with dyslexia in France and in Wales:  
case study analyses**

**by**

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**This thesis is submitted to Bangor University in fulfilment of the requirements  
of candidature for the Degree of**

**Education Doctorate (EdD)**

**January 2015**

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Finally thanks go to my husband Chris, who, as ever, has been a source of support and encouragement to me, never once complaining about the time I have devoted to this endeavour. I dedicate this thesis to him.

## **SUMMARY**

The lack of consensus over the origins of dyslexia (Carroll & Snowling, 2004; Elliott & Grigorenko, 2014; Frith, 1999; Grigorenko, 2001; Hulme et al. 2005; Ramus, 2005; Ramus et al. 2013; Simos et al., 2002; Uppstad & Tønnessen, 2007; Ziegler et al. 2008), assessment practices (Backhouse & Morris, 2005; Habib, 2008; Simpson and Everatt, 2005; Smythe et al. 2005) and the impact on learners across languages (Caravolas et al. 2005; Goswami, 2002; Hu et al. 2010; Landerl et al. 2013; Ziegler et al. 2003; Ziegler & Goswami 2005; Ziegler et Montant 2005; Ziegler & Goswami, 2006; Ziegler et al. 2010) has led to different approaches to support being adopted across Europe (Smythe et al. 2005). This study aims at gaining an understanding of learners with dyslexic tendencies' experiences and perceptions of the Welsh and French support systems. The cross-cultural dimension of the study makes the analysis pivot around some cultural differences which provide new insights.

An interpretative approach lent itself to a "simple" multiple case study design. The convergence of multiple sources of evidence and thematic data analysis found existing similarities between learners' experiences in the two countries: all learners first experienced difficulties associated to their learning difference in primary school and have experienced further difficulties ever since. Most learners are making slow or satisfactory academic progress and are not confident in class situations. Indeed, learners' behaviour in school suggested that neither French nor Welsh support systems facilitated progress in learning in the mainstream classroom. Another commonality between participants was their perception of a poor working partnership between families and professionals involved in supporting learners.

This research project highlights the importance of a learner centred approach and the need for families and professionals to work together. The analysis of existing similarities and differences between learners' experiences support Bronfenbrenner's work (1979): while the traits and characteristics of the individual learners are important, the relationships within their immediate family or school environment and the external cultural influences that affect that environment are equally as important. Adopting a well-coordinated approach to supporting children with a learning difference such as dyslexia could help them develop coping strategies which involve building on their own strengths.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

### Equivalent British and French educational terminology

British	French
<p><b>AEN</b> = Additional Educational Needs Following a 2006 policy review of Special Educational Needs, the National Assembly for Wales decided the terminology used to refer to learners with additional learning needs should change: “We recommend that the term “special educational needs” should no longer be used and that consideration by the Welsh Assembly Government is given to using the term “additional educational needs in future” (National Assembly for Wales, 2006, p27).</p>	<p><b>Handicap</b> According to the <i>Code de l'action sociale et des familles (2005, L114)</i>, the legal definition of a handicap refers to any form of limitation or restriction to fully participating in public life. A handicap can be physical, sensorial, cognitive, psychological or due to ill health. This definition also includes learning differences such as dyslexia.</p>
<p><b>ALN</b> = Additional Learning Needs. In November 2006, the Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills published another document which provides guidance on inclusion and support of learners of compulsory school age. One of the recommendations was the “adoption of the term ‘Additional Learning Needs’: “This encompasses all children and young people with learning needs which are greater than those of the majority of their peers and not just those identified as having special educational needs as defined within the Education Act 1996 and the SEN Code of Practice for Wales” (WAG, 2006, p2). The term ALN has now replaced SEN and AEN.</p>	
<p><b>AENCO/ALNCO/SENCO</b> = Additional Educational Needs Coordinator. Additional Learning Needs Coordinator. Special Educational Needs Coordinator. In collaboration with the Head Teacher and governing body, AENCOs/ALNCOs/SENCOs play a key role in determining the strategic development of the Additional Educational /Additional Learning/Special Educational Needs policy and provision in the school in order to raise the achievement of children with AEN/ALN/SEN (WAG, 2002, p64).</p>	<p><b>CPE</b> = <i>Conseillère Principale d'Education</i> In collaboration with the Head Teacher, the CPE is in charge of inclusion. This includes sharing information with staff regarding learners with special educational needs; the CPE is also responsible for the well-being of all learners. It is a non-teaching post. CPEs are civil servants (MENESR, 2014).</p>
<p><b>No equivalent</b></p>	<p><b>Le Lycée (15-18)</b> Having sat their <i>Brevet</i> in year 10, French learners join <i>le lycée</i> in year 11.</p>
<p><b>Comprehensive school</b> Comprehensive education involves learners of all abilities and financial backgrounds being schooled together for most or all their secondary school career (Glaesser and Cooper, 2012).</p>	<p><b>Le collège unique (11-14)</b> It aims for equality of outcome and involves all learners being schooled together regardless of their background or their academic ability.</p>

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

### Equivalent British and French educational terminology

British	French
<b>DFE</b> = Department for Education (England).	<b>MENESR</b> = <i>Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche</i>
<b>DENI</b> = Department for Education (Northern Ireland).	
<b>ESTYN</b> The office of Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales (ESTYN), are an independent body, funded by the WG, which inspect quality and standards in education and training in Wales.	<b><i>Inspection Générale de l'Éducation Nationale</i></b> Have similar responsibilities to OFSTED and ESTYN. However, they inspect individual teachers not whole schools. Individual teachers and members of the senior leadership team have a status of civil servants and individuals' performance is managed by an external inspection body deployed by the Ministry of Education ( <i>Inspection Générale de l'Éducation Nationale</i> , 2013).
<b>GCSE</b> = General Certificate of Secondary Education.	<b><i>Le Brevet des Collèges</i></b> French learners sit the <i>Brevet</i> at the end of year 10.
<b>IEP</b> = Individual Educational Plan This document includes SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-constrained) targets for children with learning differences. The SENCO/AENCO is in charge of issuing them.	<b>PAI</b> = <i>Projet d'Accueil Individualisé</i> The PAI outlines recommendations made by the doctor or <i>orthophoniste</i> who issued the assessment.
<b>JCQ</b> = Joint Council for Qualifications: access arrangements (JCQ, 2013)	<b><i>Protocole d'Aménagements Pédagogiques pour les Troubles des Apprentissages</i></b> Access arrangements for learners with specific learning difficulties (MENESR, 2011).
<b>LEA</b> = Local Educational Authority "The LEA has responsibility for securing educational provision for all children of compulsory school age in their area; and for funding that education" (WAG, 1999, p1).	<b><i>L'Etat</i></b> = The State/the Government The government is responsible for Education. It has delegated some responsibilities to <i>communes, départements</i> and <i>régions</i> but still controls learning pathways and the national curriculum. It is also responsible for qualifications and diplomas (only one examination board controlled by the Government), deployment of teaching staff, funding of schools and all policies relating to education. Its aim is to ensure that the education system is standardised (MENESR, 2014).
<b>LA</b> = Local Authority "(...) from 5 May 2010, the terms 'Local Education Authority' and 'Children's Services Authority' have been repealed and replaced by the single term 'Local Authority' in both primary and secondary legislation. This simply brings the legislation in line with current policy and practice and will not change its substantive meaning." (WAG, 2010).	

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

### Equivalent British and French educational terminology

British	French
<p><b>NC</b> = The National Curriculum The National Curriculum for England (2013), Wales (2008) and Northern Ireland (2010) is a set of subjects and standards used by primary and secondary schools so children learn the same things.</p>	<p><b><i>Programmes nationaux d'enseignement</i></b> A set of subjects and standards used by all schools so children learn the same things</p>
<p><b>NHS</b> = National Health Service</p>	<p><b><i>La sécurité sociale</i></b></p>
<p><b>No equivalent</b></p>	<p><b><i>Projet Personnalisé de Réussite Educative (PPRE)</i></b> Personalised Programme for Pupils' Achievement. Learners with a specific learning difference or learners of low ability can have access to this transition programme when they join secondary school. It mainly involves being extracted from French and Maths lessons and being taught in small groups (MENESR, 2011).</p>
<p><b>OFSTED</b> = The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (England), created in April 2007, is the single body responsible for the inspection, and in some cases regulation, of schools, colleges, teacher training, childcare, children's social care and work-based learning.</p>	<p><b><i>Inspection Générale de l'Education Nationale</i></b> Have similar responsibilities to OFSTED and ESTYN. However, they inspect individual teachers not whole schools. Individual teachers and members of the senior leadership team have a status of civil servants and individuals' performance is managed by an external inspection body deployed by the Ministry of Education (<i>Inspection Générale de l'Education Nationale</i>, 2013).</p>
<p><b>SEN</b> = Special Educational Needs "A child has "special educational needs" for the purposes of this Act if he has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for him" (Education Act, 1996, chapter 1, section 312).</p>	<p><b><i>Handicap</i></b> According to the <i>Code de l'action sociale et des familles (2005, L114)</i>, the legal definition of a handicap refers to any form of limitation or restriction to fully participating in public life. A handicap can be physical, sensorial, cognitive, psychological or due to ill health. This definition also includes learning differences such as dyslexia.</p>
<p><b>WG;ES</b> = Welsh Government; Education and Skills (Wales).</p>	<p><b>MENESR</b> = <i>Ministère de l'Education Nationale de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche</i></p>

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<sup>1</sup> The National Association of Parents of Children with Dyslexia.

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# **Chapter 1 Introduction**

This study explores perceptions of support for learners with dyslexia in Wales and in France. It has been conducted part-time while in full time employment and was self-funded.

## **1.1 Background to the study**

Since 2011, after Wales showed significantly lower than average performance in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), education has become a national priority (OECD, 2014). The OECD have been invited by the Welsh Department for Education and Skills to write a report which identifies strengths and challenges within the Welsh Education system. The report aimed at addressing issues surrounding the “equity and quality of the Welsh school system” (OECD, 2014, p12) and therefore should help Wales find ways of raising learners’ performance from a comparative perspective.

The research project was carried out while Wales introduced significant school improvement reforms. Since the reforms mainly aim at improving all learners’ literacy and numeracy skills’ development, it is worthwhile exploring learners with dyslexia’s experiences. Learners with dyslexia generally develop literacy skills (Reid, 2011, p11-13) at a slower pace than their peers and therefore often need support. This study should give an insight into learners’ experiences while in secondary comprehensive school and while the Welsh Education system embarks on a journey to education reform.

### **1.1.1 The British comprehensive school system: England and Wales**

Comprehensive education involves learners of all abilities and financial backgrounds being schooled together for most or all their secondary school career (Glaesser and Cooper, 2012). After winning the 1964 general election, the Labour Party introduced a reform asking local authorities in Britain (England and Wales) “to introduce plans for reorganising secondary education along comprehensive lines” (Heath & Jacobs, 1999, p3), a gradual process of reform was then begun. According to Glaesser and Copper, comprehensive education can be defined as a fairer system:

“Proponents of comprehensive systems, aiming for equality of outcome or opportunity in education, have argued that less academically able learners benefit from being schooled together with more able peers” (2012, p223).

By 1965, there were 262 comprehensive schools in England and Wales and by 1974 this number had grown to 2,677, and these were attended by 62% of secondary students in “LEA<sup>1</sup> maintained schools” (Manning & Pischke, 2006, p5). Wiborg (2009, p11) states that even though an increasing number of learners had enrolled in British comprehensive schools by the late 1970s, neoliberal policies have since weakened comprehensive education in England by “promoting a greater diversity of school types and by allowing greater use of selection, streaming, and setting”.

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<sup>1</sup> In 2010 (WAG) the term Local Education Authority (LEA) was replaced by the term Local Authority (LA). Therefore, throughout the thesis the term LEA is used when discussing policies or documents published prior to 2010.

On the other hand, the Welsh state school system has remained largely comprehensive and is based on equity guidelines (OECD, 2014, p21). Since the devolution settlement in 1999, Wales has had responsibility for most areas of education policy, except for teachers' salaries:

“Wales has pursued distinct education policies that have resulted in a gradual differentiation from those of England, aiming to match its education needs” (OECD, 2014, p16).

In all state schools in Wales, the National Curriculum must be adhered to. The National Curriculum is a set of subjects and standards used by primary and secondary schools so children learn the same things:

“The National Curriculum, as implemented in state-maintained primary and secondary schools in England and Wales from September 1989, represented a bold step towards standardising the school curriculum. Introduced as part of the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) the National Curriculum has dominated state education in England and Wales in a way that contrasts sharply with earlier practice, for governments had previously made few interventions into the curriculum taught in schools” (Pritchard and Butt, 2009, p1).

More flexibility in the National Curriculum was gradually introduced as a result of education being devolved, although the purpose of the National Curriculum remains. In 2006, The Government of Wales Act was reviewed and led to the creation of a separate legislature to the National Assembly for Wales<sup>2</sup> which can make decisions regarding several matters, including

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<sup>2</sup> The Government of Wales Act 2006 replaced the corporate body with a new National Assembly for Wales and a separate executive, the Welsh Assembly Government, made up of ministers who are members of, and accountable to, the Assembly. The statutory name for the executive remains the Welsh Assembly Government although since May 2011 it has been known simply as

education (2006, p120). The curriculum in Wales was reviewed in 2008 and aimed at meeting the needs of the individual learners whilst taking into account the broader needs of Wales (Welsh Statutory Instruments, 2008). It covers what subjects are taught and the standards learners should reach in each area of learning. In 2008, the Welsh Assembly Government issued a document which provides guidance on how best to implement the revised National Curriculum from September 2008 onwards. The Welsh Assembly Government's vision is that the curriculum is "responsive to the needs of all individual learners" (2008, p2) and enables all learners to reach their potential. The document states that schools should use the needs of the learner as a starting point and adapt learning programmes accordingly. The National Curriculum allows necessary flexibility for all learners to access the curriculum, including learners with dyslexia.

### **1.1.2 Inclusive education in Wales**

In Wales, quality and standards in Education are inspected and overseen by Estyn, the office of Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales. This is an independent body, funded by the Welsh Government, and is in charge of monitoring educational settings in Wales. It is responsible for ensuring all learners "have the best start in life with opportunities and encouragement to achieve their full potential in schools that provide inclusive and supportive environments" (2013, p1).

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the Welsh Government" (Cabinet Office and Wales Office, 2013). Throughout the thesis the term Welsh Government is used when referring to policies or reports published after 2011, while the term Welsh Assembly Government is used when discussing documents published prior to 2011.

In addition, The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice for Wales (WAG, 2002) sets out a framework for effective school based support with an emphasis on removing barriers to learning. It includes rights and duties introduced by the SEN and Disability Act (2001): schools are required to support learners identified as having a disability or a specific learning difference such as dyslexia by putting interventions in place:

“Children who demonstrate features of moderate, severe or profound learning difficulties or specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia or dyspraxia, require specific programmes to aid progress in cognition and learning” (WAG, 2002, p86).

While some learners with dyslexic tendencies “develop coping strategies and achieve remarkable success” (Rose, 2009, p10), others may “become disaffected and disengage from education” (Rose, 2009, p10) unless appropriate support is put in place for them to access the curriculum. There are and have been many controversies around the term “dyslexia”. The variation and discrepancy in focus amongst these definitions mirror the complexity of the on-going debates around the nature, the characteristics of dyslexia and how learners with dyslexia can best be supported. Debates around defining dyslexia will be discussed in the literature review of this thesis, although it is important to highlight that throughout the thesis I have chosen to refer to dyslexia as a learning difference. This lexical choice matches Reid’s views on dyslexia being “a difference” (2011, p9). The terms “difficulties” will only be used when referring to difficulties associated to the learning difference and when discussing literature or policies which use such terminology.

Ongoing discussions around defining dyslexia suggest a need to consult learners, parents and professionals and to reflect on the suitability of assessment processes and current provision. Schools in Wales must ensure all learners, including those with a learning difference, achieve their potential. Consequently, a fundamental question that every educational professional faces is “How well supported are learners with additional/special educational needs in the Welsh comprehensive school system”?

## **1.2 Outline of the research study**

In completing this project, I wanted to offer the reader new avenues for ideas and for the development of more holistic support systems for learners with dyslexia.

### **1.2.1 Research approach**

The purpose of the research is to gain an insight into the schooling experience of learners who are in the Welsh comprehensive school system and who have dyslexic tendencies. In order for professionals to develop new ideas, I wanted to investigate the impact of the support provided by seeing things from the learners’ point of view and therefore used a case study approach. Thomas (2009, p137) claims that educational thoughts can develop in an “insular way in particular environments” and that “the recognition that another country or region does things differently” (2009, p137) can offer new ideas. This is why I decided to analyse the perceptions of support of learners with dyslexia in Wales and those of learners with the same learning difference in France. The French school system also being



comprehensive, the comparison of perceptions of support is worthwhile: the French education system became comprehensive following the Haby reform (1975) which introduced *le collège unique* (See Glossary).

### **1.2.2 Aims of the study and research questions**

This study aims at gaining an appreciation of the experience of learners assessed as having dyslexic tendencies in the Welsh and French comprehensive systems; investigating the impact of the support provided should enable things to be seen from the perspective of individual learners in the two countries. The insight into the experiences of French learners and British learners (people living in Wales are British citizens) should give the reader a window on British cultural expectations and hopefully offer a new perspective on how to support learners with dyslexia.

The main research question for this project is: “How well supported are learners with dyslexia in French and Welsh secondary schools?” In order to answer this question, a series of sub queries are to be studied:

- Q1 How does dyslexia affect English speaking learners in Wales and French speaking learners in France?
- Q2 How are learners with dyslexia supported in Wales and in France?
- Q3 What impact does the support offered in the two countries have on learners?

### 1.2.3 A note on the researcher

Having grown up in the south of France with an English father and a French mother, I have always been interested in how people develop their language ability. I was educated up to degree level in France and, although I have never taught there, I have always been interested in the differences between the British and the French educational systems.

When I started this project, I was Head of Year and a Modern Foreign Language teacher in a comprehensive secondary school in Wales. At the time of carrying out this study I was Additional Educational Needs Coordinator (AENCO) in the same school. Since the project was carried out in my work place, I became a participant to my own project. In the role of AENCO, I came across learners who have dyslexic tendencies and were supported by the school. In collaboration with the Head Teacher and governing body, I played a key role in determining the strategic development of the Special/Additional Educational Needs<sup>3</sup> policy and provision in the school in order to raise the achievement of children with SEN/AEN. I took day-to-day responsibility for the operation of the SEN/AEN policy and co-ordination of the provision made for individual children with SEN/AEN, working closely with staff, parents and carers, and other agencies (WAG, 2002, p64). Completing this project should enable me to reflect on the Welsh approach to supporting learners with dyslexic tendencies. Findings will also

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<sup>3</sup> In May 2006, the National Assembly for Wales published an AEN policy review. One of the recommendations was that the term Special Educational Needs should no longer be used (2006, p27) and replaced by Additional Educational Needs. In November 2006, the Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills published another document which provides guidance on inclusion and support of learners of compulsory school age. One of the recommendations was the “adoption of the term ‘Additional Learning Needs’ to cover those learners whose needs are greater than the majority of their peers” (WAG, 2006, p7). The use of the term ALN represented a conscious shift towards “a more inclusive approach which better reflects the diversity of learning needs” (WG, 2014, p3). Throughout this project I have chosen to mainly use the term AEN as this was the terminology adopted by the Head Teacher in the Welsh school selected for the study. The term SEN is used when referring to existing legislation such as the SEN Code of Practice (WAG, 2002).

hopefully give SENCOs and teachers new ideas on how to help learners with AEN achieve their potential.

#### **1.2.4 Layout of the thesis**

In the following chapters, I first review the relevant literature relating to controversies around defining dyslexia as well as around the assessment of dyslexia. The literature review also focuses on how dyslexia affects the development of literacy skills across languages and ends with a review of the literature related to the support offered to learners in Wales and in France. The methodology for the project is then discussed, including ethical issues such as the advantages and disadvantages of being an insider researcher and issues that could emerge when working with vulnerable children or young adults. As it is a qualitative study, the volume of data collected was considerable and the data analysis approach is outlined in chapter 4. Findings are then presented using a thematic analysis. This is followed by a discussion which pivots around issues emerging from the main findings, with reference to the literature and the theoretical underpinnings of my work in particular. The discussion chapter concludes with some personal reflections on the conduct and outcomes of the study. This includes reflections on how, according to participants, issues related to inconsistencies in implementation of policies and exchange of valuable information affect the quality of the support offered. The recommendations are then tied in to Bronfenbrenner's Bioecology Theory of Human Development (1979). This work has relevance to this study as he looks not only at the relationship between the developing person and their immediate environment such as family and school, but also at how the relationships

between these settings and the larger context affect the person or in this case, the learner. I considered that this framework, which includes the wider contextual influences such as political context and economic influences, would be useful in exploring the implications arising from this study. In chapter 7, the implications of the study are therefore presented using Bronfenbrenner's (1979) work as a framework; and recommendations are set out for policy makers, education professionals as well as parents or guardians.

## **Chapter 2 Literature Review**

This chapter opens with a review of reports relating to literacy acquisition across different countries with a focus on members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. There are, and have been, many controversies (Elliott & Grigorenko, 2014; Miles, 2006; Reid 2011) around the term "dyslexia". It is therefore important to have a discussion around some definitions and debates as a starting point to the review of the existing literature. The debates around defining the learning difference have led to further research investigating ways of assessing and quantifying dyslexia, some of which I will make an attempt at analysing. As this is a "simple" multiple case study (Yin, 2009, p59) which aspires to have a European dimension there is a necessity to investigate whether dyslexia manifests itself across all European languages. Recent cross-linguistic studies will be referred to in order to gain an understanding of how dyslexia impacts learners. Finally, approaches to supporting people with dyslexia in Britain and in France are explored and illustrate the way in which cultural differences can influence how the learning difference is perceived.

### **2.1 Introduction: literacy acquisition across member countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)**

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) launched the Literacy Decade in 2003 under the slogan "Literacy

as Freedom". The aim of the initiative is to increase literacy rates worldwide by 50% by 2015. In the Education for All Global Monitoring Report (2006), UNESCO adopts as its working definition of literacy UNESCO's 1978 definition of "functional literacy":

"A person is functionally literate who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community and also for enabling him to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his own and the community's development" (UNESCO, 2006, p30).

In other words, being literate can be significant in the pursuit of development at personal, family and community levels. Indeed, according to UNESCO, "a lack of literacy is strongly correlated with poverty both in an economic sense and in the broader sense of a deprivation of capabilities" (UNESCO, 2006, p30). The report also states that the major problem with regard to literacy is lack of access to adequate schooling and the degree to which a country "enables, promotes and sustains educational outcomes" (UNESCO, 2006, p31). According to the OECD, reading skills are more reliable "predictors of economic and social well-being than the number of years spent in school or in post-formal education" (OECD, 2010, p6). They published a report entitled The OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA):

"PISA's conception of reading literacy encompasses the range of situations in which people read, the different ways written texts are presented, and the variety of ways that readers approach and use texts, from the functional and finite, such as finding a particular piece of practical information, to the deep and far-reaching, such as

understanding other ways of doing, thinking and being” (OECD, 2010, p6).

PISA’s definition of being literate focuses on young people’s ability to use what they learned in school to meet real-life challenges.

The PISA 2009 results showed that Wales’s performance in reading was significantly below the OECD average. France outperformed Wales and England in reading performance. However, France also showed a narrower distribution of reading scores which may suggest fewer high achievers but also fewer under achievers (Bradshaw et al. 2010, p18/19).

More recently, the results of the PISA 2012 assessment show that Wales’s performance in reading in 2012 remained at a similar level to that of the last two PISA surveys in 2009 and 2006, “although the number of countries outperforming Wales increased to 31” (Wheater et al. 2013, .p57). Sixteen of the countries that significantly outperformed Wales are European Union (EU) members: Finland, Republic of Ireland, Poland, Estonia, Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, France, Denmark, Czech Republic, Italy, Austria, Latvia, Hungary, Spain and Luxembourg.

The results of the PISA 2012 assessment of 15-year-olds in Wales show a narrower distribution of scores than the OECD average difference. Approximately two thirds of the OECD countries had a wider distribution than Wales. This shows that Wales may have fewer very high achievers but may also have fewer underachievers (Wheater et al. 2013, p62).

The PISA report stresses “that nurturing high performance and tackling low performance need not be mutually exclusive” (OECD, 2012, p9) and the data shows that Shanghai-China, Hong Kong-China, Singapore, Japan and

Korea are the five highest-performing countries and economies in reading (OECD, 2012, p4). In addition, “since their first participations in PISA, France, Hong Kong-China, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Macao-China, Poland, Portugal and the Russian Federation have been able to increase the share of top performers in mathematics, reading or science, indicating that education systems can pursue and promote academic excellence” (2012, p9) whether they perform at or above the OECD average and regardless of students’ socio-economic status, either by targeting low-performing schools or low-performing students within schools. The PISA 2012 results suggest that European education policies, with the exception of Finland and Estonia, have not always successfully addressed how to close the gap between high performance and low performance in reading. Since Wales was part of the low performing countries, the OECD have published a report which aims at helping the Welsh Assembly address challenges which need to be met in order to improve the quality of education:

“These include a large proportion of low performers and diverse students whose needs are not sufficiently met in schools; inadequate conditions to nurture an excellent teaching profession; lack of synergies in the assessment and evaluation arrangements; and lack of long term clarity in policy making with weak implementation approaches. An overarching challenge is that Wales lacks a compelling and inclusive long-term education vision to steer the education system and its reform efforts” (OECD, 2014, p11).

Challenges identified by the OECD highlight the fact that learners’ diverse needs are not consistently met in schools.



Across European countries, children are taught how to become literate from a very young age. Depending on their abilities, they find the process more or less challenging. Some children take longer to achieve literacy than others and some seem to have persistent difficulties which are not always addressed by the various teaching methods used. The term "dyslexia" is used to refer to one pattern of difficulties which some children encounter during this learning process. Dyslexia is a major cause of adults with access to education not achieving a good standard of functional literacy.

The following sections address the first two sub research questions:

- Q1 How does dyslexia affect English speaking learners in Wales and French speaking learners in France?
- Q2 How are learners with dyslexia supported in Wales and in France?

I first review definitions of dyslexia adopted by some organisations in two different parts of the world; I then discuss ways of assessing and quantifying dyslexia. Finally, I analyse recent research about how dyslexia manifests itself across different European languages, including approaches to supporting learners with this learning difference.

## **2.2 Dyslexia: background, definitions and debates**

Defining such a complex learning difference as dyslexia is a challenge. It is agreed that the definition should refer to difficulties reading text but “the field has been unable to produce a universally accepted definition that is not imprecise, amorphous, or difficult to operationalize” (Elliott & Grigorenko, 2014, p5). The fact that no two cases of dyslexia present exactly the same

characteristics (Reid, 2011, p16) leads to even more confusion. This is encapsulated in the Support for People with Dyslexia in Wales Report (2008) where Cooke gives evidence to the Enterprise and Learning Committee stating that writing a definition of dyslexia is difficult because it always depends on whom it is provided for. Indeed, the nature of the definition is strongly influenced by the target audience. In the same report (2008), Fawcett adds that if the definition is written for teachers, it will probably focus on literacy although dyslexia is much broader:

“If you are looking for something that is a shorthand for the teacher to identify a problem and to provide proactive support, that is probably different from the type of definition that you would have, say, for self-help—for parents and children to have an understanding. Teachers will probably define it in terms of literacy, although it is much broader than that” (National Assembly for Wales, 2008, p6).

There is thus no unique and empirical definition, rather a plethora of them.

In the next section, I explore the strengths and limitations of some definitions which were adopted by organisations in two different parts of the world. Britain and France were selected for the following reasons:

- They performed below the OECD mean as regards performance in reading literacy according to the PISA report published in 2010.
- The two countries are English or French speaking countries. French and English are non-transparent languages and therefore present irregularities between graphemes and phonemes. In other words both languages are ambiguous when it comes to spelling-to-sound mapping.
- They are considered to have a developed economy.

This study investigates how English speaking and French speaking learners are affected by dyslexia and the two countries selected should enable me to see if dyslexia is defined in relation to the nature of the language spoken. This analysis should address the first sub research question:

Q1 How does dyslexia affect English speaking learners in Wales and French speaking learners in France?

The wording of the definitions adopted by selected organisations should shed light on how dyslexia is perceived in these countries. As perceptions of dyslexia are likely to impact on the type of support provided (medical or educational) this section should also help address the second sub research question:

Q2 How are learners with dyslexia supported in Wales and in France?

### **2.2.1 Britain: the British Psychological Society**

There are currently two definitions of dyslexia in use in Britain: that of the British Dyslexia Association (BDA) and that of the British Psychological Society (BPS). The BPS's definition is actually part of a report (BPS, 1999 updated 2005, p20) which provides guidance on dyslexia, literacy, assessment and intervention. The report was written to provide guidance for Educational Psychologists (BPS, 1999 updated 2005, p5). Several Local Authorities in England have adopted this definition e.g. Leicestershire County Council (2013, accessed 13<sup>th</sup> January 2015), Devon County Council (2011) and Oxfordshire County Council (2013). In Wales, nineteen of the

twenty two LAs (WG, 2012, p17) refer to the definition of dyslexia adopted by the British Psychological Society. This definition was agreed in 1999 but was updated in 2005:

“Dyslexia is evident when accurate and fluent word reading and/or spelling develops very incompletely or with great difficulty. This focuses on literacy learning at the "word level" and implies that the problem is severe and persistent despite appropriate learning opportunities. It provides the basis for a staged process of assessment through teaching” (British Psychological Society, 1999 updated 2005, p 20).

The definition refers to literacy skills only and it is also very vague as to which types of difficulties are encountered. A specific description of error type would be beneficial to the reader since this paragraph, as it stands, could be applicable to poor readers as well as to learners with dyslexia. ”. Indeed, the definition refers to the issues that learners with dyslexia encounter in terms of reading and spelling when, as Reid states, it is broader than that:

“(...) dyslexia involves more than reading: it affects learning and how all information - and that includes oral instructions - is processed” (Reid, 2011, p16).

There is no reference to other difficulties such as areas of speed of processing, short term memory, sequencing, visual perception and motor skills.

This also leaves out any other issues such as self-esteem issues, sequencing difficulties or time management. Reid (2011, p16) and Yeo (2008, p10) state that literacy problems are not the only characteristics of

dyslexia. Indeed, Reid mentions that dyslexia is “evident along a continuum, from mild to severe” (2011, p16). According to Reid, dyslexia affects all areas of learning, including verbal information processing. This means that dyslexia involves more than reading and spelling: it applies to how learners assimilate information, how they memorise it and how they display or communicate what they have processed. Yeo’s (2008, p10) views complement Reid’s as she explains that dyslexia can affect long-term verbal memory, working memory, sequencing abilities, sequential memory and be a cause of poor left/right discrimination. This pattern of potential difficulties associated with dyslexia can therefore affect “the information processing cycle” (Reid, 2011, p16). Reid and Yeo’s views suggest that the BPS’s definition of dyslexia is not holistic as it focuses primarily on aspects of the learning difference relating to symbolic features of language such as mapping segments of sounds on the written symbols (Yeo, 2008, p10).

There is no mention of whether dyslexia is a moderate learning difference or a specific learning difference. Considering that this definition was adopted by several LAs and is accessible to the general public through LA policies or LA websites, the terminology could have been clarified. The adopted definition of dyslexia is discussed in the report and terms such as “severity” and “persistence” are analysed. The report was primarily written to provide guidance for Educational Psychologists and the jargon used is highly specialised:

“The report was written primarily to inform practising educational psychologists about the concept of dyslexia. It also outlined principles of assessment that needed to be translated into policy and practice by

psychological services and their local authorities” (BPS, 1999 updated 2005, p5).

The report costs £4.80 (2014) and can be ordered online through the BPS website. Appropriate learning opportunities are also defined and the report recommends that the Educational Psychologist involved in an assessment of dyslexia should “draw on a range of research that describes the characteristics of effective instruction” (BPS, 1999 updated 2005, p55). The definition should be read alongside the report so that the reader can have a clear understanding of the terminology used.

Hypotheses around the causes of dyslexia give rise to a great deal of controversy in the field (Brown Waesche et al, 2011; Elliott & Grigorenko, 2014; Ramus et al. 2013) and the BPS chose not to refer to the nature or origins of the learning difference. The definition, when read separately from the report, is rather imprecise but does not make any unfounded statements about dyslexia's roots or its remediation.

### **2.2.2 Britain: the British Dyslexia Association**

The British Dyslexia Association (BDA) issued a longer and more detailed definition which is aimed at the general public:

“Dyslexia is a combination of abilities and difficulties that affect the learning process in one or more of reading, spelling and writing. It is a persistent condition. Accompanying weaknesses may be identified in areas of speed of processing, short-term memory, organisation, sequencing, spoken language and motor skills. There may be difficulties with auditory and/or visual perception. It is particularly

related to mastering and using written language, which may include alphabetic, numeric and musical notation. Dyslexia can occur despite normal intellectual ability and teaching. It is constitutional in origin, part of one's make-up and independent of socio-economic or language background” (BDA cited in Support for People with Dyslexia in Wales, 2008, p 5).

As opposed to the BPS’s definition, it is broader and has a positive connotation due to the terminology chosen to describe dyslexia: "a combination of abilities and difficulties". It suggests that there are good features despite the shortcomings, although it does not give any further explanation about what these "abilities" are. Dyslexia is said to affect a "learning process" and does not only affect literacy skills. Indeed, other areas such as motor skills are also referred to. The definition also uses the word "writing" which broadens the pattern of difficulties as it could relate to handwriting and letter formation. The use of the term "condition" implies that dyslexia is a state of being that is "persistent" as opposed to ephemeral. The BDA provides a more complete definition as it refers to a wider spectrum of difficulties. The traits that are mentioned here help the reader make a difference between a poor reader or speller and a learner with dyslexia.

However, in 2009 the BDA Management Board decided to adopt a different definition. Indeed, a very influential report attempted to reach an agreed definition resulting in a change to the BDA’s own definition. The chosen definition was written by Sir Jim Rose. In 2008, Sir Jim Rose, formerly Her Majesty’s Inspector and Director of Inspection for the Office for Standards in Education, was invited by the Secretary of State to lead an independent review of dyslexia. When writing his report, Rose relied on the support and

knowledge of an Expert Advisory Group including a number of specialists in the fields of Education and Psychology. The group constructed a definition of dyslexia which is presented in the first chapter of the report:

- “Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling.
- Characteristic features of dyslexia are difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speed.
- Dyslexia occurs across the range of intellectual abilities.
- It is best thought of as a continuum, not a distinct category, and there are no clear cut-off points.
- Co-occurring difficulties may be seen in aspects of language, motor co-ordination, mental calculation, concentration and personal organisation, but these are not, by themselves, markers of dyslexia.
- A good indication of the severity and persistence of dyslexic difficulties can be gained by examining how the individual responds or has responded to well-founded intervention” (Rose, 2009, p30).

Unlike the BDA’s definition, Rose’s does not have a very positive connotation as dyslexia is being referred to as a “learning difficulty”. It focuses on the range of difficulties that learners with dyslexia might be faced with. This is the reason why the British Dyslexia Association Management Board then insisted on the following paragraph being added to Rose’s definition:

“In addition to these characteristics, the BDA acknowledges the visual processing difficulties that some individuals with dyslexia can experience, and points out that readers with dyslexia can show a



combination of abilities and difficulties that affect the learning process. Some also have strengths in other areas, such as design, problem solving, creative skills, interactive skills and oral skills” (BDA, 2009).

Without the added paragraph, there would be no reference to potential strengths learners with dyslexia might possess. Rose’s definition is nevertheless holistic as it presents the learning difference as a continuum. It is also said to affect certain skills and a range of abilities. Indeed, it emphasises the lack of fluency in word reading and spelling but also refers to difficulties in mental calculation and personal organisation. Despite the absence of reference to any abilities that a learner with dyslexia might possess, the definition ends on a rather optimistic note as it mentions that degrees of severity and persistence of dyslexia vary from one person to another and can be influenced by “well-founded intervention”.

### **2.2.3 France: *Association Nationale d’Associations de Parents d’Enfants Dyslexiques*<sup>4</sup>**

In France, support for learners with dyslexia is mainly provided by the health services with the education system having very little input. The Ministry of Education has not adopted any particular definition of dyslexia but published a report (Ringard, 2000) which summarises research trends about both dysphasia, or deviant speech disorder, and dyslexia. The style and jargon used are aimed at a specialised audience thus not making it easily accessible to all families or learners affected. They can, however, access help and support by contacting organisations such as *l’Association Nationale*

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<sup>4</sup> The National Association of Parents of Children with Dyslexia.

*d'Associations de Parents d'Enfants Dyslexiques* (ANAPEDYS). The national association also includes 32 regional branches (2004). The main objective of ANAPEDYS is to work closely with the Education Ministry and encourage Members of Parliament to take the needs of learners with dyslexia into account when discussing educational policies (2004). It is the most well-known association supporting learners with dyslexia in the country. It has adopted the following definition of dyslexia:

“La dyslexie est une difficulté durable d'apprentissage de la lecture et d'acquisition de son automatisme, chez des enfants intelligents, normalement scolarisés, indemnes de troubles sensoriels et de troubles psychologiques préexistants”<sup>5</sup> (ANAPEDYS, 2004).

It refers to dyslexia as a persistent learning difficulty but focuses exclusively on decoding skills. The definition refers to dyslexia affecting intelligent children suggesting that dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty as opposed to a moderate learning difficulty. As Rose (2009) mentioned, “dyslexia occurs across the range of intellectual abilities”, meaning that dyslexia can co-occur with other difficulties, something which is ruled out by the French definition. Rose’s comment means that there can be comorbidity between dyslexia and moderate learning difficulties (MLD). MLD can be associated with “attainments significantly below expected levels in most areas of the curriculum despite appropriate interventions” (DFE, 2011). ANAPEDYS’s definition rules this possibility out by saying dyslexia affects intelligent children.

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<sup>5</sup> Dyslexia is a persistent learning difficulty. It is characterised by difficulties in learning to read. The reading process is not automatic. Dyslexia affects intelligent pupils in a normal school environment. Children affected do not suffer from sensory dysfunctions or from pre-existing psychological problems.

## **2.2.4 Dyslexia: a causal perspective**

The variation and discrepancy in focus amongst these definitions mirror the complexity of the on-going debates around the nature, the characteristics and how to best support learners with dyslexia. Frith talks about paradoxes in the definition of dyslexia (1999, p192). In order to solve some of these issues and contradictions around defining dyslexia, she created a causal modelling framework involving three levels of description: behavioural, cognitive and biological. Frith considers that environmental influences can interact with any or all of these levels (Frith, 1999, p 194) and that all levels must be linked together when making an attempt at defining dyslexia (Hulme & Snowling, 2009, p76). She also believes that all theories are compatible:

“Defining dyslexia at a single level of explanation - biological, cognitive or behavioural - will always lead to paradoxes. For a full understanding of dyslexia we need to link together the three levels and consider the impact of cultural factors which can aggravate or ameliorate the condition. The consensus is emerging that dyslexia is a neuro-developmental disorder with a biological origin, which impacts on speech processing with a range of clinical manifestations. There is evidence for a genetic basis and there is evidence for a brain basis, and it is clear that the behavioural signs extend well beyond written language” (Frith, 1999, p211).

Frith believes that the cognitive level of the framework should act as a bridge between the biological and the behavioural levels; no definition of dyslexia should thus be based on a single aspect of her classification framework.



**Figure 1: The three-level framework (Frith, 1999, p193)**

If we use Frith's framework to categorise recent research, it helps to gain an overall understanding of the debates. At the biological level there has been on-going interest in brain functioning (Simos et al., 2002) and how dyslexia is constitutional. There have also been investigations into the heritability of dyslexia (Grigorenko, 2001; Hulme & Snowling, 2009; Ramus, 2005). Ramus highlights that dyslexia has genetic origins and that its heritability (2005, p29) has been confirmed by scientific research:

“À partir de l’ensemble de ces données, on peut donc faire l’hypothèse que les personnes dyslexiques possèdent des allèles de certains gènes qui affectent la migration neuronale, conduisant à la formation d’ectopies dans certaines aires de l’hémisphère gauche dès le milieu de l’embryogenèse”<sup>6</sup> (Ramus, 2005, p33).

This explains why dyslexia usually affects more than one member of a same family (Hulme & Snowling, 2009, p74; Ramus, 2005, p29). Simos et al (2002) acknowledge that the behavioural signs of dyslexia are the consequence of a cognitive dysfunction and investigate the underlying causes at the

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<sup>6</sup> From all these data can be drawn the hypothesis that people with dyslexic tendencies possess alleles of certain genes that affect neuronal migration, leading to the formation of ectopias in certain areas of the left hemisphere right from mid-embryogenesis. (Ramus, 2005, p33).

biological level. Indeed, in their study specific brain activation profile becomes normal following successful remedial training (2002). They made an attempt at analysing alterations in the mapping of regional cerebral activation in children with dyslexia who participated in a personalised intensive teaching program. In order to carry out their study, they used functional brain imaging (MRI) so that possible putative brain mechanisms underlying dyslexia could be examined together with the impact of a personalised intensive intervention program. The findings have crucial implications for current views regarding the nature of dyslexia as they suggest that the deficit in functional cerebral organisation underlying dyslexia can be reversed after adequate intensive intervention:

“First and foremost, it appears that although dyslexia has a demonstrable neurologic basis, it is not a neurologic disease. Rather, word reading difficulties most likely represent variations in normal development that can be reversed by means of reading intervention targeting phonologic processing and decoding skills” (Simos et al, 2002, p1212). They suggest that when addressed at a young age and with suitable teaching methods, difficulties that children with dyslexia show at the behavioural level can be overcome. This contradicts the BPS’s definition as they refer to signs of dyslexia being “severe and persistent despite appropriate learning opportunities” (2005, p20). Simos et al. acknowledge that the environmental level of Frith’s framework has direct impact on the cognitive level and therefore on the brain at the biological level. Their findings parallel Frith’s views on the necessity to compile all theories so that a meaningful and holistic definition of dyslexia can emerge.

Other studies investigated the link between the cognitive and biological levels and how abnormal connectivity between regions of the brain can affect cognitive activity (Démonet et al. 2004). Indeed, Démonet et al.'s paper is in line with Frith's and Simos et al.'s views as it recognises the biological origins of dyslexia but also highlights the importance of environmental factors such as a suitable teaching method and remediation relying on interventions for language, phonology, reading, and speech.

Although it is widely accepted that dyslexia affects learners' phonological skills (Miles, 2006, p25; Ramus et al., 2013, p631), some researchers are still sceptical and have made attempts at demonstrating that "phonology" has no precise definition or status and therefore should not have such a central position (Uppstad & Tønnessen, 2007). The researchers want to move away from Miles's and others' views on dyslexia being a result of a phonological deficit. They challenge the idea that written language is a reflection of spoken language (phonological processing). Uppstad and Tønnessen believe that more research should be undertaken so that other possibilities can be explored. They advocate a more flexible theory and believe there is a need to base the definition of dyslexia on its symptoms rather than causes such as a phonological deficit (which mirrors the BPS's view). To them, including causes of dyslexia in its definition leads to a "risk of circular reasoning" (Uppstad & Tønnessen, 2007, p170). They suggest that there is a need to challenge the idea that phonology is necessary and sufficient for the ability to read:

“Definitions of ‘dyslexia’ should be based on symptoms and should not include causes such as ‘a phonological deficit’ (Tønnessen, 1997), because then we delimit the search for causes and risk circular

reasoning, e.g. if we include 'phonological deficit' in the definition of 'dyslexia' and sample dyslexics on the basis of this definition, then it is not surprising that we find a high frequency of phonological deficits among dyslexics" (Uppstad & Tønnessen, 2007, p170).

Uppstad & Tønnessen believe that the "vagueness" (2007, p171) of the definition of phonology should prevent the term being used to define dyslexia. Using a definition of dyslexia which describes the specific learning difference as phonological in origin for research purposes prevents other causes from being explored. In addition, Frith's comment relating to some learners with dyslexia (1999, p209) not showing signs of a phonological deficit reinforces Uppstad & Tønnessen's argument:

"As a rough estimate we can assume that 80% of children who are potentially dyslexic would show phonological deficits on testing. This estimate is based on a study with an unselected group of children currently diagnosed by educational psychologists as suffering from specific learning disability (Frederickson and Frith, 1998). What about the 20% of children who did not show phonological impairments?" (Frith, 1999, p209).

Although Uppstad & Tønnessen's article seems to contradict Frith's Three-Level Framework theory, conclusions drawn by the researchers agree with Frith's remarks as she believes that focusing on the phonological causes of dyslexia exclusively can be misleading and can prevent other potential primary causes such as auditory, visual or temporal processing from being further investigated.

Ziegler et al.'s (2008) work on developmental dyslexia is consistent with Frith's and Uppstad & Tønnessen's work as their findings highlight that the

complexity of the reading process naturally suggests that dyslexia is “multifactorial”(2008, p173) in nature. They believe that there are two facets of developmental dyslexia:

“On the one hand, there is a considerable amount of heterogeneity across developmental dyslexics because most of them exhibit a variety of deficits across different domains (letter processing, phoneme processing, phonological lexicon). The combination of deficits and their relative size seem to predict reading failure and success. (...) On the other hand, there is a reasonable amount of stability across subjects in the sense that almost all dyslexics show phonological deficits, a finding that is consistent with the phonological deficit theory of developmental dyslexia” (Ziegler et al. 2008, p173).

They also stress that their research findings showed almost all participants with dyslexia presented phonological deficits. In other words, findings highlighted that there was no single cause of dyslexia, but rather a complex pattern of phonological, phonemic, and letter processing deficits. Importantly, most participants had deficits in more than one domain. These findings are consistent with existing literature (Hulme et al. 2005; Carroll & Snowling, 2004) and with the definition of dyslexia adopted by Rose (2009) which was subsequently adopted by the BDA.

## **2.2.5 Section summary**

To conclude, the definition compiled by the British Dyslexia Association, which is partly based on Rose’s definition (2009), is more holistic than others analysed in the section. Indeed, it is the only one which refers to potential



learners' strengths and abilities. It also refers to dyslexia as being "a pattern of difficulties" as it does not exclusively impact on literacy skills development. Rose's (2009) definition also states that dyslexia "occurs across the range of intellectual abilities" suggesting that it is "evident along a continuum, from mild to severe" (Reid, 2011, p16) which is in contradiction with the definition adopted by ANAPEDYS as it refers to dyslexia affecting intelligent children.

The overlapping of theoretical approaches expounded by academic researchers making attempts at explaining dyslexia from a causal perspective shows there is a lack of consensus (Elliott & Grigorenko, 2014, p40). However, various theories help gain a better understanding of the nature of dyslexia so that appropriate classroom approaches can be developed.

Throughout the thesis I have chosen to refer to dyslexia as a learning difference rather than as a learning difficulty or disability. This lexical choice matches Reid's views on learning styles and inclusion. Reid (2005) believes that there are differences between learners (2011, p9) as some are unable to adapt to certain teaching styles or environments. He also claims that it is wrong to refer to these learning differences as "difficulties" or "disabilities" (2005, p16) as these terms presuppose that the student is at fault. Reid thinks that if some students do not adapt to certain teaching styles, it is because of the educational system having unrealistic and inadequate expectations of learners.

The definition adopted by the BDA has a positive connotation and encourages an attitude shift by suggesting that it is possible to meet diverse learning needs by using the appropriate teaching approach. In the following

section, literature relating to the assessment of dyslexia is analysed and discussed.

## **2.3 The assessment of dyslexia**

Since dyslexia does not affect people in the same way, it cannot officially be "diagnosed" as a clinical condition can be. A battery of tests is often used to provide an in-depth investigation of every area that might be impacted. Over the last few decades, many standardised tests have been published in various countries. These usually provide the assessor with scores such as reading and spelling ages but do not necessarily provide a rigorous analysis of the test taker's difficulties or their strengths. Miles and Miles often stressed the importance of both spelling and reading error analyses so that a personalised remediation program can be planned (1999). Backhouse and Morris make an important statement which parallels Miles and Miles's views:

“...the professional skills and judgement needed by competent assessors extend far beyond knowing which tests to use and how to interpret the results, important as these are. Knowledge of the normal development of literacy skills and the relevant underlying cognitive processes, plus the ability to recognise the signs of specific difficulties right across the age range, are all essential prerequisites for the skilled diagnostician” (Backhouse & Morris, 2005, p11).

The quote emphasises the need for professional skills and judgement in order to carry out an assessment.

In the following sections of the review I analyse the literature which relates to the relevance of assessments and in that given context, I discuss the practices of assessment in Britain (Wales and England) and in France.

### **2.3.1 The purpose of assessment**

Backhouse and Morris (2005, p5) suggest that assessments should actively involve the learner. The process should be collaborative and aim at gaining a better understanding of a learner's profile (Jones & Kindersley, 2013, ix).

Assessments should identify needs and address concerns. Backhouse and Morris (2005, p6) also highlight the importance of addressing parents' and carers' concerns as regards a child's lack of educational progress by offering an assessment. Hence, the growing interest in developing early screening tests for dyslexia which can be used to assess pre-school children. Despite the interest in developing these tests in the UK and abroad, there is no consensus on how valid and predictive they are (Simpson and Everatt, 2005, p186; Habib, 2008, p27). Indeed, if a child has not yet started to learn how to read and write, these tests are purely based on oral performances which do not always go hand in hand with a specific learning difference such as dyslexia (Ramus et al. 2013). Simpson and Everatt (2005) even suggest that classroom based evaluations for pre-school children may be as valid as formal assessments. Although there is a strong interest in identifying children's needs early and to address families' concerns, there are still ongoing debates about the accuracy of certain batteries of tests such as the Dyslexia Early Screening Test (Nicolson and Fawcett, 2004). Environmental factors such as "the influence of class mates, the nature of the curriculum, and the level of teacher skills" (Elliott & Grigorenko, 2014, p135) are too often

disregarded. As mentioned earlier, the learner should be actively involved in the assessment and if a child is too young, he might not be fully aware of what is happening. Child in class observations should also be part of the assessment so that variables such as classroom-level effect can be evaluated (Elliott & Grigorenko, 2014, p136).

Another reason why assessments need to be carried out is that there is a need to identify not only the difficulties learners might encounter but also the strengths they have developed (Backhouse & Morris, 2005; Jones & Kindersley, 2013). For example, Davis's theory (2010, p4), which depicts dyslexia as being a gift, suggests that most learners with dyslexia naturally present eight basic abilities such as natural curiosity or striking imagination which could result in two characteristics:

“These eight basic abilities, if not suppressed, invalidated or destroyed by parents or the educational process will result in two characteristics: higher-than-normal intelligence and extraordinary abilities” (Davis, 2010, p5).

Dyslexia would therefore be a "gift of mastery" (Davis, 2010, p5). This contradicts the Rose's definition (2009) which states that dyslexia occurs across the range of intellectual ability. Moreover, the BPS stresses that although dyslexia assessments may refer to test scores from batteries of tests “designed to tap aspects of cognitive performance” (BPS, 1999 updated 2005, p49), “no particular pattern of sub-test scores can be regarded as necessary or sufficient in deciding whether and to what extent learning difficulties can be described as dyslexic” (BPS, 1999 updated 2005, p49). This also contradicts Davis's theory as the BPS's comment implies that dyslexia occurs across the range of cognitive ability.

Assessments mainly aim at diagnosing difficulties rather than at building on existing competencies. Focusing on what a learner cannot do prevents the assessor from understanding the learner holistically. Unfortunately, most assessments carried out aim at identifying test takers' literacy based weaknesses rather than possible areas of strength.

There is also a legal and administrative side to the assessment process. According to the 1996 Education Act, which applies to England and Wales, schools and LEAs are to meet the needs of children described as having learning difficulties. The act provides a legal right to accessing the curriculum for learners with dyslexia as well as the provision of information in a range of formats. There is also a Special Educational Needs framework, enforced in England in 2001 and in Wales in 2002, which makes provision to meet the special educational needs of individual children.

In France, a report was issued by the National Health Committee in 1999. It recommends that a learner who is not making any educational progress should be referred to a doctor in order to be assessed. Learners showing signs of dyslexia are referred to as "impaired children" suffering from a brain dysfunction throughout the report which discloses once more the gap between jargon used in current research (both French and British in this case) and the different ministries or committees. In France, learners are assessed for dyslexia medically (Ringard, 2000, p32) whereas dyslexia is perceived as an educational matter in Britain. Assessments are therefore mainly carried out by Educational Psychologists with contributions from parents and teachers (BPS, 1999 updated 2005, page 48) so that suitable provision can be provided. Following a formal assessment for dyslexia, British learners have access to school based support and to exam access

arrangements. French learners follow a personalised programme delivered by a speech therapist but also access examination concessions in school (Blanquer and Hetzel, 2011). In these cases, assessments are of practical value as they enable the learner to have either more suitable access to the curriculum or to have extra tuition after school. In other words, assessment can be seen as a help to plan for intervention.

Assessments can be carried out in different contexts and for different reasons, such as addressing concerns and identify needs even though there seems to be a divergence of opinions as to how predictive tests can be (Elliott & Grigorenko, 2014, p136). They can also be carried out to recognise individuals' strengths and weaknesses. Finally, they can help assess the need for examination access arrangements or plan for intervention. However, it should be a process in which the learner is actively taking part and a gateway to further analysis and understanding of a learner's difficulties and strengths.

### **2.3.2 Assessment practices in Britain and in France**

Assessment practices vary from one country to another (Smythe et al. 2005, p2). For example, in France and Britain dyslexia is evaluated with respect to learners' own linguistic and cultural context. Smythe et al. (2005) reflected on issues around dyslexia including “those relevant to the education system, public and professional awareness, legislation and policies, definition and terminology and prevalence within the country discussed” (Smythe et al., 2005, p1). Smythe et al.'s work provides an overview of the type of provision learners with dyslexia have access to in different countries around the world. It is interesting the way different countries interpret their needs within their

own linguistic and cultural context. Although legislation does not always equal provision, the following section outlines regulations relating to the identification and assessment of individuals showing signs of dyslexia in two European countries.

### **2.3.2.1 Britain (England and Wales)**

The SEN Code of Practice for England (2001) and Wales (2002) provides practical advice to LEAs and schools on carrying out their statutory duties to identify, assess and make provision for children with additional learning needs. However, as Smythe et al. state (2005) the needs of learners with a learning difference such as dyslexia are to be met by schools. Indeed, Smythe et al. refer to a survey carried out by the British Dyslexia Association in 1996 which showed that over half of LEA policies looked at stated that extra funding would be made available to schools only when a learner had a “reading age on or below the 1<sup>st</sup> percentile” (Smythe et al. , 2005, p87). The support provided for learners with dyslexia is mainly educational. The school is responsible for helping to identify learners who might require additional help. The SEN Code of Practice for England issues guidelines on how to assess learners’ needs:

“To help identify learners who may have special educational needs, schools can measure children’s progress by referring to:

- evidence from teacher observation and assessment
- their performance against the level descriptions within the National Curriculum at the end of a key stage
- their progress against the objectives specified in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy Frameworks

- standardised screening or assessment tools” (Department for Education and Skills, 2001, p 61).

The SEN Code of Practice for Wales (2002) provides identical guidelines but without mentioning the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy Frameworks as they are specific to England. According to both documents, secondary schools are responsible for identifying - when not identified in primary school - and supporting learners with dyslexia. However, there is no reference to who should be responsible for assessing learners. Both Codes of Practice encourage the use of “standardised screening or assessment tools” but do not provide guidance on how to analyse or use results. This can lead to a lack of consistency in assessment practices between schools or LAs. When Backhouse and Morris state that "the professional skills and judgement needed by competent assessors extend far beyond knowing which tests to use and how to interpret the results, important as these are." (2005, p11), they imply that the use of test results is part of an assessment process which should be carried out by a qualified assessor. Codes of Practice do not emphasise the need for competent assessors to carry out assessments of children showing signs of a learning difference. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the draft version of the new SEN Code of Practice for England (DFE & DOH, 2013) states that all SENCOs must achieve the National Award in Special Educational Needs Coordination within 3 years of appointment (p79) and training has been mandatory in England since 2009. The new SEN Code of Practice will be implemented in England from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014. In addition, The Welsh Government have issued proposals for legislative changes in relation to ALN which aim to create:



- 1 “a unified legislative framework to support children and young people aged 0 to 25 with additional learning needs;
- 2 an integrated, collaborative process of assessment, planning and monitoring which facilitates early, timely and effective interventions;
- 3 a fair and transparent system for providing information and advice, and for resolving concerns and appeals” (WG, 2014, p4).

The proposals also refer to changes to the role of the current SENCO role as the new Code of Practice is “to require governing bodies to ensure that ALNCOs have certain experience or qualifications or both” (WG, 2014, p30). The earliest that any proposals could come into force would be in relation to provision for the academic year 2016/17. These legislative changes should address issues relating to the competency of school based assessors.

As discussed in section 2.2.2, the British Psychological Society published a report (1999 updated 2005) which makes recommendations for educational psychologists relating to assessment and intervention in the context of current educational policy. Educational psychologists usually work in partnership with LAs (See 2.2.2) and are involved in carrying out assessments of additional educational needs when a school cannot provide sufficient support for a learner. Educational psychologists therefore rarely intervene in the assessment of a child showing signs of dyslexia. The report can however be useful for schools as it makes recommendations and provides guidance on the purpose of assessment practices. Throughout the report dyslexia “is regarded primarily as a mainstream educational issue” (BPS, 1999 updated 2005, p9). It also states that educational psychologists are to help schools develop “effective school based assessment, intervention and monitoring” (1999 updated 2005, p9). The report refers to the value of

assessment as being the lead to adequate intervention. When considering implications for practice, the following are the three aspects which should be evaluated throughout the assessment process:

- 1 “That the learner is learning/has learnt accurate and fluent word reading and/or spelling very incompletely;
- 2 That appropriate learning opportunities have been provided;
- 3 That progress has been made only as a result of much additional effort/instruction and that difficulties have, nevertheless, persisted” (BPS, 1999 updated 2005, p47).

The BPS recommends that assessment information should be collected by educational psychologists, teachers, parents and learners themselves. These recommendations are based on the components of the BPS’s definition of dyslexia. In other words, an assessment should include various reports, pieces of work and test scores but it should also be a process in which teachers, parents and learners take part. Standardised tests used as part of the assessment of dyslexia should provide information on the level of accuracy of spelling and/or reading. According to the report, the use of IQ tests is not relevant as results cannot be linked to any theoretical explanations of dyslexia. The use of IQ measurement tools is only justified when trying to identify strengths and weaknesses of a learner. Results should help plan appropriate intervention by building on a learner’s strengths. In other words, the BPS’s views on assessment are that diagnosis is less important than intervention.

To conclude, in England and Wales, dyslexia is an educational issue. Schools are responsible for identifying and providing intervention. The LA only becomes involved when an application for formal statutory assessment

has been submitted (WAG, 2002, p72; DFES, 2001, p72). The BDA recommends that parents who wish to get a formal diagnosis can request a private assessment, which can be costly. In England and Wales, it seems that the diagnosis is not needed in order to access extra support. Schools provide support for children who need it regardless of whether or not they have a formal diagnosis. The quality of the support is, however, questionable as there are currently no government regulations regarding AENCO/SENCOs' or SEN teachers' qualifications in Wales. However, it is important to mention that the Welsh Government (2014) proposals for legislative changes in relation to ALN, likely to be implemented in 2016, state that the new Code of Practice is to require that ALNCOs have certain experience or qualifications (WG, 2014, p30). In addition, the new SEN Code of Practice which will be implemented in England from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014 outlines that, since 2009, SENCOs have been expected to achieve the National Award in Special Educational Needs Coordination within 3 years of appointment (DFE & DOH, 2013, p79).

### **2.3.2.2 France**

In French primary and secondary comprehensive schools, classroom assistants, specialist teachers or special/additional educational needs coordinators do not exist. In fact, when parents or teachers suspect a child might benefit from additional support, an assessment is carried out by a member of the French National Health Service (MENESR, 2008, p10).

In 2000, the Education Ministry asked Jean-Charles Ringard, then a school inspector, to write a report about the situation of learners with dyslexia in schools. The report contains three main sections: firstly, some definitions are

discussed, then a description of the situation in France is given and finally, some recommendations are made. Ringard (2000) suggests that assessment procedures should be harmonised. He advises that screening should be carried out by school doctors or class teachers during children's last year in nursery school (children would be 6-7 years old). He also puts forward that another assessment should be carried out during children's first year in primary school (Ringard, 2000, p64). Smythe et al. refer to this initiative (2005, p98) but also recommend that national tests which are applied in primary school and in the first year of secondary school should be modified so that they can help teachers identify learners with specific learning differences.

The publication of the report led to the drawing up of a ministerial action plan in 2002 but a change of government resulted in some recommendations (See 2.5.2) never being followed up by any concrete changes, especially with regards to the development of school screening tests. Dyslexia screening remains the responsibility of *la Sécurité Sociale* (See glossary).

ANAPEDYS published an information booklet (2006) which provides guidance for health or education practitioners dealing with children showing signs of a learning difference. It states that the child should be referred to a General Practitioner who would then refer them to the following specialist(s):

Practitioner	Contribution to the assessment process
Speech therapist.	They use tests to evaluate the child’s oral and written competencies.
Psychologist.	They use tests to provide a measurement of the child’s IQ or cognitive abilities.
Hearing specialist.	They assess the child’s audition. This assessment is prescribed when the child’s speech appears to be impaired.
Optician or ophthalmologist.	They make sure the child’s difficulties are not due to a sight problem.
Neurologist.	They assess the child’s memory and motor function.

**Table 1: Practitioners’ contributions to dyslexia assessments in France**

Learners do not have to undergo all these assessments but some are asked to do so if there are any doubts on the nature of their learning difference. What stands out is that dyslexia is perceived as a *handicap* in France (Pouhet, 2010, p2; Habib & Joly-Pottuz, 2008, p251) and the sort of assessments carried out could encourage learners to think that they are not “normal”. Dyslexia is viewed as a medical condition as it is the responsibility of the health services to “diagnose” it.

**2.3.3 Section summary**

As a conclusion, the validity and reliability of all assessment procedures currently in place in different countries are debatable. Backhouse and Morris’s remark (2005, p11) is to be kept in mind: test results are helpful but practical diagnoses actually rest on the clinical skills and experience of examiners. Assessment should be about facilitating change and empowering the learner “to use his strengths and understand his weaknesses” (Jones &

Kindersley, 2013, p1). This affirmation opens the door to an interesting debate about the possible lack of uniformity in terms of level of skill and qualifications of assessors around the world. Smythe et al., (2005) give the reader an insight into some lacunas in various educational systems across the world. It seems that different countries interpret their needs within their own linguistic and cultural context which leads to differences in practices from one country to another. In the following section, I analyse and discuss literature relating to dyslexia across languages.

## **2.4 Dyslexia across orthographies: cross linguistic analyses**

In Europe, most languages are considered to be alphabetic: symbols reflect the pronunciation of the words. Words are composed of phonemes or units of a phonetic system corresponding to a distinctive sound. Phonemes usually more or less correspond to graphemes, units of a writing system. The child uses this regularity between graphemes and phonemes to learn how to decode or encode the language (Ziegler & Goswami, 2005, p429).

However, certain languages are less transparent. Some non-transparent languages present irregularities between graphemes and phonemes. This is the case for English and French (Ziegler & Goswami, 2005, p430).

In this section of the review I first discuss the linguistic nature of English and French. I then analyse two cross-linguistic studies which compare learning experiences of learners from different linguistic backgrounds: Ziegler and Montant (2005) review the recent literature dealing with the development of reading skills across different European languages while the second study,

by Paulesu et al. (2001), is a scientific report which presents the results of a research project that focused on demonstrating that there are similarities and differences between readers with dyslexia in deep or inconsistent (English and French) and shallow or consistent (Italian) orthographies despite a universal basis at the cognitive and brain level.

This section provides evidence that learners with dyslexia from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds are faced with obstacles which are influenced by the nature of their native language. Nevertheless, studies reviewed converge towards the same conclusion: the causes and symptoms of dyslexia are biologically universal.

#### **2.4.1 English and French: cross linguistic aspects of literacy acquisition.**

Reading single isolated words is a complex process which involves making connections between orthographic symbols, sounds (phonology) and meaning (semantics) (Goswami, 2008, p124). Before even having started to read, a child usually knows many words phonologically and semantically. Children naturally establish links between meaning and sound. However, learning to read and write is not an inherent process. Learning to read or write is helped by the emergence of certain mechanisms which help a child through the processes of encoding and decoding (Caravolas et al., 2005, 308).

Nevertheless, this learning process can be more or less challenging for learners depending on the nature of the language they are using (Goswami, 2008, p132; Hulme & Snowling, 2013, p2). English and French are often considered to be non-transparent or opaque languages due to the

unpredictability of their orthography (Caravolas et al., 2005, p308; Dulude, 2012, p22). French is often said to be inconsistent (Ziegler et al., 1996, p504; Caravolas et al., 2005, p308; Dulude, 2012, p22). In other words it is an ambiguous language when it comes to spelling-to-sound mapping. However, according to Ziegler et al. (1996, p504) French orthography is more consistent than English orthography as far as the spelling-to-sound mapping is concerned.

According to Goswami (2002, p142; 2008, p136), awareness of phonemes develops as a result of learning to read and write:

“If the spoken lexicon of phonological forms (the “phonological representations” of words in the child’s vocabulary) is not organized in terms of phonemes prior to literacy, then reading acquisition cannot be conceptualized as a process of segmenting the words in one’s vocabulary into phonemes and matching letters to these phonemes” (Goswami, 2002, p142).

Consequently, the nature of a language’s orthography can inhibit or facilitate the acquisition of literacy (Ziegler et al. 2010).

Goswami also states that phonological awareness develops universally (Goswami, 2008, p136). The process should be identical in all alphabetic languages. When literacy is taught or when the alphabetic system is introduced to learners, the acquisition of “phonemic representation can be very rapid” (Goswami, 2002, p144). Subsequently, the orthography or the regularity of letter-to-sound mapping of a language should impact on the speed of phonemic acquirement (Hulme & Snowling, 2009, p47).



It is widely accepted that dyslexia affects learners' phonological skills (Miles, 2006; Ramus et al.2013), consequently the progress of learners with dyslexia is likely to be affected by the orthographic consistency of a language:

“This means that dyslexic children who are learning to read consistent orthographies can compensate to some extent for their difficulties with phonological representation by using letter knowledge to restructure their existing representations to accurately represent onset-rime and phonemic information” (Goswami, 2002, p160).

On the other hand, learners with dyslexia learning to read or write non-transparent orthographies such as English or French have to develop additional strategies such as learning about “letter sequences that connect to whole words” (Goswami, 2002, p160). The development of such coping strategies slows the acquisition of the literacy process down and requires intense concentration (Hulme & Snowling, 2009, p47). In addition, such efforts do not usually result in the acquisition of highly accurate phonemic awareness or of grapheme-phoneme recoding abilities (Elliott & Grigorenko, 2014, p45).

#### **2.4.2 Linguistic factors in reading acquisition of learners with dyslexia**

Ziegler and Montant (2005) defend the hypothesis that it is crucial to understand reading development in order to appreciate how learners with dyslexia view the process. The authors investigate the link between phonological development, learning to read, becoming a good reader and dyslexia. They base their findings on recent research. The authors state that

certain European languages like Italian, Greek or German are very regular in terms of grapheme-phoneme correspondence. The French language is said to present a strong level of consistency in terms of grapheme-phoneme correspondence yet shows very weak correspondence in terms of phoneme-grapheme association whereas the English language is irregular in both cases (grapheme-phoneme and phoneme-grapheme). Ziegler and Montant (2005, p2) refer to Frost & Katz's theory of orthographic transparency (Frost & Katz, 1988, p 92). The theory consists of distinguishing two different methods of decoding words:

- The orthographic way: This should be used by readers of irregular languages such as English or French. The inconsistency of these languages in terms of letter-to-sound mapping makes it impossible to rely on a phonological approach.
- The phonological way: This should be employed by readers of regular languages such as Italian (Ziegler & Goswami, 2006, p430). The regularity of these languages enables a reliance on a consistent letter-to-sound correspondence.

According to Frost & Katz's theory, regular languages (German or Italian) should be taught using phonological methods and irregular languages (English or French) through orthographic methods. The current Welsh National Curriculum for English at Key Stage 2 (learners aged 7 to 11), however, states that learners should be given the opportunity to develop "phonic, graphic and grammatical knowledge, word recognition and contextual understanding within a balanced and coherent programme" (WAG, 2008, p13). This shows that, in Welsh schools, learners are taught

two different methods of decoding words: the phonological method and the orthographic method (or word recognition method).

In 1998, Goswami et al. carried out a study which aimed at demonstrating that irregularities in certain European languages represent a barrier to learning. This study involved English speaking, French speaking and Spanish speaking children reading non-sense words. English children proved to be the weakest single non-word readers. French speaking children came out with slightly higher scores than English speaking children, yet still far behind the Spanish speakers.

Ziegler and Montant (2005) develop the idea that these cross-linguistic differences are directly linked to the size of psycholinguistic units. The theory states that in regular languages (like German), the psycholinguistic units (grains) are smaller (phoneme/grapheme). This is an advantage as there are a smaller number of grapheme-phoneme correspondences to remember. The psycholinguistic grain size theory of reading and its development (Ziegler and Goswami, 2005) was developed from studies which show that the regularity of a language directly influences the nature of the phonic decoding process (type of grain used) and that it does not only influence the individual weighting of orthographic and phonological processes as the theory of orthographic transparency suggests.

Ziegler and Montant (2005) also confirm that cross-linguistic differences and difficulties do not decrease over time. The nature of the language prevails, which implies that the pattern of difficulty encountered by the learner while learning to decode their own language does not vanish over time: the adult reader or expert reader still uses the same techniques or mechanisms as during the learning process.

Ziegler and Montant conclude by stating that it is not possible to understand an adult reader in a specific language without understanding the processes used by the same reader while learning to read. Indeed, different languages rely on different learning mechanisms which are dictated by its psycholinguistic grain sizes.

In addition, one would have thought that English speaking learners with dyslexia would have been weaker than others because of the irregularity of the language. However, a study by Ziegler et al. (2003) demonstrated that there were more similarities than differences between learners with dyslexia coming from different European countries. Indeed, there are more similarities in the reading process between learners with dyslexia from different countries than between “normal” readers.

Ziegler and Montant’s article brings different research fields together: education, psycholinguistics, neuroscience, linguistics. Ziegler recently, contributed to another study (Landerl et al. 2013) which concentrated on the “relationship between phoneme awareness, rapid automatized naming (RAN), verbal short-term/working memory (ST/WM) and diagnostic category” (2013, p686) in control children and children with dyslexia, and on the extent to which their performance depends on orthographic complexity. This cross-linguistic dyslexia study covers a number of languages representing a large range of orthographic complexity. Languages studied had alphabetic orthographies “which all use the Latin alphabet and a left-to-right writing direction” (2013, p692). Results therefore cannot be generalised to non-alphabetic orthographies. Findings highlight that in more transparent orthographies, participants’ reading achievement is generally higher, even for children with dyslexia. “Thus, variance in reading skills is reduced, and

so is variance in phonological skills, given the influence of the former on the latter” (2013, p692). Landerl et al.’s findings are largely consistent with existing literature on predictors of dyslexia and literacy skills (Ziegler et al. 2003; Ziegler & Goswami, 2005; Ziegler et al. 2010), by demonstrating how orthographic complexity exacerbates some symptoms of dyslexia.

### **2.4.3 Dyslexia across orthographies: a universal phonological processing deficit?**

It was previously mentioned that both Paulesu et al. (2001) and Ziegler & Montant (2005) do agree that dyslexia is a neuro developmental disorder as opposed to being a specific diagnostic entity because of its culture specific differences and manifestations. Indeed, Paulesu et al. (2001) investigated the idea that dyslexia is a universal phonological processing deficit. The aim of the study is to draw a comparison between adult readers with dyslexia and adult readers without a learning difference in deep and shallow orthographies. The purpose of drawing this comparison is to “explore similarities and differences at both the behavioural and neurophysiological level” (2001, p 2165) and show that dyslexia does have a universal basis.

Various studies (Goswami, 2002; Ziegler et al. 2003; Caravolas et al. 2005; Ziegler & Goswami 2005; Ziegler et Montant 2005; Ziegler & Goswami, 2006; Ziegler et al. 2010; Landerl et al. 2013) showed that the nature and prevalence of dyslexia differed across languages. Paulesu et al.’s hypothesis suggests that the prevalence estimates of dyslexia in different countries are related to the shallowness of the orthography.

In order to validate the hypothesis, Paulesu et al. matched normal controls and participants with dyslexia according to their age and IQ. Volunteers were

recruited: French speaking, Italian speaking and English speaking. They were asked to take a series of reading and phonological tests. There was a consistently higher score on the reading tests in favour of the Italian speaking sample. Italian speakers made fewer mistakes when dealing with words and non-words. Nevertheless, they obtained worse results than their controls on reading and phonological tasks. They differed as much as the English and French speaking participants with dyslexia did from their controls.

These results highlight the fact that dyslexia is associated with a phonological processing deficit. Paulesu et al. then used medical imaging techniques to produce PET data (positron emission tomography) which helps reveal how tissues and organs are functioning and MRI data (magnetic resonance imaging) which produces a detailed image of the body's soft tissue and bones. Images prove that a "reduced activation in the middle, inferior and superior temporal cortex and in the middle occipital gyrus was the robust universal feature of dyslexia for word reading in the three language groups" (2001, p 2167). This results in slower, reduced activity amongst certain components of the system and, therefore, in a slower processing of written and spoken language.

The combination of both sets of results enabled the researchers to draw the following conclusions: dyslexia has a universal basis and is the consequence of a neurocognitive difference. However, it can lead to more or less severe "impairments" depending on the nature of the language learned. Paulesu et al. conclude by acknowledging that although dyslexia has a universal basis its symptoms are less obvious in shallow orthographies.

The scientific evidence which this article provides represents an immense step forward towards the recognition of dyslexia as a neurodevelopmental

difference. The study's results discussed by the researchers represent an interesting alliance of psychological findings and brain physiology.

A more recent study (Hu et al., 2010) presented results which were consistent with Paulesu et al.'s findings as it compared brain activation for semantic decisions on written words in English and Chinese individuals with reading difficulties, and English and Chinese "typical" readers. Results showed that similarities and differences in readers' brain activation patterns which strongly suggest "a common neural basis for dyslexia regardless of the language spoken and its orthography" (Hu et al. 2010, p1705). This supports Paulesu et al.'s findings as it illustrates "that reading activation is determined by the interaction of cognitive abilities and learning environment" (Hu et al. 2010, p1705).

Nevertheless a report by Hadzibeganovic et al. (2010) criticises neuro-cognitive theories such as Hu et al.'s (2010), Paulesu et al.'s (2001) and Silani et al.'s (2005) as they "presume that all dyslexics have the same type of brain abnormality" (Hadzibeganovic et al. 2010, p1312) no matter which language they use. They state that the nature of the language used by individuals with dyslexia impacts on "information-processing requirements of reading" (2010, p1312). Moreover, research shows that there are dyslexia subtypes (Ziegler et al. 2008) which, according to Hadzibeganovic et al. (2010), could discredit neuro-cognitive theories as different varieties of developmental dyslexia cannot be "characterised by the same type of neural impairment" (2010, p1314). Their paper shows that there are still on-going debates regarding cross-linguistic neuroimaging investigations and that more research is needed with regards to the neuro-biological origin of the learning difference.

#### **2.4.4 Section summary**

In relation to my first sub research question: How does dyslexia affect English speaking learners and French speaking learners? The review of the literature relating to dyslexia across orthographies shows that the nature of the language spoken by individuals exacerbates some symptoms of dyslexia (Goswami, 2002; Ziegler et al. 2003; Caravolas et al. 2005; Ziegler & Goswami 2005; Ziegler et Montant 2005; Ziegler & Goswami, 2006; Ziegler et al. 2010; Landerl et al. 2013). This suggests that French and English learners with dyslexia face greater difficulties when reading and writing, French and English being more opaque languages (Ziegler & Montant, 2005).

The evidence that Paulesu et al.'s and Hu et al's studies present is crucial to the world of scientific, educational and psycholinguistic research. However, more research is needed as their views on biological unity amongst dyslexic brains (Paulesu et al. 2001; Hu et al. 2010) are questioned by Hadzibeganovic et al. (2010). Future research could aim at investigating how symptoms manifest themselves across different languages and across individuals with different subtypes of dyslexia. The opaque nature of the English language results in a predominance of Anglo-American research findings. It is therefore crucial that non-English speaking countries develop their own analyses in order to provide suitable and accurate provision to learners with dyslexia in their own educational systems.

In the following section, I present literature relating to structures in place to supporting learners with dyslexia. The analysis focuses on England, Wales and France.



## **2.5 Approaches to supporting learners with dyslexia in Europe: cultural differences**

Various associations such as the British Dyslexia Association provide their own definition of dyslexia and make recommendations about approaches to educational support. Nonetheless, it is up to individual countries to decide on a legislation regarding the education of learners with dyslexia. Smythe et al. (2005) mention that educational policies are written in concordance with their own linguistic and cultural context.

### **2.5.1 England and Wales: legislation regarding learners with additional educational needs**

In Wales, education is a major responsibility of the Welsh Government (WG, 2013, p9). The Existing Legislative Competence of the National Assembly, according to the Government of Wales Act 2006, shows that Education and the Welsh Language are matters for the Assembly's legislative competence (WG, 2013, p9). The Assembly is responsible for implementing government policy and statutes originating in the United Kingdom parliament. Wales's legislative body does, however, adapt certain aspects of the UK parliament's policies to the needs and characteristics of Wales (WG, 2013, p9; Chaney, 2012, p28).

In both England (2001) and Wales (2002), the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice provides a framework for the education of children with special or additional needs. The framework specifies some statutory guidelines but it is mainly down to Local Educational Authorities and schools to implement them (WAG, 2002, p6; DFES, 2001, p8).

The Code provides practical advice on how to carry out statutory duties to identify, assess and make provision for children and young people with additional educational needs. Codes stipulate that learners with additional learning needs should be mainly taught in mainstream schools (WAG, 2002, p2; DFES, 2001, p7).

This research project was conducted prior to the new Code of Practice for England (DFE & DOH, 2014) being introduced in September 2014 and prior to the publication of proposals for legislative changes in relation to ALN in Wales (WG, 2014). The new Code of Practice for England provides statutory guidance from the Department for Education and Department of Health on duties, policies and procedures relating to the Children and Families Bill (House of Commons, 2014) and associated regulations.

As Smythe et al. mentioned (2005, p3), the word "inclusion" seems to be fashionable in Britain: it implies that learners with additional learning needs, such as dyslexia, should be taught in mainstream schools where additional provision is put in place. However, there is some controversy around learners with additional educational needs being taught in a mainstream educational setting. Florian (2008, p202) suggests that in Britain, there are tensions between special and inclusive education (mainstream) institutions. Florian discusses the role of inclusive mainstream schools and questions the role of specialist teachers in a mainstream school setting:

“If inclusive education was to be a process of responding to individual differences within the structures and processes that are available to all learners rather than something separate from them, what would be the role of specialist teachers, and what should be the nature of their expertise?” (Florian, 2008, p202).

Florian explores the notion of specialist knowledge. She also suggests that there are still ongoing debates (Kelly & Norwich, 2013, p45) around inclusive mainstream education and whether learners with learning differences such as dyslexia do have access to a well-adapted and differentiated education or not.

Nevertheless, mainstream state schools are legally bound to identify and put necessary provision in place for learners with additional educational needs (WAG, 2002; DFES, 2001): the Codes of Practice and the LA provide schools and governing bodies with guidance on implementing statutory duties. Dyslexia Action published a report in 2012 that “looks at the situation for children with dyslexia and literacy difficulties” (2012, p2) in British schools. The survey carried out shows that there are still significant shortcomings regarding effective provision for learners with dyslexia and literacy difficulties. The report recommends that qualified teachers and trainee teachers have access to training (2012, p58). It also highlights the need for early identification of dyslexia so that intervention can be put in place early as well as a necessity (2012, p58) to share good practice, in other words stronger partnerships need to be built between specialist teachers, Educational Psychologists, teachers and researchers (2012, p59). Long et al. (2007) also investigated the need to build stronger partnerships by carrying out a case study of a secondary school learner with dyslexia. The study aimed at “bridging the holistic and academic divide” (2007, p124) in approaches to supporting learners with dyslexia. The case study demonstrates that “taking the personal, social, and emotional aspects” (2007, p125) of a learner’s development into account can lead to positive change. This shows that interventions to support learners with dyslexia

should not only focus on the mechanics of reading but should be more holistic. In order to achieve this, Long et al. suggest schools should:

“(…) effectively address issues of self-esteem and self-efficacy. In practice, this means creating and maintaining safe and secure, person-centred learning environments where students with dyslexia can grow in confidence and self-belief (Long et al. 2007, p132).

Recommendations given by the researchers include the necessity for agencies, schools and parents to work in partnership and the need for teachers to focus on learners’ strengths. The report published by Dyslexia Action also referred to a need for stronger partnerships to be put in place so that learners are supported holistically. This highlights a need for better communication systems to be developed. The recommended focus on learners’ strengths (Long et al. 2007, p132) suggests teaching approaches should be adapted to each learning style to enable learners to reach their potential and become confident adults.

To conclude, despite existing legislation relating to meeting the needs of learners with dyslexia or AEN (WAG, 2002), Dyslexia Action and Long et al. highlight shortcomings relating to poor partnerships between parents and professionals involved in supporting learners.

### **2.5.2 French legislation regarding learners with additional educational needs**

In France there is a much more centralised system. Education is overseen by the Government although certain responsibilities are delegated to local authorities (See table below):

<b>Field of responsibility</b>	<b>Primary schools</b>	<b><i>Collège</i> (year 7 to year 10)</b>	<b><i>Lycée</i> (year 11 to year 13)</b>
<b>Teaching and learning:</b> national curriculum	State	State	State
<b>Qualifications:</b> achievement criteria and awarding body		State	State
<b>Management of resources:</b> buildings and furnishings	Town council	<i>Département</i> (county council)	<i>Région</i> (regional council)
<b>Educational resources</b>	Town council	State	State
<b>Management of teaching personnel:</b> recruitment, training and pay	State	State	State
<b>Management of administrative, technical and health personnel:</b> recruitment, training and pay	State	State	<i>Région</i> (regional council)
<b>Maintenance and school restaurant personnel:</b> recruitment, training and pay	Town council	<i>Département</i> (county council)	<i>Région</i> (regional council)

**Table 2: Distribution of responsibilities between local authorities and the State in the French education system (adapted from MENESR, 2014)**

The above table illustrates how responsibilities related to Education are devolved. In France, there are three levels of local government units: 36552 *communes* (town councils) (INSEE, 2014), 96 *départements* (INSEE, 2014) and 22 *régions* (INSEE, 2014). In the administrative division of the country, the *département* is the second largest unit of local government after the *région*. As can be seen in the table, very few responsibilities are delegated to local authorities:

“L'éducation est un service public national, dont l'organisation et le fonctionnement sont assurés par l'Etat, sous réserve des compétences attribuées par le présent code aux collectivités territoriales pour les associer au développement de ce service public”<sup>7</sup> (*Ministère de l'Education Nationale de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche*, 2004).

In 2005, a bill entitled *Loi pour l'égalité des droits et des chances*<sup>8</sup> was passed. It stipulates that children with a *handicap* can join their local mainstream school:

“Cela se traduit aujourd'hui d'abord par le droit sans restriction à l'inscription dans l'établissement scolaire le plus proche de son domicile, que l'on appelle «établissement scolaire de référence». Cela se concrétise aussi par l'ensemble des mesures collectives ou individuelles qui permettent aux élèves *handicapés* de recevoir l'enseignement auquel ils ont droit, au même titre que tous les autres élèves<sup>9</sup>” (MENESR, 2008, Avant-propos).

In France, dyslexia is often referred to as a *handicap* (Pouhet, 2010, p2; Habib & Joly-Pottuz, 2008, p251) resulting in learners with dyslexia's rights being protected by legislation relating to learners with a disability (MENESR, 2005). Since dyslexia is considered as a *handicap*, approaches to assessing and providing support for learners with dyslexia are different to those of Britain where dyslexia is related to as an educational need

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<sup>7</sup> Education is a national public service whose organisation and functioning are provided by the state subject to the jurisdiction granted to local authorities by the present code to associate them in the development of this public service. (Ministry of Education , Higher Education and Research)

<sup>8</sup> Equal Rights and Opportunities Act

<sup>9</sup> This first of all allows for the unrestricted right to enrolment in the nearest school to one's home, to be called “school of reference”. This gives access to all the individual or collective measures that will allow *handicapped* pupils to have the schooling they have the right to, in the same way as all the other pupils.

(WAG, 2002; DFES, 2001). For example, with regards to dyslexia assessment, the French approach differs from that of the British. Indeed, in France assessments are carried out by practitioners working for the French National Health Service (see chapter 2.2). Following an assessment, one-to-one tuition with an *orthophoniste* (see glossary) might be prescribed; sessions usually take place out of school hours, costs being covered by the French National Health Service (Pouhet, 2012, p15). Schools are responsible for adapting resources for learners with a disability (MENESR, 2008, Avant-propos).

According to Ramus (2005, p7), dyslexia is a medical problem which needs to be addressed pedagogically by either an *orthophoniste* or a specialist teacher. Ramus also states that the assessment of dyslexia should be carried out by a doctor as it is a neurological condition (2005, p7). These ideas are debatable as Oustric and Bellone (2000, p199) pointed out by questioning the responsibilities of *les orthophonistes* in France. In their article the authors discuss whether support for learners with literacy difficulties should be therapeutic (medicalised) or pedagogical. These articles (Ramus, 2005 and Oustric and Bellone, 2000) are the evidence of ongoing disputes between the National Health Service, psychologists or psycho neurologists and educators around how best to support learners with dyslexia.

As mentioned earlier, the French government commissioned a report (Ringard, 2000) regarding dyslexia which was published in 2000. It mainly focuses on debates around definitions, gives an account of the procedures in place to deal with learners with dysphasia, which involves difficulties with language processing, or learners with dyslexia. Ringard (2000) makes five

recommendations for improvement. These recommendations relate to developing pre-school screening tests (see 2.3.2.2), improving support for children and teenagers as well as teachers' training. Ringard (2000) also recommends strengthening partnerships between medical care and education. These recommendations were partly met by the 2005 *Loi pour l'égalité des droits et des chances* as the Act states that a learner with a disability should be supported by a team of professionals:

“Les chefs d'établissement, les directeurs des établissements de santé ou médico-sociaux, les psychologues scolaires, les conseillers d'orientation psychologues ainsi que les personnels sociaux ou de santé de l'Éducation nationale font partie de l'équipe de suivi de la scolarisation<sup>10</sup>” (MENESR, 2008, p12).

Although mainstream schools are responsible for the education of learners with a disability, they are not responsible for putting specific interventions in place. The French National Health Service take the lead on drawing up personalised educational plans (MENESR, 2008, p10) and set up interventions, such as sessions with a speech therapist. In 2006, Morcellet-Dieuzayde & Fournier released a case study on the school experiences of two learners with dyslexia. They stress the need for professionals involved in supporting learners to work together:

“Restent à résoudre les problèmes de disponibilité des enseignants et des équipes médico-sociales, les questions de décharge horaire pour les enseignants, d'allègement de l'effectif des secteurs d'intervention de chacun, des missions de l'équipe médicosociale et de la possible

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<sup>10</sup> School heads, directors of health or social health-care institutions, educational psychologists, careers advisor psychologists as well as National Education social or health workers are all part of the schooling monitoring team.



ouverture de l'école à toute intervention en son sein relevant d'une logique de soin"<sup>11</sup> (.Morcellet-Dieuzayde & Fournier, 2006, p28)

Barriers preventing partnership work are mainly down to lack of time and workload issues. The lack of training on how to teach learners with dyslexia was also identified as a barrier to effective support being put in place. The study also recommends easier access to support services by them possibly being based on school premises. ANAPEDYS published a report in 2009 which is consistent with the findings from Morcellet-Dieuzayde & Fournier's study (2006): more training for teachers is needed as well as the introduction of tracking systems to enable learners with dyslexia to be monitored throughout their schooling (ANAPEDYS, 2009, p4).

To conclude, despite French and English languages both having inconsistent or deep orthographies, the cultural differences when analysing the approaches to supporting learners with dyslexia are considerable. Nevertheless, reports referred to in this section (Dyslexia Action, 2012; ANAPEDYS, 2009; Morcellet-Dieuzayde & Fournier, 2006) make similar recommendations: a need for early intervention and early assessment, more training for teachers and more effective partnership work.

## **2.6 Chapter conclusion**

The review of the literature provides an overview of the discussions around how dyslexia impacts English and French speaking learners, the complexity of debates around the definition of dyslexia as well as issues surrounding its

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<sup>11</sup> Problems of teacher and medical social team availability must still be resolved. Many questions need to be answered relating to a reduction of teachers' timetables and to the size of the groups where the interventions will take place as well as to the missions of the medical social team and the possible opening up of schools to any health related intervention.

assessment. Despite the lack of consensus over the origins of dyslexia or the way it should be assessed, support is available to learners in France and in Britain. The approaches to support differ from one country to the other and this study aims at gaining an understanding of learners' experiences and perceptions of the two support systems. The cross-cultural dimension of the study should make the analysis pivot around some cultural differences which will provide new insights. The next chapter focuses on the methodology adopted to carry out the research project.

## **Chapter 3 Methodology**

The main research question for this project is: “How well supported are learners with dyslexia in French and Welsh secondary schools?”

In order to answer this question, a series of sub questions are to be studied:

- Q1 How does dyslexia affect English speaking learners in Wales and French speaking learners in France?
- Q2 How are learners with dyslexia supported in Wales and in France?
- Q3 What impact does the support offered in the two countries have on learners?

This chapter describes the research approach, design as well as the rationale for choosing this method. Issues around trustworthiness, credibility and generalisability are also discussed. It then outlines the methods used in the collection of data to answer the above research questions; this includes a full description of the data collection strategy and the recruitment of participants. Data analysis and how this was undertaken is presented as well as the ethical considerations involved.

## **3.1 Research approach, design and quality of the project**

### **3.1.1 Research approach**

This is a qualitative study and the data collection tools used were semi-structured interviews, archival records, documentary data and lesson observations.

According to Creswell (2009, p3) research designs are plans and procedures for research that span the decisions from broad beliefs to exhaustive methods of data collection and analysis. It implies that the choice of approach depends on the nature of the research problem.

As this research project is mainly concerned with understanding phenomena through different lenses, it is sensible to adopt an interpretative approach. Cohen et al. describe the interpretative approach as being “characterised by a concern for the individual” (2007, p21). In this way, the viewpoint of the participants themselves are reflected in the study. The interpretative approach leads to an in-depth understanding of the particular but also contributes to building a framework of “multiple realities” (Thomas, 2009, p78). According to Thomas (2009, p78), this approach could also be referred to as a naturalistic approach which frequently lends itself to the use of flexible designs where the researcher acts as an insider and interacts with participants’ perceptions and feelings.

The project aims at interpreting perceptions of support for learners with dyslexia in two different countries and therefore lends itself to words and thoughts rather than quantification. Moreover, adopting an interpretative approach implies that the research will result in a qualitative analysis of the

response of learners with dyslexia to the type of support provided by their school setting. Creswell describes qualitative research as being:

“...a form of interpretative enquiry in which researchers make an interpretation of what they see, hear and understand” (2009, p176).

Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between researcher and what is being studied and the situational constraints imposed on the study (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). The nature of the enquiry determines the choice of the approach. Indeed, since this study aims at understanding a phenomena through different lenses, the researcher is directly involved with the participants. The researcher interacts with the participants in order to gain an exhaustive understanding of their perceptions. Cohen et al. (2007, p19) state that the researcher must act as an insider in order to appreciate a participant’s viewpoint. In other words, when adopting a naturalistic approach, the researcher ought to be immersed in the participant’s environment which, in this case, is an educational setting. Because of their learning differences, learners participating in the study might perceive their school as a source of frustration or as a threatening environment. It will therefore be important to gather information about learners’ behaviour and personality outside of the school environment so that a faithful portrait of each participant can be drawn.

### **3.1.2 Research design**

The cross-cultural aspect of the study lends itself to a multiple case study design. According to Rihoux and Ragin (2009, pXVii), comparison lies at the heart of human reasoning and is always there in the observation of the world.

They also believe that the observation of singular phenomena is empty if the observer does not engage in a comparison. The analysis of perceptions of support for learners with dyslexia in a Welsh secondary school will be more meaningful if readers are given a window on their own cultural expectations by these being seen against the backdrop of the expectations and practices of another country, in this case France. Thomas (2009, p136) claims that educational thoughts can develop in an insular way in particular environments and that the recognition that another country does things differently can offer new ideas. Broadfoot (Broadfoot, 1999) mentions that drawing comparisons can enrich case studies:

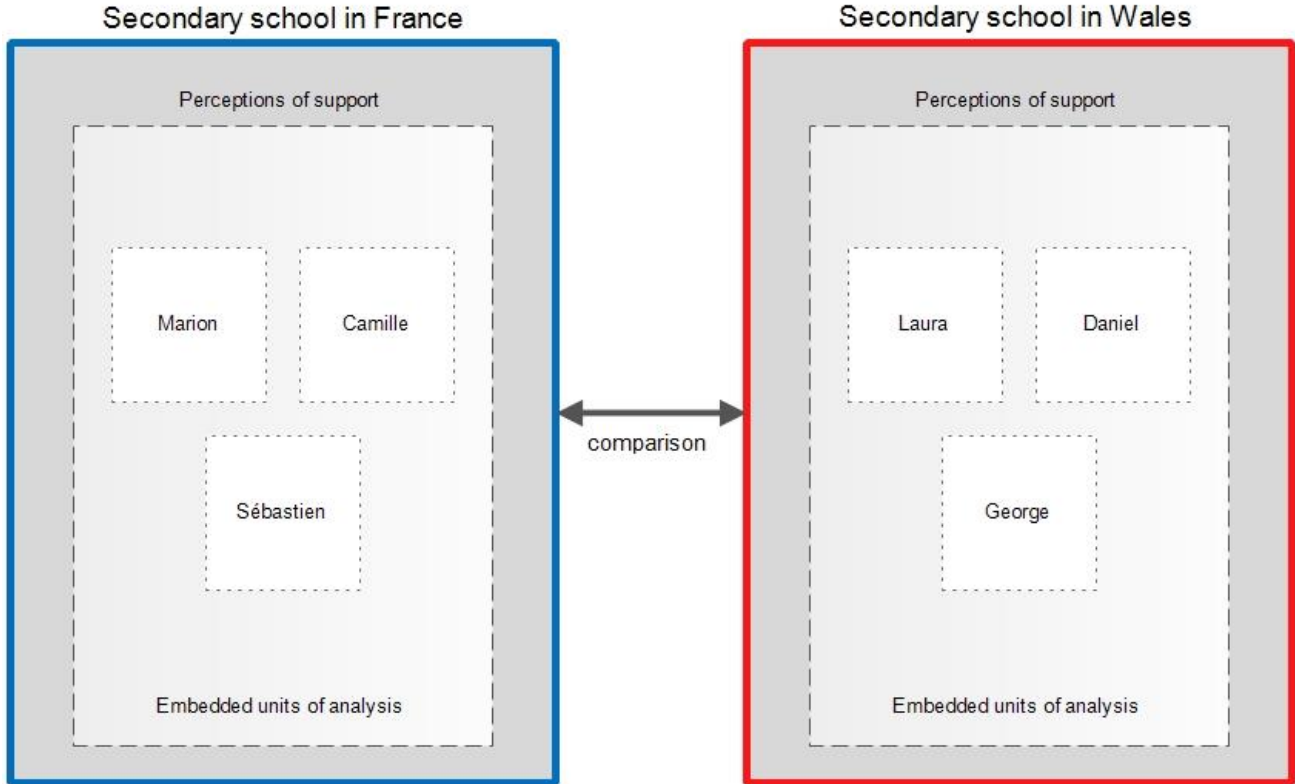
- “by providing internationally consistent data on the effects of different educational practices-if indeed these exist;
- by providing case-studies of the internal dynamics of education systems and how these influence the idiosyncratic effects of educational practices in any particular context. (...)
- by questioning the most basic and taken for granted assumptions under which any educational system operates” (1999, p21).

This study’s aspirations in terms of depth of analyses of perceptions of two education support systems shaped by governmental policies and political context (Bray et al. 2007, p8) lent itself to using a flexible interpretative design. In other words, even if the study of individuals’ perceptions of their support system using a flexible interpretative design does not claim to be generalisable, it hopefully provides an insight into the selected participants’ experiences.

This study’s focus on individuals’ perceptions of a system is directly linked to the nature of the main research question: How well supported are learners

with dyslexia in French and Welsh secondary schools? Indeed, Yin (2009, p9) states that the research question often determines the method to choose. The study's main research question starts with "how" which, according to Yin, is more likely to lead to the use of case studies. Yin defines a case study as a means to understand "a real life phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context" (2009, p18) and highlights the fact that the design "relies on multiple sources of evidence" and "specific approaches to data analysis" (2009, p18). In essence, a case study research design can lead to an analysis of participants' thoughts rather than of quantifiable data.

In order to gain a broader understanding of each case, I have chosen to adopt a multiple case study design. Yin claims that there are distinct advantages in choosing a multiple case study design as the evidence is often considered more compelling and the study is therefore regarded as stronger. This project uses a "simple" multiple-case design as it only involved two secondary schools. Indeed, according to Yin, the simplest multiple case studies consist of two or more cases "that are believed to be literal replications" (2009, p59). The two schools and participants were therefore selected meticulously (See 3.2) so that experiences can be compared. This study uses an imbedded multiple case design as it involves different sub-units (learners) in each of the cases (Cohen et al. 2011, p291):



**Figure 2: Research design (adapted from Yin, 2009, p46)**

Moreover, Stake (1995, p3) identifies two types of case study, which depend on the different purposes researchers may have. These are:

<b>Intrinsic case study</b>	“a study carried out because the researcher wants to gain a better understanding of that particular case. The case itself is of interest rather than being representative”.
<b>Instrumental case study</b>	“a particular case that provides insight into an issue or offers a refinement of a theory. The case is of secondary interest as it is a means for the researcher to gain insight into something else”.

**Table 3: Adapted from Stake (1995, p3)**



Stake (1995, p3) points out that fundamental differences between an intrinsic study and an instrumental study are foci. Intrinsic case studies focus on the particular case, whereas instrumental studies focus on the issues being explored and the need for a general understanding, the case being of secondary importance. As this study seeks an insight into the participants' perceptions of a system, it can be referred to as an instrumental study. It focuses on views and thoughts rather than on the cases.

### **3.1.3 Quality of research design**

In qualitative research, the concepts of validity and reliability have been challenged by other researchers (Janesick, 2000). Qualitative research generally deals with exploring or explaining the complexities of human experience and therefore can lead to many different interpretations. Janesick's view is that:

“Validity in qualitative research has to do with description and explanation and whether or not the explanation fits the description. Is the explanation credible? Qualitative researchers do not claim that there is only one way of interpreting an event. There is no one “correct” interpretation” (Janesick, 2000, p392).

Some qualitative researchers commonly use alternative terminology to validity and reliability. Indeed, Struebert and Carpenter (1999) use the term trustworthiness instead of validity and reliability. According to them, qualitative research is trustworthy when it accurately represents the experience of the participants. In other words, a study cannot be trustworthy

if the researcher is biased. The use of alternative terminologies could be justified by qualitative research not being that concerned with controlling influences coming from the outside or from the researcher's bias because it is not standardised:

“Quantitative criteria were developed for completely different methods (such as tests or experiments), which are based, in turn, on corresponding methodologies and scientific and epistemological theories. Since their basic assumptions are hardly compatible with qualitative research, it is unjustified to expect that the latter can or should conform to the criteria of quantitative research” (Steinke et al, 2004, p186).

Indeed, the “low formalisability” or “standardisability” (Steinke et al, 2004, p186) of qualitative research makes the transfer of quantitative criteria difficult. However, Flick developed qualitative research criteria, taking into account its unique features and goals.

Flick (2007) also uses an alternative terminology. He suggests that the quality of a research project should not rely only on thorough planning and designing and states that “quality is rather produced in the making of the research” (Flick, 2007, p64). I find Flick's approach interesting since it detaches itself from the techniques used by quantitative researchers as he believes they would not be compatible. I decided to apply some of his techniques in order to strengthen the quality of my study.

According to Flick, the quality of a study should be assessed at three levels: the design of the study, the “making of the research” (2007, p64) and the reporting stage. The following three sections are based on Flick's approach (2007).

### **3.1.3.1 The design of the study**

Firstly, when designing the project, I made sure the method selected was related to the type of issue under study and to the nature of the main research question. Flick mentions that:

“Indication of methods, approaches, designs and research types should be based on reflection of the issue under study, the research question linked to it, the existing knowledge of the issue and the population. If all these components justify the use of a specific method, design or approach, we can speak of indication in this context” (Flick, 2007, p62).

In other words, the choice of design should be “indicated” and is an important requirement for the quality of the study.

Flick then uses the word “adequacy” (2007, p63) to refer to the piloting and possible redesigning of certain aspects of the study. I piloted interview and observation schedules and was subsequently able to assess whether they were adequate. It was crucial to review the fittingness of the research tools prior to using them to collect raw data as it allowed me to readjust some interview questions. Indeed, some questions were too vague and participants ended up repeating themselves. Another question directed at learners was too abstract and had to be reworded.

Flick highlights the importance of being prepared to handle unexpected comments or events. I believe I have addressed this point by using semi-structured interviews (See appendices XII to XIII) and observation schedules (See appendices XXIX and XXX). This type of schedule provided guidance and allowed me to focus on answering the research questions. It

nevertheless provided opportunities for participants to express themselves freely (See appendices XXIV to XXVIII).

### **3.1.3.2 The research process**

Although the designing and planning stages of the project are important, the research process itself plays a crucial part in increasing the quality of the whole study.

A researcher should be rigorous and creative, according to Flick (2007). I tried to follow his guidelines by being very strict and disciplined in applying my chosen approach. I was also creative by keeping an open mind throughout the process. My study is interested in gaining new insights and understanding phenomena through different lenses and I therefore had to avoid bias.

“Consistency and flexibility” (Flick, 2007, p64) are also designated as being necessary and helpful. This project using a “simple” multiple case study design, I had to maintain consistency when interviewing and observing participants. I made sure questions were translated accurately so that sets of data collected in the two countries could be compared (See appendices XII to XXIII). On the other hand, I chose to use semi-structured schedules so that I could adapt them to the participants and to the situations. During the research process, I was promoted to the position of Additional Educational Needs Coordinator and therefore became a participant to my project. One of my colleagues interviewed me thus helping to minimise bias.

Strategies chosen to collect data also had an impact on the quality of the process. I chose to use five different data collection tools. According to

Cohen et al (2007, p141), triangular techniques attempt to “map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour” by analysing it from different perspectives. Triangulation was used to promote the quality of the study by strengthening the credibility of the findings.

### **3.1.3.3 Analysing and reporting findings**

Flick gives prominence to transparency when reporting findings. I tried to achieve transparency by providing detailed and explicit explanations of my thought processes. In essence, I made sure all conclusions drawn were justified.

I also received consistent feedback from my mentors and used it to improve the quality of my work. Flick believes it is necessary to receive feedback from other researchers and to take outside perspectives into account. I contacted Bob Adamson, a leading author in the field of educational research, while designing my project. His expertise in educational research enabled me to check the accuracy of my design.

According to Flick, transparency and use of constructive feedback from the field have a great influence on the dissemination of results. Thought processes and decisions made during the course of the research should be part of the presentation of a piece of qualitative research as it not only enables the reader to develop a better understanding of the process but also to initiate an opinion about the conclusions drawn.

I followed Flick’s guidelines in order to increase the quality of my project. His approach to assessing the quality of a research project’s design is relevant to my study. Other researchers, such as Yin, choose to use terms employed

by quantitative researchers. Yin does not reject the use of the terms validity and reliability; he believes that the criteria for judging the quality of research designs should include a number of logical tests (2009, p40):

- Construct validity: The extent to which the correct operational measures have been chosen for the concepts being studied.
- Internal validity: Seeking to establish a causal relationship and is therefore not suitable for an exploratory study such as this one.
- External validity: Refers to the domain to which a study's findings can be generalised.
- Reliability: The extent to which the data collection procedures can be repeated, with the same results.

He also developed tactics to deal with these tests when doing a case study. Yin makes recommendations about when to put these tactics into use. He matches each test to a phase of the research and details case study tactics which should enable the researcher to develop a credible research project (2009, p41). I did not find these tests relevant as they seemed more suited to a quantitative project. Merriam (2009) uses the terms validity, reliability and generalisability when discussing quality of qualitative research designs. She suggests ways of addressing each issue but draws the following conclusion:

“As in any research, validity, reliability, and ethics are major concerns. Every researcher wants to contribute knowledge to the field that is believable and trustworthy. Since a qualitative approach to research is based upon different assumptions and a different worldview than traditional research, most writers argue for employing different criteria in assessing qualitative research” (Merriam, 2009, p234).

In other words, the lack of consensus over qualitative research design quality assessment criteria forces researchers to make their own decisions based on the available literature. I followed Flick's suggestions as he did not try to fit in with quantitative researchers' quality assessment criteria but chose to write up guidelines which matched the requirements and features of qualitative research.

To conclude, this section explains the rationale for selecting a qualitative approach and a case study methodology as a means to address the three research questions developed following the literature review. The strength of instrumental multiple case study methodology is that it provides more robust evidence than intrinsic case study.

The multiple case study design chosen to carry out this research project aims at constructing a multi-dimensional analysis of the perceptions of British and French children with dyslexia of the support they are offered. Carrying out case study research in two different countries should help put the Welsh provision into perspective.

In the next section, the data collection strategy is described and discussed: first, the approach to the recruitment of participants is explained, and then the choice of data collection tools is discussed. Finally ethical considerations are dealt with.

### **3.2 Data collection strategy**

According to Stake (1995, p50), a case study researcher should be open-minded and wary. He also believes that one of the principal qualifications of qualitative researchers is experience. As a doctoral student I do not fall into

this category but I work on developing the necessary skills to become a good qualitative researcher by reading other researchers' work, piloting my own research tools and attending conferences or attending training sessions whenever possible. My teaching experience will nevertheless contribute to data interpretation and enable me to establish a good rapport with interviewees. Yin (2009, p69) enumerates the skills he believes a case study researcher should acquire: they should "ask good questions-and interpret the answers" and also "be a good listener" and not be "trapped by her or his own ideologies". These are skills I have developed since starting my teaching career in 2005. Yin (2009, p69) also states that a good case study researcher has to be "adaptive and flexible" and needs to have acquired a comprehensive and in-depth knowledge of the topics being studied.

These are the principles that must be followed when carrying out a case study. They are especially important when developing a data collection strategy. Yin also claims that some social scientists believe that the case study strategy can be mastered without difficulty when it is actually challenging as the data collection procedures require continuous interaction between the theoretical issues being studied and the data being collected.

### **3.2.1 Recruiting participants**

The following table describes the participant samples who were contacted for the project. It considers the number of participants, their age, gender, recruitment methods and selection criteria. It also describes how they were selected.



Participants	Number	Age	Gender	Recruitment methods	Exclusion/ Inclusion criteria	Selection process
<b>Learner with dyslexia.</b>	6 (3 in France and 3 in Wales)	<u>11 to 14 years old:</u> Year 7 in Wales/ <i>sixième</i> in France. Year 8 in Wales/ <i>cinquième</i> in France. Year 9 in Wales/ <i>quatrième</i> in France.	Either	Parental and child consent sought through the Assistant Additional Educational Needs Coordinators or equivalent.	Participants' first language is French in France or English in Wales.	Information sheets and consent forms were sent out to all children who fit the criteria. When more than 3 children accepted to take part, I put names in a hat and chose the first three names which came out – pseudo randomly.
<b>Parent of learners involved in case study</b>	6 (3 in France and 3 in Wales)	Not relevant	Either (parent of learner involved in the case study)	Consent sought through Additional Educational Needs Coordinators or equivalent. The Head Teacher was made aware of which families agreed to take part in the study.	Participants' first language is French in France or English in Wales.	Information sheets and consent forms were sent out to learners' parents. Consent was requested from one parent per learner.
<b>Additional Educational Needs Coordinator or equivalent</b>	2 (1 in France and 1 in Wales)	Not relevant	Not relevant	Consent sought through the establishment's Head Teacher for the research project to go ahead. Individual members of staff's consent was sought by the researcher. Names of members of staff taking part in the research project were not communicated to the Head Teacher.	Is involved with learners having been assessed as having dyslexic tendencies.	Information sheets and consent forms were handed to the potential participant after the Head accepted that I use their establishment to carry out my research project.
<b>Head of school</b>	2 (1 in France and 1 in Wales)	Not relevant	Not relevant	Schools selected mainly for practical purposes and convenience.	1 The schools are both secondary comprehensive state schools. 2 There are learners identified with dyslexia studying at the schools.	Appointments were made with both Heads; an information sheet and a consent form were given out and the research project was discussed.

**Table 4: Recruitment of participants (continued on next page)**

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Recruitment methods</b>	<b>Exclusion/ Inclusion criteria</b>	<b>Selection process</b>
<b><i>Orthophoniste</i></b>	1 (France)	Not relevant	Not relevant	I had to phone the participant as her cabinet is not on the school premises.	The participant supports/supported children involved in the case study.	Following a phone conversation, an appointment was made. Both information sheet and consent form were given out as the research project was introduced and discussed.
<b>Specialist teacher</b>	1 (Wales)	Not relevant	Not relevant	Consent sought through the Head Teacher as it is the protocol for approaching schools. However the Head Teacher was not told about which members of staff agreed to take part in the study.	The participant teaches children involved in the case study.	An appointment was made. Both information sheet and consent form were given out as the research project was introduced and discussed.
<b>Subject teacher</b>	5 (2 in France and 3 in Wales)	Not relevant	Not relevant	Consent sought through the Head Teacher as it is the protocol for approaching schools. However the Head Teacher was not told about which members of staff agreed to take part in the study.	They teach children involved in the case study.	Appointments were made and an information sheet and a consent form were given out and the research project was introduced and discussed.

**Table 4 (cont): Recruitment of participants**

As Cohen et al. (2007, p253) rightly point out, a case study focuses on individuals and seeks to understand their perceptions of certain situations. It is therefore important to be very meticulous when selecting cases and participants. Indeed, prior to starting recruitment procedures, consent was sought through the Head Teacher as this is the protocol for approaching schools. However, the Head Teacher was not told about which members of staff had agreed to take part in the study. For this project, participants were not selected for their representativeness. Participants were selected in relation to the needs of the study. Cohen et al. (2007, p114) refer to this type of sample as purposive. The research question of the study dictates the sampling procedure in that cases could not be randomly selected as the project is interested in people who have an in-depth knowledge about ways learners with dyslexia are supported. Learners were selected according to their age, year group and learning differences (they were recognised as having dyslexia); this ensured participants shared the same characteristics. Participants were selected because of their knowledge or experience.

PARTICIPANTS	PURPOSE
<b>Learners with dyslexia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To develop a better understanding of how they feel dyslexia affects their learning.</li> <li>To gather their views and perceptions of the support they are offered.</li> <li>To develop an appreciation of how they feel about their progress in school and who they go to for help and guidance.</li> <li>To be able to observe and analyse any strategies they might have developed in order to facilitate their own learning in the classroom.</li> <li>To observe how they interact with their peers during lessons: this might facilitate a comprehension of how they view themselves in comparison with classmates.</li> </ul>
<b>Parent of learners involved in the case study</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To develop a better understanding of how they feel dyslexia affects their child's learning and their life chances.</li> <li>To gather their views on the support offered to their child.</li> <li>To gather their views on their child's progress in school.</li> <li>To enquire about how their child perceives himself in comparison with his peers.</li> <li>To identify how they have supported their child and how their child has supported themselves.</li> </ul>
<b>Additional Educational Needs Coordinator or equivalent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To collect information about the protocols to follow within the establishment when dealing with a learner with dyslexia.</li> <li>To gain knowledge about the type of problems some children with dyslexia encounter in their school setting.</li> <li>To understand how they support these learners and see if there is any discrepancy between intentions and what happens in practice.</li> </ul>
<b>Head of school</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To gain a clear understanding of the responsibilities of the secondary school towards learners with dyslexia.</li> <li>To gather their views on governmental recommendations in relation to secondary schools' responsibilities towards learners with dyslexia.</li> <li>To gather their views on how the recommendations are implemented in the school.</li> </ul>
<b>Specialist teacher or therapist</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To examine methods of support applied to teach learners with dyslexia.</li> <li>To gather their views on the difficulties learners encounter and how they help them overcome some of them.</li> <li>To gain knowledge of how they view governmental recommendations given to schools and their implementation.</li> </ul>
<b>Subject teacher</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To gather their views on the difficulties learners encounter.</li> <li>To enquire about how well prepared and knowledgeable they feel about supporting learners with learning differences.</li> <li>To observe how they support learners with dyslexia.</li> </ul>

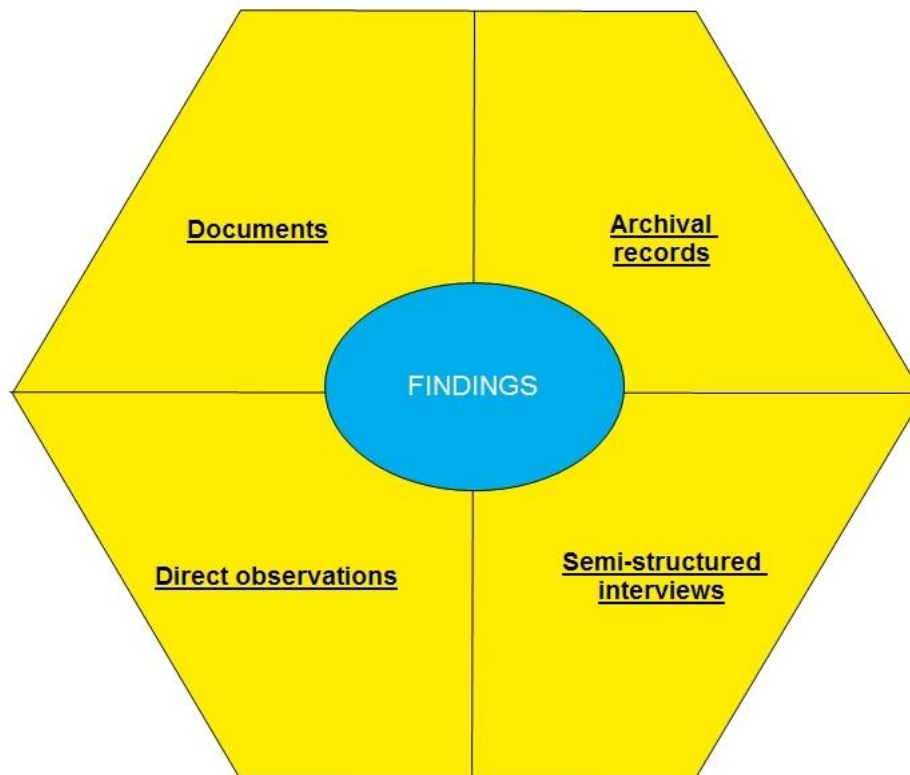
**Table 5: Purpose of participants' selection**

### **3.2.2 Data collection tools used**

I considered a number of ways of collecting data to answer the research questions and settled for the following:

- Document analysis.
- Archival records.
- Semi-structured interviews.
- Direct observations.

Yin (2009) distinguishes six main sources for case study evidence collection. He also highlights the importance of using multiple sources of evidence as opposed to relying on one single type of data. In other words, he believes that case study research designs lend themselves to triangulation. To Yin, triangulation, or the use of multiple sources of evidence, is crucial as it allows the development of “converging lines of enquiry” (2009, p115). I followed Yin’s recommendations when designing my case study and adopted his convergence of evidence theory:



**Figure 3: Convergence of evidence adapted from Yin (2009, p117)**

Yin's diagram includes other data collection tools; I adapted it by presenting the ones I selected for my study. Yin's idea is that the use of data triangulation should aim at "corroborating the same fact or phenomenon" (2009, p116). In other words, the use of multiple sources of evidence should provide insights into the same phenomenon and should relate to the main research question. The use of data triangulation is more complex than when relying on one single source but it enables me to support findings of the study more robustly. The use of triangulation implies that each source of evidence must not be analysed separately but should be converged so that a more comprehensive analysis can be written up.

The choice of data collection procedures was made in relation to the main research question and sub questions formulated at the start of the chapter.

How well supported are learners with dyslexia in Welsh and French secondary schools?			
Research sub questions	Data collection procedure chosen and contribution to each research question	Advantages of the type of procedure	Limitations of the type of procedure
<b>Q1 How does dyslexia affect English speaking learners in Wales and French speaking learners in France?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Private document analyses/archival records:</b> pieces of writing produced by learners, school reports.</li> </ul> <p><u>Contribution:</u> Helps develop an appreciation of learners' progress and provides opportunities to write up error analyses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Interviews:</b> face to face interviews with the learners, teachers, therapists, parents, AENCO and teaching assistants.</li> </ul> <p><u>Contribution:</u> Helps develop a comprehensive overview of how dyslexia affects learners' learning by listening to participants' views. It provides opportunities to gain an understanding of the phenomena through different lenses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both procedures enable language and words to be obtained from the participants.</li> <li>• Interviews allow control over the line of questioning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documents may be protected and may be unavailable to public or private access.</li> <li>• When interviewing people, my presence may influence participants' responses.</li> </ul>
<b>Q2 How are learners with dyslexia supported in Wales and in France?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Interviews:</b> face to face interviews with the learners, AENCO, teachers, therapists, and parents.</li> </ul> <p><u>Contribution:</u> Enables me to gather participants' views and perceptions on the support offered to learners with dyslexia. Sheds light on any possible discrepancies between intentions and what happens in practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews enable me to obtain language and words from the participants.</li> <li>• Interviews allow control over the line of questioning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When interviewing people, my presence may bias responses. Materials may be incomplete.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Analyses of public documents:</b> school policies, government acts, government publications or recommendations.</li> </ul> <p><u>Contribution:</u> Allows me to collect information about the protocols to follow within the establishment and gain a clear understanding of the responsibilities of the school towards learners with dyslexia.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written public documents can be accessed at all times.</li> <li>• As written evidence, it saves the time and expense of transcribing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documents may not be accurate.</li> </ul>

**Table 6: Research data collection procedures chosen (continued on next page)**  
(This table includes material adapted from Creswell, 2009, p179-180)

Research sub questions	Data collection procedure chosen and contribution to each research question	Advantages of the type of procedure	Limitations of the type of procedure
<b>Q3 What impact does the support offered in the two countries have on learners?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Interviews:</b> face to face interviews with the learners, teachers, therapists, and parents.</li> </ul> <p><u>Contribution:</u> Helps develop a comprehensive overview of how the support provided impacts on learners' learning by listening to participants' views. It provides opportunities to gain a broader understanding of the phenomena by it being seen through different lenses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interviews enable me to obtain language and words from the participants.</li> <li>Interviews allow control over the line of questioning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When interviewing people, my presence may bias responses.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Observations:</b> can take place in lessons or at break time. Participants being observed can be learners as well as teachers or therapists.</li> </ul> <p><u>Contribution:</u> Allows me to observe and analyse any strategies learners might have developed to facilitate their own learning. Enables me to observe how learners interact with their peers. Also provides an opportunity to observe the type of support provided in lessons.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When using observations, I can record information as it occurs and can be useful to explore topics that may be uncomfortable for participants to discuss.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During observations, I could be seen as intrusive (especially when lessons are being observed).</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Analyses of private documents/pieces of work produced by learners:</b> error analyses carried out.</li> </ul> <p><u>Contribution:</u> Enables me to evaluate learners' progress and observe potential implementation of strategies learned through support sessions they have attended.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enables me to analyse learners' strengths and weaknesses in relation to writing skills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only provides information regarding one potential aspect of difficulties faced by the learners.</li> </ul>

**Table 6 (cont): Research data collection procedures chosen**  
(This table includes material adapted from Creswell, 2009, p179-180)

As this study does not focus on a particular person or place but is rather more interested in the issues around how an individual with a specific learning difference such as dyslexia responds to the support provided, this choice of data collection procedures is comprehensive and relevant. The data gathered mainly consisted of narrative reports (See appendices XXIV to XXVIII) which were coded and analysed (See chapters 4 and 5). The documentary data fed into the preparation of interview and observation schedules (See appendices XXIX and XXX). All recordings were transcribed and translated into English when necessary (See Chapter 4.4).



### 3.2.2.1 Documentary data

Stake (1995; p68) believes that “gathering data by studying documents follows the same line of thinking” as running interviews or observations. In other words, it requires preparation so that the analysis can pivot around certain themes. On the other hand, the researcher should keep an open mind so that “unexpected clues” (Stake, 1995, p68) are taken into consideration and can enrich the findings.

Both Head Teachers were asked for the following documents prior to my first visit to the schools:

WELSH SCHOOL	FRENCH SCHOOL
School development plan.	<i>Projet d'établissement.</i> <sup>12</sup>
AEN Policy.	<i>Protocole d'aménagement pédagogique/différenciation pédagogique pour les élèves porteurs de troubles de l'apprentissage (PAI).</i> <sup>13</sup>
AEN Policy and Inclusion Policy.	<i>Documents relatifs au soutien individualisé des élèves en difficulté (ex: PPRE).</i> <sup>14</sup>

**Table 7: Researcher's list of documents submitted to Head Teachers**

In addition to the public documents discussed in the literature review, the analysis of documentary data provides a useful source of corroboration. Indeed, it provides “unobtrusive” and “stable” (Yin, 2009, p102) written evidence which has proven to be very helpful when preparing interview and observation schedules. Yin discusses the strengths and weaknesses of such data in Case Study Research (2009, p102); to him, this type of data is “stable” because it can be examined again and again. It is also “unobtrusive” as the collection process does not require the researcher to

<sup>12</sup> School Development Plan.

<sup>13</sup> Teaching and learning differentiation policy: adapting teaching approaches to the needs of learners with learning difficulties.

<sup>14</sup> Policy concerning personalised support for pupils with learning difficulties.

intrude in the research context. Documents listed above (See Table 7) proved to be valuable and played an explicit part in the research project by providing background information and contributing to the research findings.

### **3.2.2.2 Archival records**

The archival records collected for this project were learners' reports and samples of written work. The documents mainly consisted of quantitative data. As with the documentary data, they provided background information about the learners thus giving a wider picture of their academic progress. As Yin points out (2009, p102), this type of source presents the same strengths and weaknesses as documentary data but can be more difficult to access for privacy reasons; I therefore had to seek parental consent. Yin makes a very important remark:

“Most archival records were produced for a specific purpose and a specific audience other than the case study investigation, and these conditions must be fully appreciated in interpreting the usefulness and accuracy of records” (2009, p106).

Numerical data should not always be considered as accurate and it is important to keep this in mind when analysing them. There could be an element of bias which should not be ignored. School reports are written up by teachers, therefore personalities and standards can have a great influence on overall assessments.

Archival records and documentary data were used in conjunction with other sources of evidence and allowed the development of “converging lines of enquiry” (Yin, 2009, p115) which hopefully made the findings of this case study more convincing and more valid.

### 3.2.2.3 Semi-structured interviews

Cohen et al. define the interview technique as being:

“..an unusual method in that it involves the gathering of data through direct verbal interaction between individuals” (2007, p351).

They then compare interviewing with administering questionnaires. Conclusions drawn are that data gathered from administering questionnaires is more reliable as the anonymity of the process encourages more genuine responses from participants. It is also less time consuming than interviewing and can be sent through the post or via email. However, there is no opportunity for the researcher to ensure questions are fully understood by participants and when mailed or emailed, a high percentage of returns cannot be guaranteed. For this study, the use of questionnaires could have been problematic as some participants would not have been at ease when having to read and fill in a written document. Moreover, in order to collect genuine and complete answers from participants, this being the strength of a case study design, questions would have had to be open-ended. When dealing with some participants who have been assessed with dyslexia, the use of written open ended questions did not seem appropriate as writing lengthy, detailed answers may have proven to be a demanding exercise:

“Questionnaires also present problems to people of limited literacy, and an interview can be conducted at an appropriate speed whereas questionnaires are often filled in hurriedly” (Cohen et al. 2007, p352).

I therefore decided not to use questionnaires; the main data collection tool I employed was the interview. I chose to carry out interviews as I believe that information can be obtained that cannot be acquired by the use of

observation alone. Indeed, interviews are conducted with a view to finding out something from the perspective of the interviewee; they attempt to understand the issue being studied from the participants' point of view:

“Interviews enable participants (...) to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view” (Cohen et al. 2007, p349).

The interview technique is suitable to my chosen research design as it is flexible. As Cohen et al. mention, it allows the researcher to use “multi-sensory channels” such as “verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard” (Cohen et al. 2007, p349). In other words, the face to face interview technique enables the researcher to record answers given by the participant as well as valuable information such as body language, facial expression, and tone of voice.

The nature of my project was a determining factor when choosing the type of interview to be used. I decided to conduct semi-structured interviews or standardised open ended interviews (See appendices XII to XXVIII) for the following reasons: firstly, I knew the questions I wanted answered; secondly, I wanted to be able to draw comparisons between participants' answers and asking the same interview questions in the two countries facilitated this. Finally, the standardised open ended interview allowed me a certain element of control. In essence, choosing informal conversational interviews or an interview guide approach would have made data analysis quite difficult as responses from participants from both schools could have been very different and challenging to compare. Moreover, the absence of predetermined questions would have facilitated the omission of certain topics; this could have prevented effective use of data triangulation as each source of evidence (transcriptions) would have had to be analysed

separately. Finally, the use of closed quantitative interviews would not have been suitable as it does not give participants the opportunity to voice their views freely. Although leading standardised open ended interviews is more time consuming, it allows participants to give more genuine responses.

#### **3.2.2.4 Observations**

I used observations as a data collection tool in order to provide a broader view of the topic being investigated. Robson refers to observations as useful to researchers because:

“...what people do may differ from what they say they do, and observation provides a reality check” (2002, p310).

The observational data collected (See appendices XXIX and XXX), as well as the interview (See appendices XII to XXVIII) and documentary data, converged towards gaining an insight into the same phenomenon. Data triangulation was a way to enhance the quality of the research design and to increase my understanding of each case.

For the case study, it was important that observations took place in the participants’ “natural setting” (Yin, 2009, p109) where the data collected naturally occurred in social situations. Yin refers to this type of observation as “direct observation” as it provides an opportunity for the researcher to observe certain behaviours and environmental conditions. I chose to observe the learners selected for the case study “formally” (Yin, 2009, p109). Observations can range from formal to informal data collection strategies. I chose to lead formal observations of learners in classroom situations and thus developed observational instruments (See appendices XXIX and XXX) in advance using the following codes:

Observation codes	X: learner being observed.	> : being spoken to
	OP : other pupil	OT : on task
	C : class	OfT : off task
	T : teacher	Q : question
	< : talking to	A : answer

**Table 8: Codes used during observations**

I chose to use semi-structured observations (See appendices XXIX and XXX). According to Cohen et al. (2007, p397), observations can range from structured to unstructured. Using structured observations would have meant having to work out different categories in advance. This would have been quite constraining as it relies on a hypothesis being tested and would have been more relevant to a quantitative researcher. As I had an idea of what I was looking at, semi-structured observations seemed like the most appropriate choice. It allowed me to “have an agenda of issues in a far less predetermined or systematic manner” (Cohen et al. 2007, p397). This strategy allows more flexibility while still focusing on answering the main research question. The use of unstructured observation did not seem suitable as it would have made the comparison of data very challenging and the data collected might not have been as significant for the research. The data collected consists of written observations guided by “an agenda of issues”. It was important that the learner felt comfortable and acted naturally:

“The qualitative researcher aims to catch the dynamic nature of events, to see intentionality, to seek trends and patterns over time” (Cohen et al. 2007, p397).

This implied that I wasn't to intervene in any way; I did not participate during lessons as it could have influenced the learner's behaviour. Adopting a non-interventionist approach enabled a more reliable set of data to be collected. The use of observations helped increase the validity and reliability of the research design as it helped corroborate the research findings by providing an insight into the same phenomenon but from a different angle. It highlighted the relevance of Yin's Convergence of Evidence (2009, p117) theory by providing a new insight into classroom situations.

To conclude, this qualitative “simple” multiple case study is interested in the informants' perspectives. Fairbrother (2007, p46) claims that qualitative researchers in education believe in the importance of cultural, political and social contexts, and in the fact that education cannot be decontextualised from its local culture. The choice of data collection tools for this project was made so that participants' views can be explored holistically.

### **3.3 Ethical considerations**

#### **3.3.1 Introduction**

Research in the social sciences or in education needs ethical consideration. This project directly involves people through interviews, observations and even through looking at documentary records. Some participants are young and vulnerable; it is therefore of the outmost

importance not to harm them in any way. I sought and obtained approval from the College of Education and Lifelong Learning's Ethics Task Group prior to starting collecting data. I consistently took every point made by the College of Education and Lifelong Learning's Procedures for seeking approval by ethics task group policy statements into consideration when carrying out the research.

Bassey (1999, page 74) highlights the fact that when taking data from participants the researcher must make sure those participants' initial ownership of the data is taken into account and that the data is collected in a way which respects participants as fellow human beings who are entitled to dignity and privacy.

This project is a multiple case study, therefore meaning that the number of human participants is rather limited. This is advantageous as it makes it more manageable to look after participants with more care and thought.

The quality and the relevance of the research must also be taken into consideration. This implies very thorough preparation when designing research tools. I made sure the language used was simple and understandable so that children were at ease when being interviewed. When interviewing adults, the language was also adapted to the audience; I made sure I did not use technical terms when interviewing non dyslexia specialists. These primary considerations were taken into account when designing the research project. Furthermore, attention was paid to the British Educational Research Association Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2011).



### **3.3.2 Legal requirements and consent**

The British Educational Research Association Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research state that:

“The Association takes voluntary informed consent to be the condition in which participants understand and agree to their participation without any duress, prior to the research getting underway” (2011, p5).

Prior to undertaking the data collection process, participant consent was sought (See appendices VIII to XI). According to Thomas (2009, p149), informed consent is needed when carrying out research in the social sciences. He states that informed consent should include all information that participants need to know, such as the nature and purpose of the study, the expected benefits of the study but also the possible harm that may come from the study as well as information about confidentiality and anonymity. The potential participants should also be given the choice to take part or not, as well as the right to withdraw from the study. When carrying out this research project, I followed these guidelines strictly.

I sought consent from the Head Teachers and adhered to guidelines produced by professional bodies. I then had to obtain consent from the parents of the children who took part in the study. In order to do so I agreed that, in both schools, the Assistant AENCO or AENCO equivalent (France) approached the families on my behalf as information about learners who have been assessed with dyslexia should be kept confidential. The consequence of approaching the families and students through another person was that I became reliant on their abilities to explain the study with sufficient enthusiasm to ensure they would take part. They were also given a consent letter which gave information about the aims of the study, the participant recruitment, the research tools, data

storage, publication, confidentiality, anonymity and the possibility of withdrawing from it. Information letters and consent forms (See appendices I to XI) were adapted for the children; the language used was simple and understandable, sentences were concise and the layout was clear. Letters and forms were printed on coloured paper as some learners with dyslexia find it helpful (Cooke, 2002, p165-166). Learners were also told that the letter and form could be read out to them if they wished so. The Data Protection Act (1998) guidelines were followed: information gained from research is kept strictly confidential. Participants' names were removed from archival documentary data and pseudonyms were used to refer to participants throughout interview transcriptions and throughout the thesis. Recordings are password protected.

### **3.3.3 Minors and vulnerable adults**

This research project involves minors and potentially vulnerable children. Learners with learning differences tend to have little confidence, hence the importance of undertaking research with great care. Earlier, I discussed potential problems when choosing participants in the Welsh school. However, ways of approaching participants in the French school have not yet been referred to. Indeed, I was a stranger to French participants and they might have felt very shy and/or worried about the idea of having to answer my questions. The role and responsibilities of carers or parents were thus explained very clearly in the consent letter. The fact that participants did not know me made the role of those giving consent even greater: carers or parents were involved at all stages and gave explanations to the participants prior to our first meeting so that he/she knew what to expect (See appendices VI, VII, X, XI).

I also had to comply with legal obligations before undertaking the data collection in the French school and obtained the French equivalent to the Criminal Records Bureau clearance which was issued by *La Direction des Affaires Criminelles et des Grâces, Ministère de la Justice* (Ministry of Justice).

### **3.3.4 My role as a researcher**

While carrying out this research project I was an insider researcher in Wales but an outsider researcher in France. Indeed, the sets of British data were collected in my work place. Although there are some definite advantages to “researching your own organization while being a complete member” (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014, p121), it also involved a need for “thoughtful examination of the ethical implications of the research on individuals” (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014, p146).

According to Unluer (2012), it is important for researchers to clarify their roles, especially when using qualitative methodology, in order to make their research trustworthy. Roles undertaken by qualitative researchers can range from being part of the group being studied (an insider) to complete stranger (an outsider). Although “there are a variety of definitions for insider-researchers, generally insider-researchers are those who choose to study a group to which they belong” (Unluer, 2012, p1), while outsider researchers do not belong to the group they study. In the following sections, I discuss the advantages and disadvantages of being an insider researcher in Wales and an outsider researcher in France.

### **3.3.4.1 Welsh secondary school: potential advantages and disadvantages of being an insider researcher**

While carrying out my research project in Wales, my understanding of the support systems in place was helpful as I did not solely have to rely on participants' descriptions or on documentary data to gain an overview of the school's provision. It enabled me to focus on gathering participants' perceptions of the support in place. According to Alderson and Morrow (2011, p5), advantages of being an insider researcher include knowing the specific setting very well, being able to arrange quick access, having an established rapport with participants and being able to put findings into practice.

Becoming a participant to my own project was unexpected but was very practical. Since I knew the Welsh school setting well, I was able to acquire an "understanding in use" rather than "a reconstructed understanding" (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014, p121) of the systems in place. Working in the school made access to participants, documents and archival records easy as obtaining consent could be done quickly by consulting the Head Teacher in person or parents through my Assistant. Participants overall seemed comfortable during the interview sessions and during observations. They knew me well and therefore did not seem threatened by my questions or my presence in their lessons.

On the other hand, there are also potential drawbacks associated with being an insider. Although my colleagues seemed comfortable during the interviews and observations, I was nervous prior to the interview with Mr Smith, Head Teacher. He answered my questions openly but I felt uncomfortable when he referred to my responsibility with regards to training members of staff as my roles as a researcher and as the school's AENCO became "blurred". Indeed, "role duality" (Unluer, 2012, p2) could

have led to a loss of objectivity during the interview process. I had to carry on asking questions without showing signs of defensiveness or discomfort.

Moreover, I was also a participant to the study. One of my colleagues therefore interviewed me as the school's AENCO and helped me reflect on my answers, thus helping to minimise bias. Involving my Assistant helped to ensure that I was true to the process and that the issue of "blurred" roles did not become an obstacle to doing research in my own work place.

I also had to ensure I kept an open mind while collecting data in my work place. At the start of every interview, I told the participants that I was not looking for specific answers and that I was interested in their perceptions or opinions. This enabled me to keep an open mind and to make the research outcomes trustworthy. Although I knew what provision was available for learners in the school, I never had the opportunity to discuss it with my colleagues or with parents. It was important to stress that I was not looking for specific answers so that they could be honest. The use of semi-structured interviews also strengthened research findings as questions were directly related to my research questions and helped avoid asking "leading" questions. Questions were also open and gave participants the freedom to provide information they thought was important while keeping them focused on a specific topic. In other words, I facilitated the interview process by using open questions but allowed participants to lead and let their answers determine the direction the interview took while keeping within topics of interest.

Another potential disadvantage was regarding the unequal power dynamics between the learners involved and myself (Alderson & Morrow, 2011, p47). I had to make a point of explaining that my activity in respect

of this study was completely separate from my employment (AENCO) and that taking part in the study would have no effect on them as learners:

“The researcher’s self-understanding and social vision come into play, with issues of power central to the process” (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014, p147).

In essence, Coghlan and Brannick (2012, p148) stress that “processes of obtaining consent, ensuring anonymity and confidentiality” as well as balancing conflicting needs are addressed while planning, collecting and analysing data. Participants were selected carefully: I avoided choosing learners I taught, as it was important they felt comfortable enough to be themselves and act naturally when data was collected. It was also made clear to them that they could withdraw from the study at any point without them having to justify their decision. In the information sheet given out (See appendices I to VII) I highlighted the fact that the data collected would remain anonymous and that their answers would be kept confidential. To provide anonymity for all participants, pseudonyms were used throughout the thesis.

#### **3.3.4.2 French secondary school: potential advantages and disadvantages of being an outsider researcher**

I went into the French school with an open mind as I did not know the setting nor knew the participants. Alderson and Morrow (2011, p5), highlight that advantages of being an outsider researcher include seeing issues that insiders overlook and be free to take “the independent critical view that is vital to the research”. Access to documents and participants might be slow but ensured high ethical standards as I had to set up good working relations with participants. I did not have issues regarding role duality (AENCO/researcher). Although when carrying out research in the

Welsh school, I had to overcome some of the disadvantages of being an insider by taking a preventative approach, my independence as an outsider might have helped people to talk to me more honestly about problems.

On the other hand, participants seemed nervous about meeting me: one participant said she had forgotten about our appointment. Observations seemed to make teachers feel nervous even though I had shared information about the project and made clear that I was observing learners, not teachers. Being an outsider meant altering the flow of social interaction unnaturally (Unluer, 2012, p1) as participants did not know me.

Potential drawbacks of being an outsider researcher living in a different country meant that spoken and written information about the research project were very important. Telling participants about my background and explaining the research project aims orally as well as in writing was necessary so that I could make sure participants understood my position as a researcher. Although French is my “mother tongue” and I lived in France for most of my life, I had to be cautious when writing my information sheets and consent forms in French (the first ones I wrote were in English) as translations had to be accurate.

### **3.3.5 Research outside the United Kingdom**

Cohen et al. (2007, p75) stress the importance of adopting a code of ethical practice which would enable researchers to be aware of their obligations to their participants. As mentioned earlier, I made sure the requirements in law and of the relevant professional bodies in the two countries were scrupulously respected.

The linguistic aspect had to be taken into consideration. Indeed, the consent forms and information sheets had to be written in two different languages (English and French). Translations had to be checked by two readers to ensure they were clear and accurate, and for “their tone and style” (Alderson and Morrow, 2011, p90). My mother and father are bilingual, translations could therefore be checked and discussed. My mother was a teacher in a French secondary school and is familiar with French educational terminology. In addition, my father was a translator and English teacher and could apply his expertise to checking my translations were faithful. Although transcriptions of interviews in France were not translated, quotes from the transcripts were translated (footnotes) by my father. Translating text from one language to another is a complex task with no clear ethical guidelines:

“a major challenge for translation studies with respect to ethics is precisely how to come to terms with the fact that any proposal of guidelines for ethical translators cannot achieve any validity or status” (Van Wyke, 2013, p557).

According to Van Wyke, the translator always has to use cultural context to make decisions. Far from providing a transparent reproduction of the original document, fluid translation is “the reinforcement of ethnocentric values” by assimilating “foreign” elements into dominant discourse of the target language therefore “obscuring differences between source, target text and cultures” (Van Wyke, 2013, p552). Although there is no code of ethics to follow with regards to translating documents, consulting other readers helped to address inaccuracies.

For the purpose of this project, certain cultural differences had to be taken into consideration; for example, all French learners are taught in mixed ability groups and exams are not differentiated. Learners, parents and



teachers might therefore perceive dyslexia differently from their British counterparts: learners with dyslexia are compared with their peers who might be strong readers and writers. It could have resulted in participants not being as willing to talk about certain issues relating to dyslexia. A great deal of careful planning was a necessity prior to approaching French learners and their families.

### **3.4 Data analysis approach**

Qualitative studies tend to generate large volumes of data which need to be analysed strategically. Yin emphasises the importance of adopting an analytic strategy before gathering the data:

“Unlike statistical analysis, there are few mixed formulas or cookbook recipes to guide the novice. Instead, much depends on an investigator’s own style of rigorous empirical thinking, along with the sufficient presentation of evidence and careful consideration of alternative interpretations” (Yin, 2009, p127).

I followed Yin’s guidelines by organising the data collection process and choosing an analytic strategy prior to starting the data collection process.

#### **3.4.1 Data collection process**

The data collection process was conducted in two stages: this enabled me to undertake data analysis at two specific points. The data gathered during the first stage was used to gain a sound understanding of learning environments in the two countries. This first set of data helped inform the data collection of the second stage.

The first stage of the data collection process involved:

- Collecting the documentary data.
- Interviewing the Head Teacher.
- Interviewing the AENCO or equivalent.

The second stage of the data collection process involved:

- Interviewing learners.
- Interviewing teachers and specialist teachers.
- Interviewing parents.
- Collecting archival records.
- Interview with the *orthophoniste*.
- Running formal classroom observations of learners.

Being a multiple case study, the data collection process had to be thought through and organised in advance; indeed each interview had to be repeated in the other country. As I am a part-time researcher, I had to make sure I went to France to collect data during “their” term time and therefore was left with very little flexibility. Most of their breaks coincided with those in Wales except for February half term and Easter break 2012. The following table displays the organisation of the data collection process:

Stages	France	Wales
Stage 1	February half term 2012 11/02-19/02	Autumn term 2012 05/11-21/12
Stage 2	Easter holidays 2012 31/03-15/04	Spring term 2013 07/01-08/02

**Table 9: Organisation of the data collection process**

Most interviews were transcribed professionally (See Chapter 4.4 and appendices XXIV to XXVIII). I began the analysis by ensuring that each transcript was an accurate representation of the interview.

Data analysis is characterised as being the stage that follows collection of the data. This study being interpretative, findings should emerge from the data collected by using a triangulation of data collection tools.

In order to facilitate the data analysis task, each interview and observation schedule was planned in relation to the research questions and the theoretical framework provided by the literature review.

### **3.4.2 Data analysis**

Qualitative research designs often have the reputation of producing large amounts of narrative data. Yin recommends that novice researchers use a “two-case” design rather than a “multiple case” design (2009, p162). This recommendation emerged from the difficulties involved in analysing case studies. On the other hand, Yin also highlights the benefits of using multiple cases as it strengthens the study findings by the evidence being more “compelling” (Yin, 2009, p53). Although I am a novice researcher, I chose to lead a multiple case study and therefore made sure I planned each stage of the study carefully by adopting the appropriate strategy.

I then opted for one of Cohen et al.’s suggested methods of organising the analysis. Indeed, they present five different ways of organising and presenting the data analysis (2007, p467): two of them are by case, the other two focus on issues and the last one revolves around instruments. I chose to organise my analysis by research question. I thought that this method would help me focus on the original research questions without getting side-tracked:

“It returns the reader to the driving concerns of the research, thereby “closing the loop” on the research questions that typically were raised in the early part of an enquiry. In this approach all the relevant data from the various data streams (interviews, observations, questionnaires etc.) are collated to provide a collective answer to a research question” (Cohen et al. 2007, p468).

Cohen et al.’s method parallels Yin’s theory of Convergence of Evidence (Yin, 2009, p117) as it stresses the importance of using multiple sources of evidence to gain an insight into “the same phenomenon” (Yin, 2009, p117) in order to enhance the quality of the research design. All data collection tools used were designed so that the main research question can be answered; this method enabled me to identify similarities and differences between sets of data and present my analysis clearly.

The comparative element of the study is present throughout the analysis as each documentary analysis, each interview and each observation was repeated in the other country (See appendices). Cohen et al. (2007, p469) state that when analysing qualitative data, the interpretative nature of the project might encourage researchers to bring their own biases to the analysis. The systematic comparison presented in this study was also aimed at making the analysis more meaningful. As previously mentioned, the analysis of perceptions of support for learners with dyslexia in a Welsh secondary school is to be more significant and worthwhile if readers are given a window on their own cultural expectations by these being compared to the expectations and practices of another country.

### **3.5 Chapter summary**

This chapter explains the rationale for adopting an interpretative approach to address the three research questions developed following the literature review. The cross cultural aspect of the study determined the choice of research design. Carrying out case studies in two different settings is more meaningful to the reader as the recognition that another country does things differently can offer new ideas. The rationale for selecting instrumental multiple case study methodology is also explained. The chapter also provides a detailed explanation of the data collection strategy which was based on Yin's Convergence of evidence theory (2009, p117). Ethical considerations are also reviewed as this project directly involves people. Finally, this chapter provides an explanation of the data analysis approach chosen and discusses the issue of quality of research design.

The following chapter outlines the steps taken to analyse the data collected. It also includes a commentary relating to the data collection process.

## **Chapter 4 Data analysis**

The data collection process was conducted in two stages. The data gathered during the first stage helped adjust research tools to be used in the second stage as I had gained a better understanding of both learning environments. As mentioned in the previous chapter, data collection tools were designed carefully so that the main research question could be answered (See appendices XII to XXX). This chapter begins with a summary of the data collected in the two countries. This is followed by an introduction to the participants involved, a list of their pseudonyms and a commentary on the data collection process. Transcription and coding processes are then described. This leads to an explanation of the steps undertaken in the thematic analysis of the data. The chapter concludes the rationale behind the chosen structure of the findings chapter.

### **4.1 Data collected**

The data collected consisted of:

- Twenty-three semi-structured interviews.
- Five classroom observations.
- Archival records (school reports and samples of learners' work).
- Documentary data (documents relating to professional development, school development plan and relevant policies).

It should be noted that I was given the opportunity to observe three English lessons in the Welsh school and two French lessons in the French school.

In British schools, teachers are regularly observed by the senior leadership team. As a consequence, my presence did not seem as stressful for them as it was for the teachers in France who are rarely observed, and therefore would have found the process more demanding. In addition, I was known to members of staff in the Welsh school so they may have felt more comfortable with me observing their lesson. In France, individual teachers and members of the senior leadership team have a status of civil servants and individuals' performances are managed by an external inspection body deployed by the Ministry of Education (*Inspection Générale de l'Éducation Nationale, 2013*). I was given the opportunity to observe two lessons in the French school. The third observation could not take place due to a clash with a whole school event.

## **4.2 Participants: pseudonyms and roles**

Consent forms and information sheets (See appendices I to XI) were given out to:

- The two Head Teachers.
- *Conseillère Principale d'Éducation* (CPE).
- AENCO (Additional Educational Needs Coordinator).
- Six parents.
- Six learners.
- Six teachers.
- Specialist Dyslexia Teacher.
- *Orthophoniste*.

One teacher did not wish to take part in the study. Due to timetabling issues, one of the learners was taught by two different English teachers:

one specialist teacher and one non-specialist teacher. The specialist English teacher did not wish to take part in the study.

Twenty-four potential participants were selected and twenty-three consented to take part in the study. To provide anonymity for all participants, pseudonyms were used, with the exception of myself. (See following table).

		France		Wales	
		Name	Role	Name	Role
Stage 1	Mr Dupont	Head Teacher	Mr Smith	Head Teacher	
	Mme Gaillard	<i>Conseillère Principale d'Education(CPE)</i>	Mrs McCormack	AENCO	
Stage 2	Charlotte	Learner Year 7 ( <i>sixième</i> )	George	Learner Year 7	
	Sébastien	Learner Year 8 ( <i>cinquième</i> )	Daniel	Learner Year 8	
	Marion	Learner Year 9 ( <i>quatrième</i> )	Laura	Learner Year 9	
	Charlotte's mum	Learner's mother	George's mum	Learner's mother	
	Sébastien's mum	Learner's mother	Daniel's mum	Learner's mother	
	Marion's mum	Learner's mother	Laura's mum	Learner's mother	
	Mme Ponticelli	Charlotte and Sébastien's French teacher	Mrs Jones	George's English teacher	
	Mr Castronovo	Marion's French teacher	Mrs Roberts	Daniel's English teacher	
	Mme Coutelet	Orthophoniste	Mrs Thomas	Laura's English teacher	
	N/A	N/A	Mrs Evans	Specialist teacher	

**Table 10: Pseudonyms and roles of participants**



## 4.3 Commentary on the data collection process

### 4.3.1 France

The secondary school was selected for practical reasons. My parents live near the school and I was therefore able to stay with them while collecting data. The school takes learners from year 7 to year 10. Once learners have taken and passed *le Brevet des Collèges*, which is the equivalent to British GCSE examinations, they have to move to a different educational setting called *le Lycée*. The school is situated in a semi-rural and quite wealthy area, according to Mr Dupont, Head Teacher. It is a comprehensive school, which was built in the 1990s. The buildings are thus in good condition and offer a pleasant environment for learners to work in.

#### Stage 1

<b>Collecting documentary data</b>	The list of documents given to the Head Teacher prior to my first visit was passed on to <i>la Conseillère Principale d'Education</i> . The CPE is responsible for inclusion; she liaises with teachers and external agencies to ensure learners' well-being. I collected the documents during my first visit to the school. The CPE was very helpful and had put the documents together in a file. Reading these documents helped me gain a better understanding of how learners with dyslexia are supported in the school.
<b>Archival records</b>	When interviewing parents, I asked if they would agree to me having copies of their children's school reports. I was then able to ask the CPE for learners' reports and to photocopy some of the learners' French work. These documents allowed me to have an overview of learners' progress in school and also to be aware of their strengths and difficulties when writing in French.
<b>Interview with Mme Gaillard, CPE</b>	The interview took place in her office. It was a long interview as she seemed very enthusiastic about participating in the project and wanted to share her views on protocols in place to support learners with dyslexia. My interview schedule helped me keep some control and allowed me to make sure specific topics were discussed.
<b>Interview with Mr Dupont, Head Teacher</b>	I had made an appointment to see him in the morning. He was given the interview questions in advance. The interview took place in his office. There were no interruptions during the process and he seemed very enthusiastic about participating in my research project.

**Table 11: Stage 1, France: data collection**

## Stage 2

- **Interviews with parents**

I interviewed parents before meeting with learners as I thought they would tell me about their children's personalities. Meetings with parents were arranged by the CPE who also gave them consent forms and interview schedules in advance (parents passed consent forms and interview schedules on to their child).

<b>Charlotte's mother</b>	The interview took place in the CPE's office. Meeting her before meeting Charlotte was helpful as she was able to warn me about how shy her daughter was. I was then better prepared for Charlotte's interview. The interview took place during the school day while Charlotte was in lessons.
<b>Sébastien's mother</b>	Sébastien's mother came to the school after work. The interview lasted over one hour. When it came to an end she asked me to get in touch with her if Sébastien said something she should know about. However, I explained Sébastien's answers would be kept confidential unless his comments suggested there was a safeguarding issue.
<b>Marion's mother</b>	I met with her during the school day and the interview took place in the CPE's office. Marion has since left and joined a school which specialises in teaching learners with learning differences such as dyslexia.

**Table 12: Stage 2, France: interviews with parents**

- **Interviews with learners**

The three interviews took place in a small meeting room. The key was made available to me by the CPE and she also had arranged meeting times. Learners were taken out of a lesson to talk to me.

<b>Charlotte Year 7</b>	She was very shy and seemed quite nervous about having to talk to me. I tried to make her feel comfortable by asking her to talk about her hobbies and her taste in music but her answers were never very detailed.
<b>Sébastien Year 8</b>	He was very talkative and very friendly. He enjoyed taking part and asked me if he would see me again.
<b>Marion Year 9</b>	She seemed happy to take part in the project and answered my questions without looking too nervous.

**Table 13: Stage 2, France: interviews with learners**

- **Interviews with teachers**

I interviewed learners' French teachers. The same teacher taught two of the learners. Both interviews took place in a small room by the staff room. There were a few interruptions as colleagues were walking past but both teachers thought it would make the process seem too formal if we had gone to the interview room. I therefore decided to lead the interviews near the staff room.

<b>Mme Ponticelli, Charlotte and Sébastien's French teacher</b>	She had forgotten about our appointment. I thus waited in the staff room for about one hour. She said she was happy to take part in the interview but seemed relatively tense. She relaxed when the interview started.
<b>Mr Castronovo, Marion's French teacher</b>	He was very cooperative and was interested in how schools support learners with dyslexia in Wales.

**Table 14: Stage 2, France: interviews with teachers**

- **Running formal classroom observations**

I was given the opportunity to observe two French lessons. In French secondary schools, all classes are mixed ability. However, in this particular school, a section called PPRE (*Projet Personnalisé de Réussite Educative* (Personalised Programme for Learners' Achievement) was created for a selection of learners in year 7. These learners attend these sessions during French and Maths lessons. The teaching methods are slightly different and children are taught in small groups. This initiative was put in place to ease the transition between primary and secondary school for learners struggling with mathematics, reading and writing. Unfortunately, I was not able to observe Charlotte in a classroom situation. She was part of a PPRE group and had access to a support programme but the observation was cancelled due to a charity run taking place in the school on the day it was scheduled.

<b>Sébastien's lesson</b>	The teacher asked me to sit next to Sébastien. I believe my presence did not make Sébastien feel uncomfortable. He seemed happy to see me and tried to talk to me during the lesson. The class was disruptive therefore most learners achieved very little work.
<b>Marion's lesson</b>	The teacher introduced me to the class and said the purpose of my visit was to see what teaching methods were used in France. I sat at the back of the classroom by myself. The teacher decided to give the class a test about a series of novels they had been asked to read at home.

**Table 15: Stage 2, France: classroom observations**

- **Interview with Mme Coutelet, *orthophoniste***

<b>Mme Coutelet, <i>orthophoniste</i></b>	She came to work early so that she could be interviewed. The interview lasted just over 45 minutes. Her office is part of a medical centre and I had to ring her to make an appointment. The majority of her patients are infants and teenagers. Her office is close to the secondary school selected for the study. She works for the French National Health Service and therefore cannot disclose any information regarding her patients.
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**Table 16: Stage 2, France: interview with *l'orthophoniste***

### **4.3.2 Wales**

The secondary school is an English medium comprehensive state school. It takes learners from year 7 to year 13 and is situated in the centre of a small town. According to Mr Smith, Head Teacher, the school's catchment area includes some very deprived neighbourhoods. He also mentioned that it currently includes three Communities First wards. The Communities First programme aims at supporting people living in some of the most deprived areas in Wales (National Assembly for Wales, 2007). The catchment area therefore contrasts with that of the French school.

## Stage 1

<b>Collecting documentary data</b>	The list of documents and the questions were given to the Head Teacher's Personal Assistant before the interview. Permission to access documents requested and to refer to them in my research project was granted by the Head Teacher.
<b>Archival records</b>	Learners' school reports are also available to teachers on the school network and are password protected. I made sure parents agreed to me having copies of these as I do not teach any of the learners involved in the study. Samples of learners' English work were copied and provided by teachers taking part in the study.
<b>Interview with Mr Smith, Head Teacher</b>	I gave his interview questions to his Personal Assistant three days before the appointment. The interview took place in his office during one of my free periods. Mr Smith appeared to answer my questions openly.
<b>Interview with Mrs McCormack, AENCO</b>	As mentioned in the previous chapter, I was promoted to the post of AENCO after my predecessor unexpectedly resigned. It happened six months before the data collection process was initiated. As interviewing myself was not an option, one of my colleagues, who is also my assistant, accepted to do it. He was given the semi-structured interview schedule, including a list of possible prompts and probes relating to each question. In order to minimise the element of bias surrounding the process, a researcher from University accepted to read the interview transcript and challenge answers that lacked objectivity. I consequently made two changes to my answers before writing up the analysis.

**Table 17: Stage 1, Wales: data collection process**

## Stage 2

- **Interviews with parents**

I interviewed the three participants' mothers. The Assistant AENCO contacted them and made appointments for me. They were very keen on taking part in the study and came to school to meet me.

<b>George's mother</b>	I had booked a meeting room and used my management time to complete the interview. George and his mother used to live in a different county and moved to the area a year prior to the study. However, I was told they were moving back due to some family issues. During the interview, she was very keen on talking about her son's strengths and was very positive about his progress.
<b>Daniel's mother</b>	She works as a child minder and attended the meeting with a little girl she looks after. The little girl was three years old and sat quietly eating biscuits. Daniel's mother seemed rather distressed about her son's progress in the school and shared a lot of her concerns during the interview. Daniel has not been assessed by an Educational Psychologist and therefore does not have a formal diagnosis of dyslexia.
<b>Laura's mother</b>	Laura's mother was concerned about her daughter's future. They used to live in a different county and Laura had the opportunity to go to a school, which specialised in supporting learners with dyslexia. The family moved to this area two years ago. She is very supportive of the school and was overall pleased with the support Laura is entitled to.

**Table 18: Stage 2, Wales: interviews with parents**

- **Interviews with learners**

The three interviews took place during the school day in a small office opposite my classroom. They had to leave their timetabled lessons to attend the interview session. They seemed rather pleased about this.

<b>George</b>	George did his best to answer all my questions but had difficulties expressing some ideas. He attempted to share his concerns about his timetable but the transcription of the interview was challenging as a lot of his sentences are fragmented. He had great difficulty constructing sentences. He succeeded in putting some ideas across.
<b>Daniel</b>	Daniel seemed nervous at the start of the interview. Despite his agitation his first answers were clear and rather well formulated; after a few minutes he was feeling tired and the interview seemed to have become more demanding. He sounded sad towards the end of the session.
<b>Laura</b>	Laura is not a confident learner and shared her worries with me. The interview day coincided with the end of the year 9 option choice process. She was very vulnerable during the session especially when I asked her to talk about her strengths. She suffers from low self-esteem and she was really distressed by having to fill the Year 9 option choices form in. She was tearful towards the end of the interview therefore I stopped the recording and arranged a time to meet with her and the Specialist Teacher in order to help her choose her options.

**Table 19: Stage 2, Wales: interviews with learners**

- **Interviews with subject teachers**

Three English teachers were interviewed. Two of them were non-specialists. The interviews took place during the school day and teachers gave up their planning and preparation time to talk to me. They were interested in the project and were keen on taking part. The school had to undergo an inspection this year and teachers were put under a lot of pressure.

<p><b>Mrs Jones, George’s teacher</b></p>	<p>In year 7, learners follow a skills based curriculum. Teachers involved have to teach learners skills needed to study Humanities, English and Religious Education. Learners should then have the necessary skills to cope with the curriculum in year 8. It implies that learners do not have English lessons in year 7. In other words the skills focused approach prevails over deep subject content.</p> <p>I met George’s teacher in the staff room. She is a trained Modern Foreign Language teacher. She knew George very well as she also was his form tutor. As a form tutor, she monitors her tutees’ progress both academically and socially; encouraging involvement, commitment, and high standards of work and behaviour. She also worked closely with the AEN department so that George could have access to the support he needed.</p>
<p><b>Mrs Roberts, Daniel’s teacher</b></p>	<p>Daniel’s English teacher is a trained English teacher. She also has other managerial responsibilities in the school. We met in her office during one of her planning and preparation periods. She revealed that she was assessed with dyslexia herself and that she spent most of her life supporting her mother who has dyslexic tendencies. She therefore could relate to Daniel even though her learning difference is not as profound as Daniel’s.</p>
<p><b>Mrs Thomas, Laura’s teacher</b></p>	<p>She is a Newly Qualified Art Teacher who also teaches English. Due to timetabling issues, the class was taught by two different English teachers: one specialist teacher and one non-specialist teacher. Laura’s other English teacher did not wish to take part in the study.</p>

**Table 20: Stage 2, Wales: interviews with teachers**

- **Interview with Mrs Evans, specialist teacher**

<p><b>Mrs Evans, specialist teacher</b></p>	<p>Mrs Evans works in the school three days per week. She is very experienced and very passionate about supporting learners with AEN. She is a specialist dyslexia teacher but also works with children with other learning differences such as autism or dyspraxia. She is based in the Learning Zone where she teaches small groups of learners with AEN. The interview took place in the Learning Zone; classical music was playing in the background. She was extremely keen on talking about how she works with children with dyslexia, as this is where her expertise lies.</p>
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**Table 21: Stage 2, Wales: interview with the specialist teacher**

- **Running formal classroom observations**

I was given the opportunity to observe three English lessons. In the Welsh school, lessons are seventy five minutes long. There are four lessons in the school day.

<b>George's lesson</b>	Year 7 learners are taught in mixed ability tutor groups. I sat far away from George as I did not want his behaviour to be altered by my presence. I do not think he knew why I was there. I told him about it but he might have forgotten. The lesson involved oral work. Learners had been preparing for a debate about the death penalty. George was part of a group and had to work with his peers to think of arguments against death penalty. It was not an English lesson; as mentioned earlier, year 7 learners study themes as part of a skills based curriculum.
<b>Daniel's lesson</b>	In year 8, learners are taught in sets. Heads of Departments organise sets according to learners' ability in individual subjects. Daniel was placed in set 6 in English. This is the bottom set and consists of a small group of learners with additional learning needs. I sat at a table on my own. The classroom learners were taught in is also a computer room therefore my presence was virtually unnoticed as teachers often ask for permission to use computers to do their work. The lesson was very structured and involved a series of short tasks. The group responded very well to the teacher's approach. Learners were working towards writing a feature article for a newspaper. The task was broken down into a planning stage and a research stage. Once they reached the writing stage they were given a template to work from. Daniel struggled writing the article but understood what was expected of him.
<b>Laura's lesson</b>	In year 9, learners are taught in sets. Laura is in set 4. There are 6 sets altogether. The group is taught by two different teachers. Mrs Thomas, who is not a specialist teacher, has geared her teaching approach towards developing learners' verbal reasoning skills by encouraging group discussions and acting. The other teacher focuses on the linguistic aspect of the subject. During the lesson I was invited to observe, Mrs Thomas introduced <i>Of Mice and Men</i> (Steinbeck, 1937) as they will have to study it in year 10. The lesson mainly involved class discussions and paired reading. Laura was withdrawn and reluctant to read or discuss the novel.

**Table 22: Stage 2, Wales: classroom observations**

## 4.4 Transcribing and coding

This section sets out the principles and processes for analysing the data gathered. The semi structured interviews often lasted longer than 30 minutes. I thought it was important to make participants feel comfortable during the process and I thus always took my time and rarely interrupted them. This led to a large volume of data being collected and having to be



transcribed verbatim (See appendices XXIV to XXVIII). Interviews were often deep and participants were given the opportunity to express their views and sometimes concerns.

All interviews led in France were transcribed by French native speakers. Three of the interviews were translated professionally and the remaining nine interviews were transcribed by my mother who is a French native speaker. My parents understood the confidentiality issues involved and did not know any of the participants.

Seven of the interviews led in Wales were transcribed professionally and the four remaining interviews were transcribed by my father who teaches English at a French University and also worked as a translator for a private language school. By doing this, I was able to save time and money.

Lesson observation notes were typed up (See appendices XXIX and XXX).

In order to start the thematic analysis, I used NVivo, a computer assisted qualitative data analysis software package. I uploaded all interview transcriptions and observation grids to be able to highlight and categorise every comment made by participants and every observation noted during the lessons I attended so that coding could be done easily on screen, removing the need to print out hard copies of the text. Documentary data was also analysed and information extracted was categorised.

The first step involved reading the twenty-three semi structured interview transcripts and identifying separate themes which could be used to address the sub research questions. Themes emerged from the classroom observation data as well as from the documentary and archival data. I initially highlighted thirty-one themes. These were refined until nineteen headings remained. The second step involved classifying

emerging themes and, to aid clarity, I added a description to each theme heading. Each interview schedule was designed so that sub research questions could be answered (See section 3.4.2). The order of themes presented in the table simply mirrors the order in which questions were asked to participants.

1	<b>Socio economic profile of the schools' catchment areas:</b> a description of the schools' catchment areas and of the proportion of learners coming from low income families.
2	<b>Learners' personalities and aspirations:</b> comments referring to learners' personalities, hobbies and aspirations.
3	<b>Learners' strengths:</b> comments referring to learners' academic or non-academic skills.
4	<b>Participants' definition of dyslexia and difficulties associated to it:</b> how participants define dyslexia, their understanding of the learning difference, how it manifests itself.
5	<b>First signs of dyslexia and primary school experience:</b> participants refer to their primary school experience and to difficulties they faced.
6	<b>Class work in secondary school:</b> comments relating to learners' class work and behaviour during lessons combined with analyses of examples of work.
7	<b>Dyslexia and self-esteem:</b> the impact dyslexia has on participants' confidence.
8	<b>Dyslexia assessment (Britain) or diagnosis (France):</b> learners/families' experiences relating to obtaining a formal diagnosis/assessment.
9	<b>Support available to learners:</b> support offered to learners in school and support offered by outside agencies/services.
10	<b>Experience and training of school staff:</b> accounts of training made available to school staff while qualifying or as professional development.
11	<b>Orthophoniste and specialist teacher's expertise:</b> qualifications and/or studies required to enter the profession.
12	<b>Parental involvement and strategies of support:</b> what families do to support their children and the school.
13	<b>Working in a partnership:</b> how schools, parents and outside agencies/services communicate and exchange information about learners they support.
14	<b>Implementation of policies relating to supporting learners with additional educational needs:</b> how policies are implemented in schools and to what extent they can be fully adhered to.
15	<b>Learners' progress and monitoring:</b> evidence of progress from school reports, teachers' comments.
16	<b>Terminology used in reference to learners' difficulties:</b> participants' preference of terminology when referring to their learning difference.
17	<b>Teachers and support staff in the mainstream classroom:</b> what teachers and support staff do to support learners with dyslexia in the mainstream classroom.
18	<b>Parents' views on the support offered to their children:</b> what parents think of the support offered and how they value it.
19	<b>Learners' suggestions for improvement:</b> learners' views on the support offered. What changes they would make to their school.

**Table 23: Themes**

The emerging themes were identified as nodes. The data was then sorted electronically so that information (data source) for each theme could be viewed collectively, therefore applying triangulation of data sources theory.

I then wrote a first draft of the findings chapter using my research questions as headings (See section 3.4.2):

- Q1 How does dyslexia affect English speaking learners in Wales and French speaking learners in France?
- Q2 How are learners with dyslexia supported in Wales and in France?
- Q3 What impact does the support offered in the two countries have on learners?

My analysis approach was very systematic as I drew direct comparisons between France and Wales: every sub section was a comparison between the two countries. I then realised that this systematic comparative approach did not provide a true illustration of findings as I had ignored some of the data collected by systematically drawing comparisons between the two countries. Following a discussion with my supervisors, I wrote a second version of the chapter making sure I referred to all the data collected in an attempt at writing a “high quality analysis” (Yin, 2009, p160):

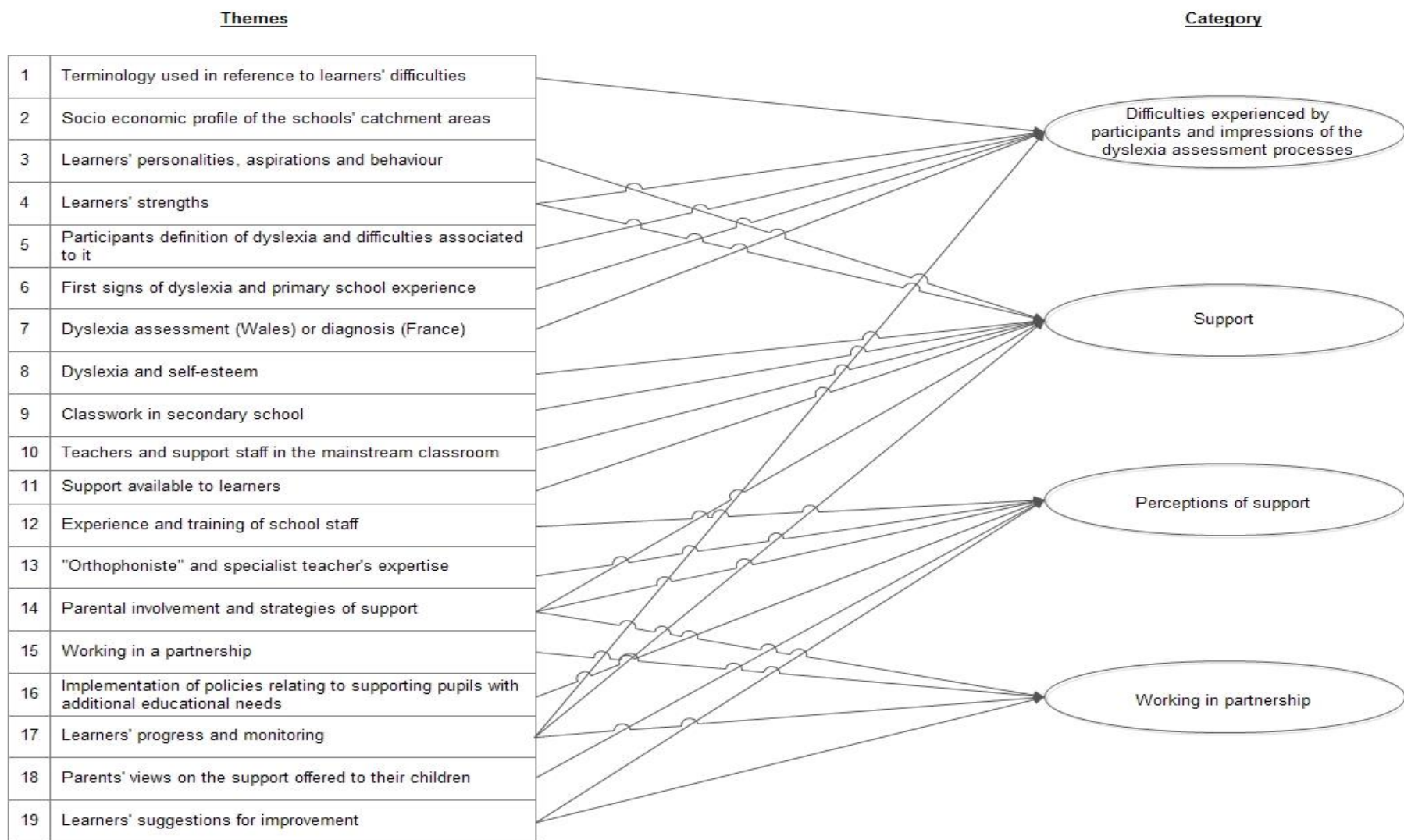
“First, your analysis should show that you attended to *all the evidence*. Your analytic strategies, including the development of rival hypotheses, must exhaustively cover your key research questions (...). Your analysis should show how it sought to use as much evidence as was available, and your interpretations should

account for all of this evidence and leave no loose ends” (Yin, 2009, p160).

I then decided to rewrite the chapter following Yin’s advice and driven by the idea that my analysis should refer to all the data collected in order to illustrate the complexity of the findings. A review of the evidence by theme revealed a number of strong categories and associations, which have been arranged under four headings:

- Difficulties experienced by participants and impressions of the dyslexia assessment processes.
- Support
- Perceptions of support
- Working in partnership

Figure 4 illustrates the categorisation process:



**Figure 4: Diagram showing categorisation of themes**

## **4.5 Chapter summary**

Stage 1 of the data collection enabled me to gather information about existing structures of support for learners with dyslexia in the two countries. Stage 2 of the data collection process provided the opportunity to explore in depth the areas of difficulty learners with dyslexia experience in school and how this impacts on progress. It also enabled a full exploration of the dyslexia assessment process in the two countries.

In the following chapter, each of the main categories will be explored in depth with reference to the source materials.

## **Chapter 5 Findings**

The data analysis chapter set out a largely descriptive account of the data collection process and of the management of the information gathered. In this chapter, the findings are analysed and explored in relation to the following main headings:

- 5.1 Difficulties experienced by participants and impressions of the dyslexia assessment processes.
- 5.2 Description and impact of the support offered in the two countries.
- 5.3 Perceptions of support.
- 5.4 Working in partnership.

The first section of the chapter will address the first research question: findings shed light on how French speaking and English speaking learners are affected by dyslexia. Together, sections two, three and four address the two other research questions: types of support provided in the two countries are described (See section 3.4.2). This is followed by an evaluation of the quality of the support offered to learners.

The organisation of the chapter should also give the reader an insight into commonalities and differences between participants from the two countries.

## **5.1 Difficulties experienced by participants and impressions of the dyslexia assessment process**

### **5.1.1 Early years**

This section is organised around learners' perceptions of their primary school years. Parents also shared their views on their children's early years of schooling.

All learners taking part in the study experienced difficulties when learning to read and write in primary school. Four learners realised they had difficulties in year 2, one learner in year 3 and one in year 4. There were no clear differences between British and French learners in terms of the nature of their difficulties.

All French learners attended sessions with an *orthophoniste* or speech therapist twice per week after school. Charlotte was the only French learner to have received some additional support: while in year 5 and 6. She attended extra small group sessions in school (outside of school hours). Two of the French learners' primary school experience was described very negatively.

On the other hand, all British learners received support during the school day and not in addition to their timetabled lessons. George attended a "Special Learning Unit", as it was referred to by his mother. Daniel received extra support with his reading and writing, although his mother did not explain what the sessions involved and did not refer to their frequency. Laura had access to extra literacy support from the age of 6. All British learners had regular meetings with Educational Psychologists following school referrals.



### 5.1.1.1 Charlotte and Marion's negative experience

Charlotte and Marion had to repeat year 2. Teachers thought it would enable them to catch up with their peers. Charlotte's mother was not keen on the idea but was told she would have to send her daughter to a different school if she did not agree with their decision:

*“D’abord, ils lui ont fait redoubler le CP parce que elle ne lisait pas en fin de CP, moi, j’étais totalement contre et on m’a dit c’est ou ça ou elle change d’école...elle ne voulait pas changer d’école, il y avait ses cousins<sup>15</sup>”*

Charlotte's parents were contacted by the primary school when she was in year 2. She could not decode words as well as other learners in the class. Charlotte's time in primary school was distressing. She first went to a private school which believed she was not progressing well enough to move up to the next year group and she had to repeat year 2 (CP). When she eventually moved up to year 3 (CE1), Charlotte's mother was told by the teacher that her daughter was wasting other learners' time by putting her hand up to ask questions in class:

*“Pour elle, lever le doigt, c’était très dur et quand elle le faisait on ne l’interrogeait pas. Donc en l’espace de deux mois, je suis allée voir deux fois l’enseignante, qui m’a dit, vous comprenez, elle fait trop perdre de temps aux autres.<sup>16</sup>”*

It was difficult for Charlotte to dare ask questions about lessons but when she did, the teacher chose to ignore her. Her mother decided to move her to a different primary school, a state school. Her schooling experience improved until she reached year 4 (CE2):

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<sup>15</sup> “First of all they made her repeat year 2 because she was unable to read at the end of year 2, I was totally against this and I was told that it was that or change school...she didn't want to change school, there were her cousins”

<sup>16</sup> “For her, putting up her hand was really hard, and when she did it the teacher never asked her. So in the space of two months I went to see the teacher twice and she said: “You must understand that she makes the others waste too much time”.

*“L’enseignante du CE2 lui mettait: “Tu ne réfléchis pas“, des choses vraiment horribles, elle les avait classés par ordre de nullité donc, il y avait les forts, les moyens et les escargots. Et Charlotte était l’avant-dernière des escargots.”<sup>17</sup>”*

The teacher produced a class league table and put learners into groups according to their academic performance. Charlotte was asked to join *les escargots* (the snails). Primary school was a difficult time for her but she persevered.

Marion also had to repeat year 2. While learning how to read and write, her teacher thought she was not progressing as fast as other learners.

#### **5.1.1.2 Sébastien felt different**

Sébastien said he realised he was different when he was in year 4:

*“Ben on commençait déjà les dictées donc oui je commençais à voir que j’avais des mauvaises notes en français, donc ça c’était... ça commençait à m’énerver un peu... quand j’avais de bonnes notes en français, j’étais super content, ben quand je dessinais, je voyais que les autres, ils faisaient encore des maisons comme ça, et moi je commençais la perspective et je leur ai appris, et ils m’ont dit comment tu fais?”<sup>18</sup>”*

He used to get very low marks in French dictation tests but he realised he could draw much better than other learners. He was the only learner in his section able to draw a three dimensional house. On the other hand, his parents thought he could not pronounce words as clearly as he should

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<sup>17</sup> “The teacher in year 4 would say: “You’re not thinking enough”, really horrible things, she had apparently classified them in order of uselessness, there were the good and the average ones, and the snails. Charlotte was second to last of the snails.”

<sup>18</sup> “Like, we started having dictations and, yeah, I started to see that I had bad marks in French, so it was... it started to get on my nerves a bit... when I got good marks in French I was really happy, like, when I used to draw I saw that the others, they were still doing houses like this, and I was doing the perspective and I taught them, and they asked me how I did it”.

when in year 2. They made an appointment with an *orthophoniste* and were told he had a learning difference.

### **5.1.1.3 Difficulties relating to reading acquisition**

George remembered he could not focus on tasks for long periods of time when in year 2 and then started reading words backwards:

*“And as I got to ten I was writing and I was reading words backwards then...”*

His mother noticed he was not retaining information such as spellings. She contacted the school several times to request a referral to an Educational Psychologist.

Daniel’s reading acquisition was slower than that of his peers and teachers consequently contacted his mother when he was in year 3. She suspected it was dyslexia. Daniel used to get frustrated in school and had frequent temper tantrums:

*“And he would have tantrums like a two-year-old although he was six.”*

The school referred him to a Psychologist based in the local hospital. When she mentioned dyslexia to him, he said it was too early to assess him. He was in year 8 when interviewed and had not yet been assessed.

Laura had difficulties associating phonemes to graphemes. She could not remember when she first noticed signs of dyslexia but she described how she felt during lessons in primary school:

*“If... like... everyone else is talking and the teacher’s talking and there’s books and writing everywhere it feels like it’s all spinning and it’s just too much in my head and... like... one goes through the other ear and then get mixed messages.”*

Her description was very moving as she expressed her frustration and torment very clearly. She followed the Toe by Toe (Cowling and Cowling, 1993) structured programme which is a multi-sensory reading manual that helps children improve their reading and spelling.

In the two countries, learners noticed the first signs of dyslexia in primary school while learning to read and spell. Charlotte and Marion were singled out as they were told to repeat a year. Sébastien was the only learner who mentioned feeling different because he could not spell correctly and because he could draw better than others in the group. Despite experiencing difficulties, he was aware of his strengths.

Overall, French learners had access to very little support while in primary school and two of the French learners associated these early school years with anxiety.

### **5.1.2 Dyslexia assessment (Britain) or diagnosis (France)**

This section focuses on participants’ experiences relating to obtaining a formal diagnosis/assessment. As mentioned in the literature review, dyslexia is diagnosed by a practitioner working for the French National Health Service. In Britain, Educational Psychology Services (Local Authority) can carry out assessments for free. However, private and specialised support centres also carry out assessments but charge for it. Five of the six learners taking part have a formal diagnosis or were formally assessed for dyslexia. Daniel had not been formally assessed.

The following table provides an overview of professionals involved in assessing dyslexia in the two countries. Five out of six learners were assessed while in primary school:

Diagnosis/assessment request	Learners	Referrals: professionals involved in diagnoses or assessments
<b>Wales Education</b>	George	Educational Psychologist
	Daniel	<b>No assessment carried out</b> but was referred to a Paediatric Clinical Psychologist.
	Laura	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speech and language therapist.</li> <li>• Educational Psychologist.</li> </ul>
<b>France Parents</b>	Charlotte	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Orthophoniste</i>.</li> <li>• Orthoptist.</li> <li>• Neuro Psychiatrist.</li> </ul>
	Sébastien	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Orthophoniste</i>.</li> <li>• Orthoptist.</li> </ul>
	Marion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Orthophoniste</i>.</li> <li>• Child Psychiatrist.</li> <li>• Neuro Psychiatrist.</li> <li>• Cognitive Psychologist.</li> </ul>

**Table 24: Professionals involved in dyslexia assessment process in France and in Wales**

### 5.1.2.1 Medical diagnosis

According to Mme Gaillard, dyslexia is considered as a *handicap* or a disability in France. Assessments are carried out by doctors or an *orthophoniste* working for the French National Health Service (*la Sécurité Sociale*). She also commented on an increase in the number of children “diagnosed” with dyslexia:

*“...mais après, ça va être le corps médical qui s’en charge. Ici, c’est tout médicalisé.”<sup>19</sup>*

<sup>19</sup> “... but after it’ll be the health service that will take over. Everything here is medicalised”.

She explained that the assessment of dyslexia is carried out by medically trained practitioners. She added that due to the large number of “diagnoses” being issued, the Authority requested that every “diagnosed” learner be reassessed by a neurologist every two years.

Mme Coutelet, *orthophoniste*, explained that she carried out assessments using standardised tests. A referral has to be made by a General Practitioner for costs to be covered by *la Sécurité Sociale*. She wrote down the names of the tests she used to assess children. The tests she used were written by Suzanne Borel-Maisonny (1949), a pioneer in the field of speech therapy. She created the test so that she could evaluate speech and language, reading and spelling of children from 5 years to 10 years 6 months. Mme Coutelet also used more up to date tests. Firstly, L2MA2 (Chevrie-Muller et al. 2010) enables the assessor to evaluate psycholinguistic skills, which include verbal memory and attention span. It also provides information about linguistic and cognitive processes leading to comprehension, production of speech and learning to write. She uses this test to assess children in years 4, 5, 6 and 7. The test was standardised in France and Belgium.

The second test she mentioned is entitled N-EEL (Chevrie-Muller et al. 2001). The battery is composed of 17 subtests and allows the assessor to report on language comprehension and speech production. The main components of speech can be analysed: phonological, morpho-syntactic and lexical. She also used this test to assess cognitive processes in the production and understanding of speech, such as verbal memory. The test can be used to assess children with a chronological age of 3years 7months to 8years. The information provided by these tests enabled her to give a “diagnosis” of dyslexia to a child.

Charlotte was assessed in primary school by an *orthophoniste*, a neuro psychiatrist and an orthoptist. Following the assessments, the practitioners involved met in order to discuss Charlotte's education and appropriate intervention. Sébastien was assessed by an *orthophoniste* and referred to an orthoptist when he was in primary school. Marion was assessed by an *orthophoniste* and was referred to a child psychiatrist, a neuro psychiatrist and then to a cognitive psychologist.

### **5.1.2.2 Educational psychologist assessment**

In Britain, assessments are carried out by Educational Psychologists who work for the Local Authority. Otherwise, children can be assessed privately although this is rather costly.

In the school selected for the study, assessments can be carried out by Educational Psychologists but there is a strict criterion for being referred for assessment. Educational Psychologists use standardised spelling tests and standardised reading accuracy test and then they test again after two terms of intervention before being able to give a diagnosis. The definition of dyslexia adopted by the British Psychological Society is adhered to strictly and provides a criterion for assessment processes. Indeed, the definition relates to dyslexia as being evident when:

“...accurate and fluent word reading and/or spelling develops very incompletely or with great difficulty. This focuses on literacy learning at the "word level" and implies that the problem is severe and persistent despite appropriate learning opportunities. It provides the basis for a staged process of assessment through teaching” (British Psychological Society, 1999 updated 2005, p20).

The references to accuracy, fluency and spelling suggest that only certain standardised tests may be used. Tests must provide standardised scores for reading accuracy and spelling. In addition, the use of the word “persistent” suggests that a learner’s progress needs to be monitored over a certain period of time. When lack of progress is evidenced over time, despite appropriate intervention, a diagnosis can be given.

The school assesses children’s reading comprehension and reading accuracy using standardised tests. As AENCO, I use the results to identify children in need of extra support. Some children are privately assessed for dyslexia but actually obtain relatively high scores when taking standardised tests for reading comprehension and spelling tests in school.

In contrast to what Mme Gaillard said during the interview, I come across fewer and fewer learners who have been assessed formally. We therefore organise support based on quantitative data from standardised reading comprehension and spelling tests.

George was assessed by an Educational Psychologist in a different county, as was Laura. They were both assessed in primary school. On the other hand, Daniel has not been formally assessed yet. Daniel is the only learner who attended a Welsh primary school. His mother has repeatedly asked for a formal assessment to be carried out but the Educational Psychology Service has only recently accepted her request. Daniel’s mother was reluctant to pay for the assessment to be carried out privately. A formal assessment of dyslexia does not necessarily mean that the support in place will be changed. The school supports children with or without a formal diagnosis. We also rely on Primary feeder schools to pass on information to us so that we are aware of children who received intervention before joining the secondary school.



The two countries have very different approaches to assessing learners with dyslexic tendencies. Nevertheless, the outcome is the same: learners were told they have a specific learning difference. Daniel was only recently formally assessed: he had a smile on his face when he received the diagnosis. It might have been a sign of relief after years of uncertainty around the origin of his difficulties; he is now in year 9.

In the following section, the impact of the terminology used to describe learners' learning difference will be described.

### **5.1.3 Social and emotional impact of dyslexia assessments on learners**

I asked participants about their feelings as regards the terminology used to refer to their difficulties. On reflection, I tried to encourage them to reflect on the role of assessments or “diagnoses”.

One French learner said she did not want the learning difference to be associated to a lack of intelligence. Others were comfortable with the term “dyslexia” being used.

#### **5.1.3.1 Concerns regarding other people's perception of the learning difference**

Marion did not mind the word being used unless it was associated to a lack of intelligence. She did not want the term to be used pejoratively by others. On the other hand, her mother preferred the use of a different term: “general learning difficulties”:

*“Elle fait encore des fautes de dyslexie mais c’est plus un problème d’apprentissage.”<sup>20</sup>*

She did not want her daughter’s learning difference to be referred to as a specific learning difficulty.

### **5.1.3.2 Positive impact of assessment**

The use of the term “dyslexia” was important to George’s mother. George said he did not mind others referring to him as “dyslexic”. She was relieved when the formal assessment was carried out because a teacher had called George “*lazy*” when he was in primary school:

*“And so I’m happy that I’ve got a name for it.”*

This had affected him as he was, in fact, working hard. In this situation, the assessment was perceived as supportive and had a positive impact on George’s school life.

Daniel thought the use of the term dyslexia was not really an issue as, in his words, “*you can get rid of it*”. I am not sure what he meant by this comment; he might have meant that one can overcome it by developing coping strategies.

Laura was keen on the term being used to describe her learning difference. She was formally assessed in primary school and said it made her feel unique:

*“I feel different... like... in a good way though. I’m not like other people. It’s like I don’t want to be the same. It’s like I’m my own person.”*

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<sup>20</sup> “She still makes mistakes typical of dyslexia but it’s more a learning difficulty”.

The dyslexia assessment procedures are different in the two countries but the terminology used following an assessment is the same. Marion was a little concerned about the term being misinterpreted by others. Overall, five out of six learners interviewed did not feel uneasy about the term being used by others.

#### **5.1.4 Participants' definition of dyslexia and difficulties associated to it**

In this section, learners' own definitions and perceptions of dyslexia are described. The section is structured around learners' perspective; other sources of evidence were made to contribute to findings when relevant. Indeed, lesson observations and analyses of learners' work also provided factual evidence of difficulties associated to the learning difference in a school environment.

When invited to define dyslexia, learners often referred to difficulties with reading, writing and memorising facts: three learners mentioned having difficulties memorising written material or verbal instructions. Four learners mentioned having difficulties when writing (spelling and/or handwriting). Two learners thought dyslexia affected speech and language, three learners associated it to reading difficulties (decoding) and two to a lack of intelligence. Dyslexia was mainly defined in relation to academic learning.

Once again, no clear discrepancy was noticed between definitions provided by learners from the two countries: I was not able to correlate difficulties described and the level of transparency of their native language. Interestingly, both Daniel (Wales) and Sébastien (France) associated dyslexia with having difficulties to pronounce words.

Moreover, the two year 9 girls, Marion (France) and Laura (Wales), referred to a lack of intelligence; this showed a certain level of insecurity.

#### **5.1.4.1 Difficulties relating to memory, reading and writing acquisition**

To Charlotte, dyslexia could be defined as an inability to memorise orthography and to conjugate verbs accurately. In France, grammar is taught in school. Learners start studying verb conjugations and sentence structures in primary school. Charlotte's mother associated dyslexia with an incapacity to comprehend written material:

*“Pour moi, c’est une forme de handicap, de fonctionnement du cerveau en fait, qui l’empêche d’assimiler la lecture, pour elle, c’est essentiellement au niveau de la lecture, après, d’autres enfants ont peut-être d’autres problèmes...”<sup>21</sup>”*

She used the word *handicap* when defining dyslexia. To her, the brain cannot process written text, resulting in reading comprehension difficulties. Dyslexia was defined in terms of academic performance. Neither Charlotte nor her mother mentioned soft signs of dyslexia such as, for example, organisational skills and left-right confusion. This might suggest that they based their perceptions of the learning difference on the type of tests/assessments used by practitioners to provide a diagnosis.

Marion defined dyslexia as being synonymous with extra work. It meant having to work twice as hard. She said it took her a very long time to learn a lesson whereas her friend only had to read it once and would remember it. She also expressed her fear of getting answers wrong during lessons. This concerned her so much that she admitted not raising her hand during

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<sup>21</sup> “For me it’s a sort of *handicap*, the way the brain works actually, which prevents her from developing her reading skills; for her it’s mainly reading, perhaps other children have got other problems...”.

classes. She preferred to sit at the back of the classroom. This was apparent during the lesson observation I carried out. She was indeed sat at the back of the classroom and did not ask the teacher for help. Her teacher gave the class a test and she copied most answers from her neighbours. She was rather agitated during the session.

George associated dyslexia to a lack of concentration, difficulties with handwriting and spelling. It also involved reading words backwards. His written work was fragmented and letters were not joined up. During the lesson I observed, learners had to work in small groups and prepare arguments for or against the death penalty. He was in charge of summarising his group's ideas on paper. He showed difficulties organising ideas and only wrote one or two short sentences on the A3 sheet of paper given to the group. Once again, dyslexia was defined in terms of academic performance. The Educational Psychologist had looked at George's written work and reading test data then wrote a report stating that George obviously had dyslexic tendencies.

#### **5.1.4.2 Speech and language: pronunciation**

To Sébastien, dyslexia could involve difficulties with reading, writing and speech. In year 2, he had been referred to an *orthophoniste* as he had difficulties pronouncing certain words. He said it took him longer to read and that he had to concentrate more than other learners when writing. Sébastien found learning a modern foreign language extremely difficult. The sounds are different to the French sounds:

*“On m'a dit que [o] et [u] ça se prononce /u/ et maintenant en anglais c'est [oo] ça fait /u/. Donc ça mélange tout; c'est dur.”<sup>22</sup>*

[oo] in English and [ou] in French sound the same: /u:/ or /u/. He said he ends up getting confused. His mother defined dyslexia as a gift. She was keen on Davis's method (2010). She said she wanted it to be something positive. She also referred to how she supported her son at home.

When I observed Sébastien during a French lesson, he was keen on taking part and remained focused for most of the lesson. He often requested clarification from the teacher and therefore often put his hand up to ask questions. He was hesitant before starting the written task but seemed rather comfortable when making verbal contributions to lessons. Sébastien's definition of dyslexia seems to be related to the types of assessments he had to take in order to receive a “diagnosis”.

Daniel's definition was very similar to Sébastien's. He also explained that he struggled pronouncing certain words. Daniel's written work is difficult to decode. His spellings are so different from the correct ones that words are sometimes barely recognisable. He seems to have difficulties associating characters to sounds.

#### **5.1.4.3 Cognitive abilities**

Laura's views were very strong. Dyslexia rhymed with being “dumb”:

*“Yeah. 'Cos... like... most people... like... get it the first time but then overall a bit dumb asking “Oh, explain it again, again”. Just into it... like... clicks in and... without looking at me weirdly and that, like, puzzled.”*

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<sup>22</sup> “I was told that [o] and [u] put together was pronounced /u/ and now in English [oo] sounds /u:/. So everything's mixed up; it's hard”.

Laura thought it meant being slower than other learners in classroom situations. I saw Laura's art work. She took part in a competition and had to create a poster representing what dyslexia meant to her. At the centre of the poster figured a human head and a brain in the shape of a "jammy dodger". During the English lesson I observed, Laura was very reluctant to take part in the paired reading activity. She said to the teacher that she could not do it. She was not facing the teacher; she sat with her back against the wall facing the other side of the room. Her written work showed letter reversals and very simple sentence structures (subject, verb and complement).

### **5.1.5 Section summary**

Learners' description of difficulties they associate to the learning difference mainly related to academic performance. Although learners were young when assessed, it seems that their perceptions of the difficulties associated to dyslexia originate from the foci of the assessment process. Learners focused on areas of difficulties identified by professionals involved in assessing them. The two countries have very different approaches to assessing learners with dyslexic tendencies: dyslexia is perceived as a *handicap* in France and the assessment process is therefore medicalised (See chapter 2.4).

The range of definitions given by participants supports the view that no two cases of dyslexia present exactly the same characteristics. As mentioned in the review of the literature, there is no unique and empirical definition but a plethora of them.

The learning difference was perceived differently by the six learners who took part in the study. Neither the nature of their native language nor

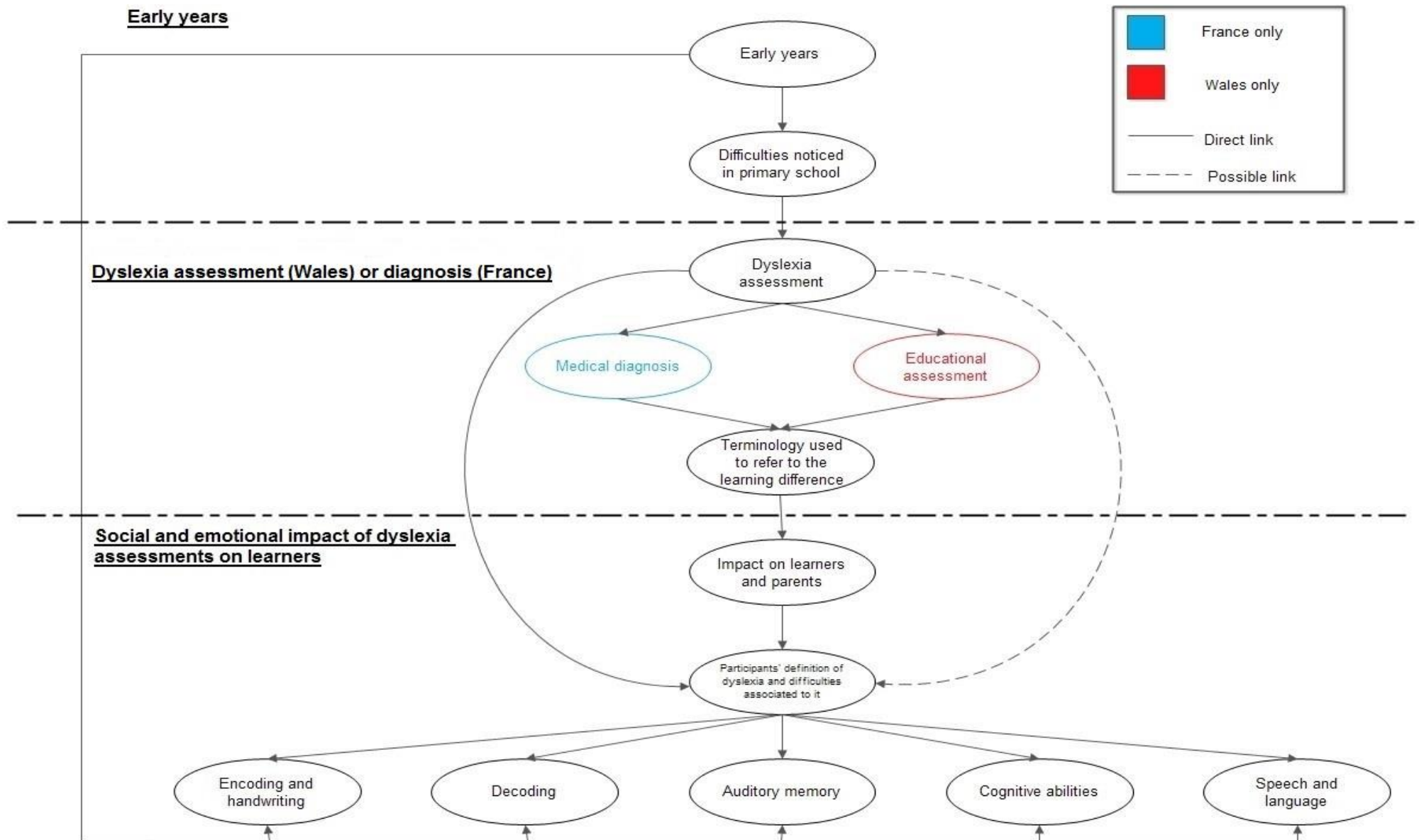
their school environment seemed to have an impact on the way they defined the learning difference, although the fact that both a French learner and a British learner (Sébastien and Daniel) mentioned having difficulties with speech was interesting.

English and French are often considered to be non-transparent or opaque languages due to the unpredictability of their orthography. French is often said to be inconsistent (Ziegler et al. 1996, p504) and even though French orthography is more consistent than English orthography as far as the spelling-to-sound mapping is concerned (Ziegler et al.1996, p504), it is not considered as a transparent language. According to Goswami (2002, p142), awareness of phonemes develops as a result of learning to read and write. Consequently, the nature of a language's orthography can inhibit or facilitate the acquisition of literacy and may affect speech and language. As dyslexia affects learners' phonological skills (Miles, 2006, p25), the progress of learners with dyslexia is likely to be affected by the orthographic consistency of a language.

Although French and British learners taking part in the study noticed the first signs of dyslexia in primary school, their progress might be more or less affected depending on the level of transparency of their native language. Figure 5 shows interrelationships between themes which emerged from the data and summarises this section's findings.

The following section focuses on support offered to learners in the two countries.





**Figure 5: Summary of findings under section 1: thematic interrelationship diagram**

## **5.2 Description and impact of support offered in the two countries**

Participants described support available to them, including strategies used at home. The impact on learners' behaviour and progress was looked at during the data analysis process and is presented in this section.

### **5.2.1 Support available to learners**

Learners have access to more support in the Welsh school setting. All the British learners attended support sessions in school and had a modified timetable. At the time of the interview, only one out of three French learners attended support sessions with the *orthophoniste* and PPRE classes (See section 4.2.1).

The mothers of five learners mentioned strategies they had developed to support their child with their learning at home. All strategies relied on using multi-sensory techniques to help develop numeracy, literacy and organisational skills.

#### **5.2.1.1 Educational support**

In France, head teachers supervise the implementation of a document entitled *Protocole d'Aménagements Pédagogiques pour les Troubles des Apprentissages* (Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale, 2011). The document makes recommendations regarding the support of learners with additional educational needs. Mr Dupont said that he was responsible for organising review meetings with the General Practitioner assigned to the school, parents, learner and Mme Gaillard. When a child is issued with a

diagnosis of dyslexia, a meeting takes place and a PAI (*Projet d'Accueil Individualisé*: the equivalent to the Individual Educational Plan) is issued.

The PAI outlines recommendations made by the doctor or *orthophoniste* who issued the assessment. PAIs are accessible to teachers so that they can put recommendations into practice in their classrooms.

Mme Gaillard and Mr Castronovo seemed sceptical when discussing the PAI. Mme Gaillard did not think that recommendations were consistently implemented by teachers. Mr Dupont and Mme Gaillard jointly supervise the organisation of an intervention put in place to support learners with poor literacy and numeracy skills. The *Programmes Personnalisés de Réussites Educatives*, or PPRE, consist in assigning identified learners to a small group that will have access to alternative English and Maths lessons. The teaching approach is different as it is multi-sensory. This intervention is available to selected year 7 learners who then follow a modified timetable and have access to small group teaching:

*“Donc c’est bien parce que ces gamins, ça leur permet d’être à un moment donné rassurés et de pas forcément souffrir de la comparaison avec le reste du groupe qui est en réussite et d’aller à leur rythme (...)”<sup>23</sup>*

Mme Gaillard explained that it aims at bridging the gap between primary and secondary school education. Mr Dupont and Mme Gaillard said that the school’s development plan highlighted the necessity to develop a similar intervention in year 8. The PPRE is an initiative recommended by *Le Ministère de l’Education Nationale*. Schools follow governmental guidelines and cannot implement their own interventions. Mr Dupont said it was difficult for the school to take initiatives.

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<sup>23</sup> “So it’s good for it allows these kids at that particular time to feel reassured, to go at their own rhythm and not to suffer from being compared to the rest of the group who are getting everything right”.

In Wales, Mr Smith explained he was responsible for the implementation of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (WAG, 2002) in his school. As Head Teacher he supervises arrangements put in place to support learners with additional educational needs. The day to day organisation of the support and the management of a team of Learning Support Assistants are delegated to the Additional Educational Needs Coordinator.

As AENCO, I use reading comprehension standardised tests and cross referenced scores with Cognitive Abilities Tests' (GL assessments, 2009) standardised scores. I also refer to information passed on by feeder primary schools to identify learners who might need extra support. The aim is to organise effective literacy provision in Key Stage 3.

The provision consists of 3 waves of intervention, wave 1 being the most intensive. Learners having access to wave 1 and wave 2 support are placed on the AEN register. We decided to use standardised scores since they reflect performance in relation to age-peers. Wave 1 intervention is the most intense as learners receive the support from a specialist teacher and are excused from French lessons. The specialist teacher helps children develop their literacy skills. Wave 2 intervention consists of two half hour reading sessions taking place weekly during tutorial time. Learning Support Assistants monitor groups of learners in wave 2. Once learners in need of support are identified, I write IEPs (Individual Educational Plans) for learners receiving wave 1 intervention. Targets generally address areas of concern. IEPs are the equivalent to French PAIs. They also include achievable targets. Learners accessing wave 2 intervention are encouraged to set their own targets. They do this in groups with guidance from their Learning Support Assistant. IEPs are available to all members of staff. George, Daniel and Laura have access

to wave 1 provision. George and Daniel also have daily one to one SAFMEDS (Say All Fast Minute Every Day Shuffled) sessions with a Learning Support Assistant. SAFMEDS (Beverley et al, 2009) is a method of targeting and monitoring mastery and fluency across all areas of learning. Learners read words written on flashcards on a daily basis until they become fluent.

Learners with dyslexia used to have access to Learning Support Assistants during lessons. However, the team has recently gone through a redundancy process and the school is no longer in a position to offer classroom support.

Learning Support Assistants are now allocated to learners with a statement of special educational needs. George and Daniel happened to be taught in the same groups as a child with a statement and therefore had access to a little help during lessons. Laura, however, does not have access to support in lessons.

#### **5.2.1.2 Health service**

Mme Coutelet, *orthophoniste*, mentioned that support offered by her service involved two half hour sessions per week. Sessions take place in her office after school. She believes that it is challenging to work with teenage “*patients*” as they often lack motivation and are reluctant to attend sessions.

When *orthophoniste* support sessions were discussed during interviews, Charlotte’s mother said that Charlotte was fed up with having to attend speech therapy sessions. Sébastien stopped attending at the end of year 7 and Marion stopped in year 8. Marion was denied the implementation of a PAI in school as her dyslexia was not considered to be severe enough.

Learners have access to more support in the Welsh school setting. On the other hand, British learners do not have access to speech therapy sessions. The French National Health Service supports learners and their families by covering the costs of the sessions. French learners were reluctant to receive support once in secondary school. Charlotte, Sebastien and Marion did not want to do extra work after school. George, Daniel and Laura were not reluctant to attend support sessions in the Learning Zone in school (where learners from wave 1 are taught).

### **5.2.1.3 Support strategies used at home**

All parents interviewed talked about multi-sensory techniques they used at home in order to help their children develop coping strategies.

Sébastien and Charlotte’s mothers used a kinaesthetic teaching approach to help their children grasp certain mathematical concepts or memorise lessons:

*“Combien de fois j’ai essayé de lui expliquer le fonctionnement de la multiplication, en prenant des grains de riz, des pâtes, des choses comme ça...”<sup>24</sup>*

Charlotte’s mother used dry pasta or rice grains to help her daughter understand multiplications. She also used a similar technique to help her memorise the shape of letters of the alphabet.

Sébastien’s mother also told me about how she and her husband helped him with his homework: they helped him memorise his lessons by acting then drawing and finally by writing the words down. She said she always

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<sup>24</sup> “The number of times I’ve tried to explain to her how multiplication works by using grains of rice, pasta and things like that...”.

told Sébastien that dyslexia was a gift because she wanted him to remain positive.

In Wales, Laura's mother created labels she could Velcro onto a mat:

*"I mean we... we've done things at home which has been... which helped her with the dyslexia... so when she was a little bit smaller we used to have a card... a Velcro stick on at home and there would be little cards on it... what you have to do it in the day like you know... everything was on for breakfast... to feeding her guinea pigs, to getting undressed and everything was on it."*

Labels helped her memorise her morning routine.

In the two countries parents helped their child to learn through more than one sense. Their techniques involved using sight, hearing or touch. By involving the use of more of the child's senses, especially the use of touch (tactile) and movement (kinetic), they tried to help their child's brain to develop tactile and kinetic memories to hang on to, as well as the auditory and visual ones (Henry, 1998).

The following section focuses on contrasting behaviours displayed by learners in school and at home.

### **5.2.2 Learners' personality and behaviour**

Teachers were invited to describe the learners' behaviour during the interviews. All of the British learners and two of the French learners participating in the study were referred to as withdrawn during English or French lessons. Their descriptions matched my observations. Parents also shared their views on their child's behaviour and personality: their views did not necessarily correlate with teachers' observations nor mine.

There was a clear discrepancy between learners' behaviour in school and at home.

Sébastien was the only learner whose behaviour was similar in both settings.

### 5.2.2.1 School

Charlotte's French teacher described her as generally reserved and hard working. She also said that Charlotte was more engaged in her PPRE classes because she was part of a small group of learners that had similar difficulties to her. However, in other mainstream classes she did not participate and was withdrawn:

*“Charlotte, c’est une enfant effacée qui est très, très scolaire, très, très persévérante, très, très attentive et appliquée mais qui ne progresse quasiment pas. Et alors, elle se maintient, donc moi, je l’encourage à se maintenir tout le temps un peu au même niveau.”<sup>25</sup>*

Marion's teacher said she tended to sit at the back of the classroom and not to take part in the lessons. Her teacher mentioned she seemed reticent to complete written tasks. This comment matched my observations. I observed a French lesson during which she had to take a test. She sat at the back of the class and tried to copy other learners' answers. Nevertheless, she seemed very sociable when I saw her walking down the corridors at break time. She said she had a lot of friends in the school.

In Wales, George, Laura and Daniel's English teachers referred to them as cooperative learners who lacked confidence when having to produce

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<sup>25</sup> “Charlotte is a very withdrawn child who is very, very conscientious, very, very persevering, very, very attentive and hard-working but who hardly makes any progress. She manages to keep her head above water so I encourage her to maintain as much as possible this level all the time”.



written work “for fear of failure”. When observing them during an English lesson, I noticed that they did not take part as much as others in the group.

#### 5.2.2.2 Home

Although teachers described most participants as reserved or not confident, parents’ descriptions of their personalities were contrasting. Charlotte used to lose her temper when her mother tried to help her with her homework. On the other hand, she was always very well behaved and polite in school; she tended to vent her frustration at home:

*“Ah oui, elle devient frustrée et puis moi, par moments je perds un peu mon calme, il y a des moments où je finis par m’énerver un peu, même si j’essaie vraiment de faire attention, alors c’est tout de suite: “Tu vois, tu dis que je suis bête...” alors que j’ai jamais dit ça ...”<sup>26</sup>*

Charlotte’s school work is a source of tension at home. Her mother explained that Charlotte often became disheartened and short tempered when she tried to help her. Unfortunately, I was not able to observe Charlotte in class as a whole school event clashed with the scheduled observation.

Marion, George, Daniel and Laura were described as very sociable and outgoing by their mothers. Daniel’s English teacher mentioned he lacked confidence to his mother during parents’ evenings but she sees a different side to him at home. According to her, he is very confident and joyful when not in school.

There was a discrepancy between parental descriptions of their child’s personality and what was observed in the classroom. When I observed

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<sup>26</sup> “Ah yes, she gets frustrated and then sometimes I lose my composure and there are times when I end up getting a little annoyed even though I try to be careful; then it’s straight away: ‘See, you say that I’m stupid...’ when I’ve never said that...”.

lessons, Sébastien was the only one who put his hand up to ask the teacher questions. Sébastien was also the most talkative and positive while being interviewed. His mother said she had read *The Gift of Dyslexia* (Davis, 2010) and had used it to encourage Sébastien to build on his strengths. He was not described as withdrawn by his teacher or by his mother. On the contrary, he seemed to have developed his own coping strategies. Descriptions provided by his teacher, his mother and observations carried out in class all converged towards the same conclusion: he appeared to be outgoing and wanted to take part.

### **5.2.3 Learners' progress**

This section pivots around data gathered from three sources of evidence. Data was collected during lesson observations. Analysis of documentary data such as samples of work and teachers' reports also provided useful evidence of learners' academic progression. Learners' progress is monitored differently in France and in Wales. It was therefore not possible to rely on quantitative data to compare participants' progress. However, teachers' comments provided an overview of each learner's progression.

#### **5.2.3.1 Learners' progress in the French school setting**

- **Charlotte**

I was not able to observe Charlotte as a whole school event took place on the day of the scheduled observation. Her French teacher, Mme Ponticelli, photocopied some of her class work. The work consists of reading comprehension exercises and notes about the function of adjectives in a sentence. Charlotte's handwriting is neat. Her use of punctuation is very limited, for example she is unable to use capital letters or full stops

accurately. As Charlotte mentioned during the interview, she does not seem to grasp the concept of tenses and makes many mistakes when conjugating verbs. Rules relating to the doubling of consonants are not always applied. She confuses nasal sound spellings such as /ã/, /ẽ/, /õ/. The French language is not transparent as noted in the literature review. Some patterns sound the same but are spelled differently such as “an” and “en”. Charlotte also tends to forget to add an -s to nouns when plural. She does not always apply rules of adjectival agreement either. Her French teacher said that she excelled when given the opportunity to take part in oral work. I did not have the opportunity to observe a lesson but believe that she enjoyed her French PPRE lessons as the class was small and it was not a mixed ability group. French secondary school teachers write three reports per academic year. Charlotte’s reports, which provide feedback from ten teachers, show that she is perceived as a hard working learner but struggling to achieve the level expected for her chronological age. She received one positive comment, in Art, during the first term:

*“Bon trimestre”.*<sup>27</sup>

Most other comments referred to a lack of progress but included an acknowledgement of her efforts. However, one comment written by her Humanities teacher was very negative:

*“Aucune participation; Charlotte semble dépassée déjà par ce qui lui est demandé (alors qu’elle bénéficie de sujets adaptés). Il va falloir intensifier les efforts.”*<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Good term’s work.

<sup>28</sup> No participation. Charlotte seems out of her depth as regards what is asked for (even though she has questions adapted to her). She will have to make greater efforts.

The comment implies she is not working hard enough and is not working at the expected level. Although most teachers acknowledge her efforts, her reports show that she is not making very good progress.

- **Sébastien**

Sébastien's teacher explained that spelling was his main problem. During the lesson I observed, he was focused and sat on his own at the front of the class. His French teacher gave me copies of his work where I was able to see that he does make a large number of spelling mistakes. One of the pieces of work shows on average one circled spelling mistake per line. Like Charlotte, he confuses nasal sound spellings; word endings are often wrong and rules regarding the doubling of consonants are not consistently applied. He misplaces apostrophes but places full stops and commas accurately. His use of capital letters is good and his letter formation is clear although he seems to struggle conjugating verbs and choosing the correct ending. He has good handwriting and his reports, which provide feedback from ten teachers, show that he has progressed:

*“Très bon trimestre. Attention à rester bien organisé dans le travail.”<sup>29</sup>*

The above comment, for example, was written by his Art teacher. She praises him for his work but mentions poor organisational skills. Throughout the year, his efforts seemed to have intensified. However, his final report shows he struggles to keep up with the level of work expected, especially in the more academic subjects. For example his average mark in Humanities during the third trimester was 4/20; however the teacher's comment was encouraging:

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<sup>29</sup> Excellent term's work. Must remain organised in his work.

*“Une année de progrès. La moyenne ne reflète pas les capacités de Sébastien.”<sup>30</sup>*

The teacher explains that his poor marks are no reflection of his ability, in other words, he is capable. He gives encouragement by telling him to persevere. Overall his efforts are acknowledged but his marks are often extremely low in more academic subjects such as English as a foreign language or Humanities.

- **Marion**

During the French lesson I observed, Marion was sat at the back of the classroom, next to her friend. The class was given a test whose aim was to evaluate learners' reading comprehension skills. It was based on a list of books to read that had been given to the group at the start of the year. Questions were projected on a whiteboard in small print. Marion could not read the questions well but did not ask the teacher for help. She spent most of the lesson trying to copy answers from her neighbours. The French teacher, Mr Castronovo, photocopied her test paper. However, it was not her own work and I was therefore unable to analyse mistakes made. Her handwriting is very neat and the use of punctuation is accurate. Her answers are rather short but I noted she wrote most of them down while the rest of the class stood up to pack away: she seized the opportunity to copy answers from the learner sitting in front of her. Mr Castronovo believes she does not concentrate enough during lessons. According to him, her errors generally consist of incorrect sentence structures:

*“Il y a quand même un manque de conscience des structures essentielles de la langue”.<sup>31</sup>*

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<sup>30</sup> Progressed during the year. His mark is not a real reflection of his capacities.

<sup>31</sup> “There's still a lack of awareness of the essential structures of the language”.

Marion's reports, which provide feedback from eleven teachers, show that she made limited progress over the year: she only received four positive comments during the first trimester. Teachers sometimes acknowledge her efforts but overall highlight a real lack of progress:

*“Ensemble très faible. Marion est volontaire mais éprouve de grosses difficultés à l’écrit.”<sup>32</sup>*

This comment from her Biology teacher refers to her difficulties with written work. On the other hand her Art and Physical Education teachers are very positive about her progress. I was told that Marion has since left the school. Her mother had mentioned that possibility during the interview saying that she wanted her daughter to be given more opportunities to do drama and to take part in kinaesthetic group work.

### **5.2.3.2 Learners' progress in the Welsh school setting**

By looking at samples of learners' work, interviewing learners' English teachers and analysing annual school reports' comments, I was able to gain an understanding of how well George, Daniel and Laura were progressing in school.

- **George**

George's English teacher gave me a photocopy of a reading comprehension exercise which he had completed in class. The sample showed that he is unable to form letters well and tends to write words and figures back to front. Letters are also jumbled up and he does not write on lines provided. He was recently diagnosed with dyspraxia which explains his bad posture and his difficulties gripping pens and pencils. Mrs Jones

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<sup>32</sup> Overall very weak. Marion is a willing pupil but has great difficulties in her written work.

also noticed he was not able to copy from the board or from a photocopied worksheet. Writing the date is challenging for him as his knowledge of the months of the year and days of the week is rather limited. Mrs Evans, specialist teacher, also noted that he tended to mix lower and upper case when writing:

*“Perhaps, he does the classic B-D reversals, he is doing things like that, using a lot of printed capitals instead of lower case but he again, it’s this whole thing about getting the self-confidence and he is engaged in class, he interacts very well when you’re having discussion... verbally excellent. So, you know he is, and he is making progress.”*

Despite the “b-d” reversals she commented on how articulate he was. George can express ideas intelligibly but writing them down on a sheet of paper is very demanding. His teachers tend to encourage him to take part in lessons orally. The lesson I observed consisted of a debate about capital punishment which learners had been preparing for a week. George was not vocal during the debate and even said, during the plenary, that it was difficult to think of arguments. Other learners were able to process the other team’s argument; think about what to say back and then formulate their own ideas but George needed more time. Mrs Jones also mentioned that George could not deal with digressions during lessons. In other words, it was preferable for her to adhere to her lesson plan as any deviation could really puzzle him. George left the school during the academic year, before year 7 reports were given out to parents.

Daniel and Laura’s specialist teacher, Mrs Evans, gave me photocopied samples of work which they had completed in the Learning Zone.

- **Daniel**

Daniel's written work is sometimes illegible. Letter formation is an issue for him but his lack of phonic awareness is striking. Mrs Evans and Mrs Roberts commented on these points. Mrs Roberts, English teacher, sometimes has to ask him to read his work to her as she cannot decode it. Sadly, he cannot always understand what he has written down. She also noted that Daniel could not use computers effectively. The use of ICT is usually helpful to most learners with reading and spelling difficulties but not to Daniel. The computer software highlights his spelling mistakes but cannot provide suggestions as it is unable to recognise the words. Even using a search engine proves to be difficult for him as the key words he tries to enter are spelled incorrectly.

I observed one of his English lessons. It was a low ability group with only twelve learners in the class. He seemed to understand verbal instructions and had friends in the group. He completed the starter activity by writing a very short sentence. They had to write a feature article about a celebrity. The task had been broken down and involved a planning stage and a template to be filled in on computers. I sat next to Daniel while he was filling his template in. He was writing about Lewis Hamilton. I scanned through his work and noticed he had spelled the name of the formula one racer in three different ways. He copied and pasted a lot of information without having read it. I saw him using a search engine, and as mentioned by Mrs Roberts, he could not spell key words and therefore could not access the information needed. He was looking for Lewis Hamilton's birth place: Daniel could not spell his name; he could not spell "birth" which became "berv" nor "place" which became "plaiice". He then asked me for help. He did not realise that I was observing him and did not find my



presence intrusive as I work in the school and was pretending to do my own planning work using the computer situated next to his.

Daniel is in the lower sets in all subjects. It is important to note that French learners are taught in mixed ability groups thus teachers' comments often relate to learners' performance in comparison with others in that group. When reading through Daniel's reports, it is noticeable that all teachers praise Daniel and say that he is making satisfactory progress. However, his progress is measured using a target level set by teachers at the start of the year. These target levels are usually set in relation to the learner's abilities (WAG, 2008). Although Daniel's targets are lower than those set for learners being taught in top ability sets, his progress is acknowledged. This system results in school reports being more encouraging and more positive than the French ones:

*“Daniel has worked reasonably well throughout the year, producing work of a satisfactory standard. He has good practical skills and is able, to work effectively as part of a group.”*

His science teacher's comment highlights his strengths before addressing his lack of concentration. As I observed one of his lessons and had access to a sample of his written work, I am well aware of his difficulties. Nevertheless, most teachers chose not to mention spelling or handwriting difficulties. Overall, Daniel is making satisfactory progress and is working towards achieving his set targets and therefore reaching his potential.

- **Laura**

Mrs Thomas, Laura's English teacher, had been focusing on oral work with the group. It was a set five group (out of six sets). She said Laura was really withdrawn during lessons. I observed a lesson during which they had to take part in a paired reading activity. She was disengaged as

she did not feel comfortable reading out loud. Laura seemed really sad during the lesson. During the interview, she had shared her concerns regarding her year 9 option choices. Laura lacks phonic awareness, her work also showed homophone confusion such as “wear” instead of “where”. The sample also showed some letter reversals and a tendency to mix lower and upper case letters. When reading her school reports, it seems that she is making satisfactory progress in most practical subjects and will achieve her target level. Like Daniel, she was placed in lower sets. About half of her teachers consciously omitted comments relating to her writing skills and focused on her strengths before setting targets for improvement:

*“Laura has been working well in English this year and I am very pleased with her contribution in class. I have also been pleased to see her approach me when she requires further clarification on something. Laura’s recent written work has demonstrated a good level of understanding and she is beginning to adapt her tone to suit the purpose of the writing. In order to progress, Laura needs to concentrate on implementing strategies that will help her to develop her reading work (we have discussed how I can help more with this).”*

This comment was written by her English teacher. When I interviewed her, she was not as positive about Laura’s progress but she obviously wants to encourage her and wrote very positive remarks. Although about half of Laura’s reports do include comments relating to poor spelling or poor sentence structures, the majority suggest that she will meet her target level by the end of the academic year.

To conclude, French learners’ work mainly showed difficulties with spelling nasal sounds, conjugation and punctuation. Teachers often

referred to them falling behind with their work and not keeping up with the pace of lessons. On the other hand, British learners had difficulties with letter formation, mixing upper and lower case, phonic awareness, short and long vowel sounds and letter reversals. Progress is monitored differently in the two countries so a valid comparison cannot be drawn. French learners are taught in mixed ability groups and therefore are often compared to the rest of their tutor group. Although this could be perceived as a way of raising aspiration, it could also be demoralising.

#### **5.2.4 Learners' awareness of own strengths**

I asked learners participating in the study to identify their strengths. All learners regarded practical subjects and/or Maths as their preferred area of learning. Five out of six participants were hesitant when discussing their strengths with me. Sébastien stood out as he had a clear idea of what he wanted to do in the future and had clearly been encouraged to build on his strengths.

##### **5.2.4.1 Uncertainty and lack of direction**

Marion and Charlotte could not think of their strengths at first. Marion eventually said she was good at Physical Education. She was described as lacking confidence by her French teacher who commented on the negative perception she had of herself. He believed she had been "labelled" as "dyslexic" and that she had been focusing on her weaknesses ever since.

Laura felt she was good at Physical Education and Art. She was emotional during the interview, especially when she explained why she enjoyed Art:

*“And your imagination starts going but if it’s... like... someone telling you to do this, to do that, and write down a piece of paper, copy from books it’s just, it gets to me and it’s like all...(laughs)”*

She explained that she liked Art as she was able to rely on her imagination. Her mother also told me about her ability to be creative and about how good she was at sports. Mrs Evans, specialist teacher, encouraged her to take part in an Art competition this year. She drew a poster about how it felt to have dyslexia. The picture represented a human profile with a brain resembling a “*jammy dodger*”. Learners associated strengths with school performance. Five were hesitant when answering the question and did not make the difference between personal qualities and academic achievements. Their answers were always related to their performances at school. Parents provided more holistic descriptions of their children’s strengths but Sébastien was the only learner who appeared to be confident about his competences.

#### **5.2.4.2 The case of Sébastien**

Sébastien answered the question eagerly. He was good at Maths and Art, explaining that he enjoyed his Art lessons because the teacher focused on the message conveyed by the work produced rather than on the form:

*“Elle juge pas forcément sur le dessin, (...), donc en fait si tu fais bien ce qu'elle a demandé mais c'est mal dessiné, ça on s'en fiche, mais t'as une bonne note, mais si tu sais super dessiner mais que c'est pas du tout dans le contexte qu'elle a demandé, elle donne des mauvaises notes.”<sup>33</sup>*

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<sup>33</sup> “She doesn’t just judge the drawing (...), so, in fact, if you’ve done what she asked for well but it’s been badly drawn she’s not bothered and you’ll get a good mark ; but if you can draw really well but it’s not at all in the context she asked for she’ll give bad marks”.

While talking about his Art project, he became very animated and grabbed my bottle of water to tell me how he would be able to turn this bottle into something else and talked me through the different steps of the transformation. He even said that his creativity made him stand out and that he loved Art because he did not feel he was being judged by others. He possibly meant that he was not being judged in relation to academic performance. Sébastien's mother was also very positive. She confessed that his father had dyslexic tendencies but only realised it once his two sons were assessed as having dyslexia. His father is a Technology teacher specialised in Art and Design. He developed his own coping strategies: he does not write his ideas down but draws symbols instead. Sébastien and his mother often discussed successful people with dyslexia at home and she said Leonardo De Vinci was their hero. Sébastien had developed an interest in drawing three-dimensional pictures and practised every day. Sébastien's family refer to his learning difference as his strength:

*“Il ne savait pas qu’il y avait un lien entre les deux, donc, nous, quand on a eu des enfants dyslexiques, on est allé chercher ce que c’était, on a essayé de positiver les choses etc donc on a cherché tout ce qui était formidable donc évidemment que Léonard de Vinci est devenu notre Dieu à nous de même que tous les génies de la création qui étaient dyslexiques.”<sup>34</sup>*

His teacher referred to his good nature, his uniqueness and his family as being his strong points. Sébastien had a very clear idea of what career path he wanted to take. He wanted to become a marine carpenter. His parents' approach seemed to have a very positive impact on him.

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<sup>34</sup> “He didn't know there was a link between the two so when we had children with dyslexia we looked up what it was and tried to think positively about things; we looked up everything positive about it and obviously Leonardo de Vinci became our God, just like all other creative geniuses with dyslexia”.

### 5.2.5 Section summary

Learners have access to more support in the Welsh school setting and French learners were reluctant to receive support from the speech therapy service once in secondary school. This meant that French learners mainly relied on their families to help them with their work. All parents interviewed helped their child at home, using a kinaesthetic approach to learning.

There was a clear discrepancy between parental descriptions of their child's personality and what was observed in the classroom. Most learners interviewed were described as withdrawn by their teachers, with the exception of Sébastien who appeared to be more outgoing in lessons.

When analysing French learners' work, it became apparent that they had difficulties with spelling nasal sounds, conjugation and punctuation. On the other hand, British learners had difficulties with letter formation, mixing upper and lower case, phonic awareness, short and long vowel sounds and letter reversals.

Despite British learners having access to more support in school, their difficulties were more pronounced: this could suggest either that they had a more severe form of dyslexia or that the lack of emphasis on grammar in the early years of schooling in Wales has affected them adversely. Findings relating to perceptions of support offered in the two countries will be analysed in the next section. The section also refers to the implementation of government policies relating to supporting learners with additional educational needs such as dyslexia.

Figure 6 provides an overview of the findings discussed under the two previous sections. The interrelationship diagram provides a non-linear perspective and an illustration of the relationships between identified themes.

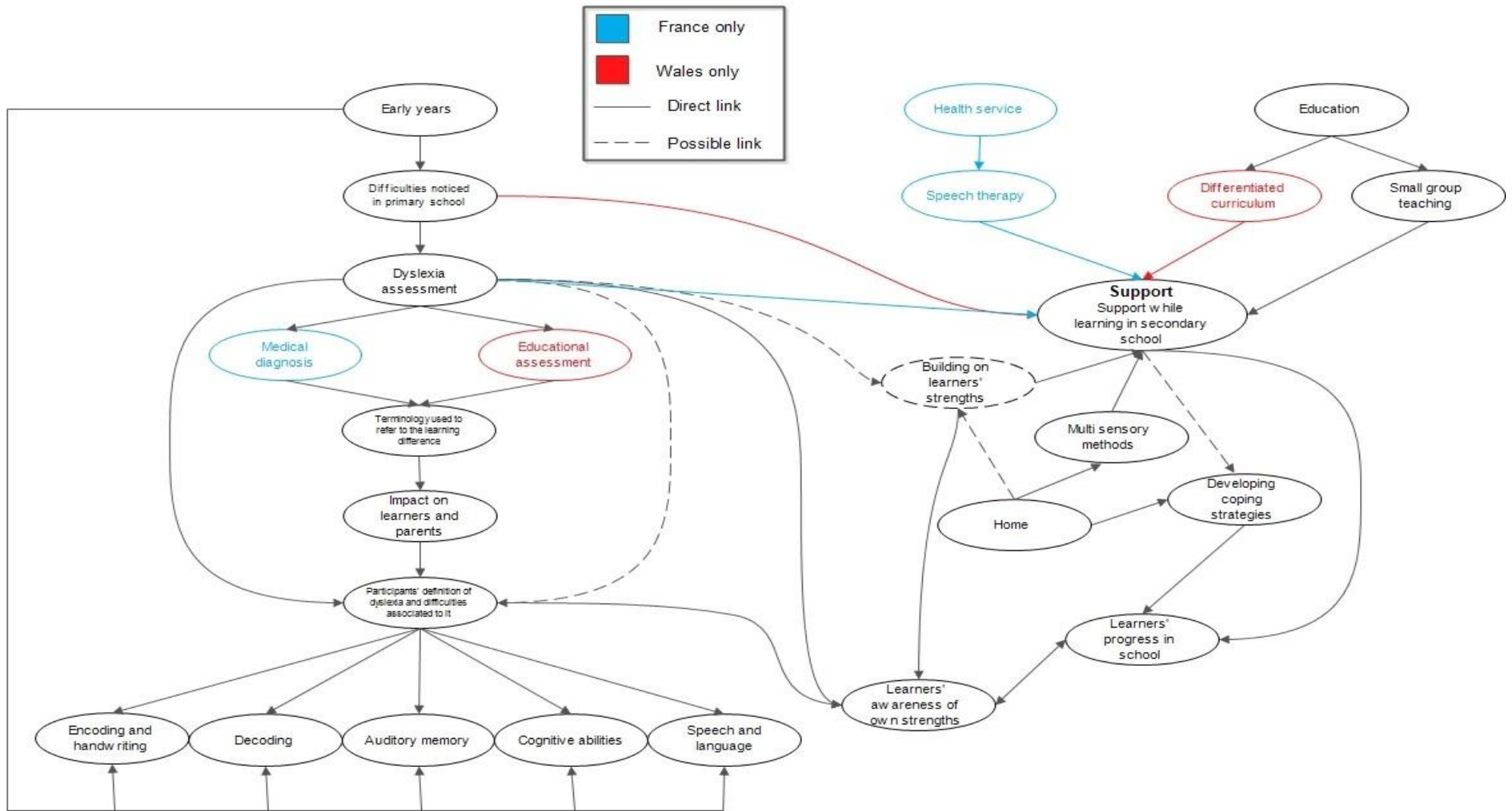


Figure 6: Summary of findings under sections 1 and 2: thematic interrelationship diagram

## **5.3 Perceptions of support**

The following section includes participants' critical views on structures in place. It also outlines findings relating to the implementation of policies, opportunities for staff training and professional expertise.

### **5.3.1 Parents and learners' views on the support offered**

Parents shared their views on the impact of the educational plans put in place. George's mother was the only one out of six parents that was fully satisfied with the support offered to their child.

#### **5.3.1.1 Parents' views: perceived limitations of support offered**

Charlotte's mother was happy with the PPRE provision put in place. She thought it made a real difference. On the other hand, she did not think her daughter's PAI was taken into consideration by many teachers. Her Humanities teacher gave her differentiated pieces of homework while other teachers did not. They were never invited to attend review meetings either. Charlotte was still attending speech therapy but was not keen on going.

Sebastien's mother explained that some teachers had tried to adapt a few tasks to make them more accessible to her son. However, she was shocked when she attended a parents' evening and realised his tutor did not know about his learning difference.

Marion's mother expressed some strong views about the lack of support available to her daughter. She was denied access to a PAI and teachers did not differentiate work for her. She said she was going to move Marion



to a different school where oral work was valued more. Marion has now left the school.

George's mother was pleased with the level of support offered to her son. She thought it made him feel more secure.

Parents' views on the support offered to their children were on the whole negative. Only one parent was completely satisfied. A lack of communication between the management team and school teachers was highlighted by French parents. In Wales, a lack of challenge in the work set by teachers was pointed out by one parent. Another parent was in favour of a full time differentiated curriculum for her daughter.

#### **5.3.1.2 Learners' suggestions for improvement**

Learners shared their views on the support offered during the interviews and were invited to make suggestions for improvements. All French learners wished they could do more work on grammar. They found grammar helpful and wanted to do more of it. On the other hand, British learners did not refer to grammar. The French learners used terms such as "verb endings" or "conjugation of verbs". French learners showed a better understanding of linguistic terminology. Two learners (French and British) wished for more differentiation in the mainstream classroom.

##### **5.3.1.2.1 More differentiation and literacy support focusing on grammar**

Charlotte wanted to do more work on orthography and conjugation of verbs during her French PPRE lessons. She also said she wished she did not have to study a modern foreign language (English).

Sébastien said he wished his History teacher would give one or two fewer questions in his tests as he never had enough time to answer all of them. He would also like to do more grammar in class. He felt it helped him assimilate written language. In his dream school, he would start at 8 o'clock and finish at 1 o'clock which would enable him to take part in sporting activities in the afternoon and would give him more time to do his homework.

Laura said she would like more help from teachers during lessons. She wanted teachers to go over instructions again with her. She would also like them to provide written instructions as she was never able to memorise verbal ones.

#### **5.3.1.2.2 Small group teaching and learning**

Marion would prefer to be part of a tutor group consisting of learners with dyslexia only. They would be able to go over basic language and improve their literacy skills.

George could not get accustomed to his timetable this year. The school adopted a fortnightly timetable but he wished for a simpler one to follow. He also shared with me that he preferred to receive literacy support in a very small group. At the time of the interview there were six learners in the group, which made him feel uncomfortable.

All French learners wished for more support with grammar or basic literacy skills. Three out of six learners said small group teaching would help them. Two out of six expressed a need for more differentiated work or more support during lessons.

### 5.3.2 Implementation of policies relating to supporting learners with additional educational needs

The two Head Teachers expressed their reservations about the implementation of policies. They also both referred to excessive workload and too much pressure put on school staff. Mr Smith mentioned insufficient funding.

#### 5.3.2.1 Excessive workload is a barrier to consistent implementation of policies

In France, *Le Protocole d'Aménagements Pédagogiques pour les Troubles des Apprentissages* (Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale, 2011) offers practical advice on how to support learners with AEN in the classroom. It highlights the importance of meetings involving teaching staff and therapists so that a PAI can be drawn up. Mr Dupont, Head Teacher, said it was not always straight forward to implement government policies.

Mme Gaillard, CPE, referred to the governmental expectations as “*unrealistic*”:

*“Non, ce n'est pas du tout réaliste. (...) Alors que sur le terrain, évidemment on est tenu donc de faire des PAI mais concrètement, on ne peut pas mettre vraiment en application...il y a certains collègues qui vont y être sensibles et qui vont le faire...qui vont appliquer mais pas tous...”<sup>35</sup>*

She believed parents were told that their child would be supported in school and that the PAI would be referred to by teachers; they would then tailor their teaching approach to the needs of their child. In reality, she

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<sup>35</sup> “No, it's not at all realistic. (...) While, of course, in the school we are meant to do IEPs, in reality we can't really set them up...certain colleagues will be receptive to the idea and will do them...will get things going but not all of them...”.

stated that they were not in a position to apply recommendations made by professionals in the PAI as teachers were not always cooperative due to excessive workload.

### **5.3.2.2 Insufficient funding**

In Wales, The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice states that secondary schools are responsible for identifying and assessing learners with AEN. It also states that schools are responsible for providing support for identified learners (WAG 2002, p58). Mr Smith expressed concerns about excessive pressure put on schools to support learners with AEN. He mentioned a lack of funding.

Mr Smith, Head Teacher, expressed his opinion on the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (WAG, 2002):

*“So... the Code of Practice, to come back to the start of the question, I think... you know... I think it’s good that there’s a definitive code of practice that all schools should adhere to it. I think that’s important obviously. (...) You know... I am concerned that the extra work which is put on yourself and other colleagues and on the school staff to support learners... um... isn’t fully resourced. And I think local and national governments are expecting more and more from schools by giving less and less.”*

Mrs Evans noted that the quality of the implementation varied and was directly correlated to the financial situation of the LA. In George, Daniel and Laura’s school, over 25% of learners were placed on the Additional Educational Needs register. Only a minority of children with AEN have dyslexic tendencies; the AEN department also supports learners with medical needs, behavioural problems, emotional and social disorders,

autism and dyspraxia. Recommendations made by the Code of Practice (WAG 2002) are not fully fulfilled due to workload issues and staffing shortage.

### **5.3.3 Training of school staff**

In the two countries, educational plans are put in place to support learners. These plans include recommendations that teachers ought to take into consideration when planning their lessons. I asked teachers how comfortable they felt when teaching learners with dyslexia. All teachers interviewed said they did not feel knowledgeable enough due to lack of training even though, in the case of France, the Head Teacher organised training sessions for teachers in school.

#### **5.3.3.1 France: impact of training organised by the Head Teacher**

Mr Dupont had been Head Teacher of the school for 10 years at the time of the interview. He used to be Deputy Head Teacher in a secondary school in the suburbs of Paris. He was once invited to attend a training day at a hospital led by Dr Michel Habib, Clinical Neurologist trained in Neuropsychology and Behavioural Neurology. During the interview, Mr Dupont shared some very positive news:

*“Voilà vers le mois de mai/juin, où là, il y aura 4 demi-journées dont une demi-journée avec un médecin, qui viendra nous parler du handicap de la dyslexie, la 2e demi-journée, ce sera une psychologue, et les deux autres demi-journées, ce sera un enseignant qui est spécialisé dans la mise en pratique du travail*

*auprès des élèves dys, qui viendra expliquer comment faire dans la pratique avec les élèves..<sup>36</sup>*

He organised four training sessions for teachers: the workshops were successively led by a doctor, a psychologist and a teacher who worked in a special school. The aim of the training was to make teachers more aware of how to support learners with dyslexia in the classroom. Even though sessions were welcomed by teaching staff, the two French teachers interviewed said they had not received sufficient training and said they felt they did not have the expertise to support learners with dyslexia in the mainstream classroom.

### **5.3.3.2 Wales: school expected to organise training using own staff**

Mr Smith had not received any training since he started working in the school. As an AENCO, I was never given access to professional development. I decided to study part time in order to improve my professional performance. There is currently no legal obligation for AENCOs to have extra qualifications in Wales. On the other hand, in England, the new Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (DFE DOH, 2014) states that SENCO training is mandatory and has been since 2009; SENCOs must hold The National Award for Special Educational Needs Coordination qualification. This Award is at Master's Degree level and aims at equipping SENCOs/AENCOs with relevant knowledge to be able to identify children's needs and organise effective provision in the relevant education setting.

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<sup>36</sup> "Somewhere around May/June time there will be four half days, one of which will be with a doctor who will talk to us about the *handicap* of having dyslexia. For the second half day there will be a psychologist and for the two other ones a teacher specialised in working with pupils with dyslexia will come and explain how to put this work with the pupils into practice".

Mrs Thomas, who qualified as a teacher recently, was the only teacher who attended lectures about supporting learners with dyslexia in the classroom.

The Head mentioned a need for extra training. Teachers interviewed also expressed concerns regarding insufficient training opportunities. Mr Smith said the Local Authority could organise professional development days for teachers in the county. He also suggested that I took responsibility for training teachers in the school:

*“(...) perhaps the Authority or more obviously the school should be looking to provide development for all staff really. I suppose, in a way, that comes to your role as well but also... you know... the school organising stuff from outside as well.”*

As I said during my interview, the AENCO workload is considerable; I also have teaching responsibilities and have not had the opportunity to set up such sessions.

The French Head Teacher provided opportunities for teachers to gain an understanding of the learning difference. Teachers were also given practical advice on how to support learners in the classroom. In the Welsh school's Improvement Plan, there is no reference to organising training for teachers. The plan focuses on providing opportunities for more able learners to succeed and reach their potential. The departmental improvement plan of the additional educational needs department refers to a need for further training of school staff.

#### **5.3.4 Orthophoniste and specialist teacher's expertise**

In France, learners with dyslexia are offered support from an *orthophoniste* who works for the National Health Service. In the Welsh

school, George, Daniel and Laura attend timetabled support sessions with a specialist teacher. Both specialist teachers and *orthophonistes* support learners with dyslexia but do not, however, have the same qualifications.

#### 5.3.4.1 Medical training

Mme Coutelet said she qualified in 1982 in Lyon. She first took a competitive exam in 1979 when she had to study the theoretical background to physiotherapy, occupational therapy and audio phonology. This led on to a more specific exam for *orthophonistes*, including an evaluation of students' knowledge of Physics, Biology, Maths and French. Once she passed these exams, there was an oral to be able finally to enter a speech therapy training school and qualify three years later:

*“Donc moi, j’ai d’abord passé un concours qui était un tronc commun avec kinésithérapie, ergothérapie, audiophonologie. C’était en 79 et ensuite, on avait un concours spécifique à l’orthophonie ; si on obtenait des notes suffisantes au concours du tronc commun, voilà, donc j’ai passé un concours qui était un concours d’abord écrit avec français, physique, biologie et math je crois (...) et ensuite une fois qu’on avait réussi, qu’on était admis à l’écrit, on passait l’oral. C’était un oral psychotechnique en fait et à l’issue de cet entretien, on avait l’autorisation d’intégrer l’école d’orthophonie.”<sup>37</sup>*

Nowadays, students have to train for four years at university in order to become an *orthophoniste*. The selection process is exam based; they have to take a *concours*<sup>38</sup> and apply for places at university. Studies

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<sup>37</sup> “Personally, I first of all had to take a competitive exam which was a common-core syllabus for physiotherapy, occupational therapy and audio phonology. That was in 1979 and then there was a specific competitive exam for speech therapy if your marks were good enough in the common-core syllabus exam. So, I firstly took a written competitive exam with French, physics, biology and maths, I think (...) and then if you passed that there was an oral exam. It was in fact a psychotechnical oral and if you got through it you were then able to get a place in a school specialised in speech and language therapy”.

<sup>38</sup> Competitive exam.



include work experience placements and they also have to write a dissertation. As Mme Coutelet qualified in the 1980s the set up was slightly different.

They need to study for so long because of the nature of their profession. Mme Coutelet explained that they are responsible for helping patients with speech impairments, difficulties with writing or articulating:

*“Alors de toute façon, l’orthophonie, c’est la rééducation des troubles du langage oral, du langage écrit...des troubles de l’articulation et de la parole...des troubles de la voix, c’est-à-dire qu’on rééduque tous les étages...qui permettent la communication-expression.”<sup>39</sup>*

They help patients develop their written and oral communication skills. Learners with dyslexia are given multi-sensory tasks to help them develop their phonological awareness. Mme Coutelet also insisted on the moral support she provides patients with.

#### **5.3.4.2 Specialist teacher training as part of continuing professional development**

Mrs Evans, specialist teacher, is employed by the Local Authority. She is a qualified science teacher and she specialised in the teaching of learners with dyslexia by taking a Master’s Degree level module at university. The module promoted a multi-sensory teaching approach and demanded that teachers tutored a learner with dyslexia for thirty lessons. Only qualified teachers are able to enrol on this course. By the end of the module, students must show the ability to draw up an individual teaching programme adapted to the needs of a learner with dyslexia.

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<sup>39</sup> Anyway, speech therapy is the rehabilitation of the spoken language, the written language...problems of articulation and speech...voice problems, in fact everything allowing expression-communication.

Mrs Evans's training was not theoretical and was much shorter than the *orthophoniste* studies. It equipped her with practical knowledge needed to support learners with dyslexia in the classroom or in small groups. Her lessons generally evolved around developing reading comprehension skills:

*“Sometimes, we do 10 minutes or a quarter of an hour of reading. You (...) make sure they understand it, that they actually comprehend and you keep working gently at these comprehension skills.”*

She thought learners needed to work on developing literal, inferential and evaluative reading comprehension skills. She believed that this type of support was the key to helping learners access work across the curriculum. Mrs Evans's expertise was educational whereas Mme Coutelet's training was medical. They nevertheless both used multi-sensory teaching approaches to support learners with dyslexia.

### **5.3.5 Section summary**

Parents' views on the support offered to their children were negative overall. This section of the chapter also highlights weaknesses in implementation of policies. Lack of time, lack of training and lack of funding were identified by participants as being the main cause for professionals not consistently working together in the interest of learners. Findings specifically related to partnership work are presented in the next section.

## **5.4 Working in a partnership**

In France and Wales, Individual Educational Plans (or in French, *Projet d'Accueil Individualisé*) are drawn up for learners with dyslexia. The data shows some similarities between the two countries: class teachers are not involved in drawing up IEPs or PAIs. The documents are shared with them and they should implement them in the mainstream classroom. Another similarity between the two countries is that half (Wales) or over half (France) of the professionals involved in the study criticised communication systems in place. In France, four of the five professionals interviewed suggested that communication between teachers and outside agencies/services was poor. Similarly, in Wales, three out of six professionals interviewed highlighted issues regarding exchange of information to do with supporting learners with dyslexia in the mainstream classroom. Lack of time to discuss teaching approaches, exchange information or apply IEP/PAI recommendations came across as the main cause of support shortcomings.

The data also shows marked contrasts between the two countries: in France, the drawing up of the IEPs or PAIs is medicalised as the process is coordinated by a General Practitioner. On the other hand, Education is responsible for drawing up IEPs, the process is coordinated by the AENCO (teachers are not involved).

### **5.4.1 France: working with teachers, parents and health services**

Mme Gaillard makes sure that all Individual Educational Plans (in French, *Projet d'Accueil Individualisé*) are given to teachers. As mentioned in the literature review, PAIs include recommendations made by medical

practitioners. In France, every school works in partnership with a General Practitioner. A meeting is organised in school by an allocated GP at the start of each academic year. Individual learners are discussed and a PAI is usually drawn up so that their learning needs can be met in school. Mme Gaillard explained that all professionals working with learners are usually invited, with the exception of teachers. Reports and PAIs are then shared with parents and teachers.

Mme Coutelet, *orthophoniste*, said she regularly attended meetings in her *patients'* schools:

*“Alors ce qui est intéressant c’est qu’ici pour les enfants qui sont en grande difficulté parfois on demande ce qu’on appelle des réunions d’intégration. On fait ce qu’on appelle des équipes éducatives pour essayer d’aider au mieux les enseignants en classe.”<sup>40</sup>*

She explained that she liaised and attended meetings in schools in order to provide guidance and support to classroom teachers.

However, teachers I interviewed did not mention these meetings. They were given a copy of the PAIs of learners they taught.

Mme Gaillard, CPE, noted that teachers did not consistently apply recommendations from PAIs. Parents regularly phoned the school to complain about concessions not being granted when taking tests. She mentioned that on one occasion, a learner with dyspraxia was given a laptop and a teacher refused to let him use it during lessons; even though the PAI stated he was entitled to it. Mme Gaillard feeds back to Mr Dupont regularly. Mr Dupont, Head Teacher, wrote an email to teachers last year reminding them that they had to comply with PAIs' guidelines.

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<sup>40</sup> “What is in fact interesting is that here, for children who have learning difficulties, what are called integration meetings are organised. So called educational teams are created in order to help the classroom teachers as much as possible”.

Mr Castronovo, Marion's French teacher, told me he did not take PAIs into consideration:

*“...on reçoit ça dans le PAI, sur une feuille de papier, et on te dit : « On est prié de faire ça ». Alors, on ne le fait pas parce que on n'en voit pas vraiment l'intérêt, on n'en voit pas la justification, et nous, on le perçoit comme une surcharge de travail, et donc voilà, on ne le fait pas.”<sup>41</sup>*

He said he did not find concessions useful to children and that he used his personal judgement to decide on what support a learner needed in class.

Mme Ponticelli, Sébastien and Charlotte's French teacher, said she did not have the necessary knowledge or expertise to apply recommendations made by PAIs:

*“Je ne peux pas adapter vraiment totalement l'enseignement à mes élèves dyslexiques parce que c'est un travail qui me prend trop de temps (...).”<sup>42</sup>*

She explained that she did not have time to apply all recommendations when teaching mixed ability classes.

Mme Coutelet, *orthophoniste*, shared that *patients* complained regularly about lack of support during lessons. Her recommendations were not followed through. She explained that there was a structure in place but no ground work.

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<sup>41</sup> “...we get that in the IEP on a sheet of paper and they say to you: 'We would like you to do this'. Well, we don't do it as we don't really see any interest in it. We, the teachers, don't see any justification in it, we just perceive it as extra work and so don't do it”.

<sup>42</sup> “I can't really completely adapt my teaching to pupils with dyslexia as it's work that takes me too much time”.

## 5.4.2 Wales: working with teachers, support staff and parents

As AENCO, I am responsible for writing educational plans for learners with dyslexia. External agencies are rarely involved. IEPs include educational targets and some suggestions of support. Teaching staff have access to them and I communicate with teachers by using the school's messaging system.

During the interview I mentioned that interventions put in place to support learners with dyslexia were not enough to help them access the curriculum:

*“Maybe we should be working with the teachers more but again there's a time... a work load issue here... for me... as well. I don't always have time to share everything. I've given out booklets to teachers so that they can... you know... read a bit about how to support children with dyslexia in the classroom.”*

A team of 19 Learning Support Assistants used to support learners with additional learning needs such as dyslexia in mainstream classrooms. However, insufficient funding recently led to seven members of staff being made redundant. Learning Support Assistants were able to differentiate work for learners during lessons. I have not been able to provide training to teachers since losing support staff.

Mrs Jones, George's English teacher, said she was not able to differentiate tasks for him; she thought he would benefit from a one-to-one learning support assistant:

*“I do feel is that um... it's really... it's more challenging um... teaching dyslexic children in a mixed ability environment. I find that a big challenge. (...) He needs that reinforcement. He needs that*

*encouragement um... you know. You can only get that when you've got somebody one-to-one with him (...) You know, with all the best will in the world um... you know the class teacher can't fight that. You can differentiate work but you know really ideally, George's would need to be differentiated and then differentiated again..."*

Mrs Roberts, Daniel's English teacher, mentioned not being able to give Daniel extra attention in class because of behavioural issues in the group. Too many children needed her help.

Support for learners with dyslexia is organised by the school. External agencies are rarely involved and dyslexia is not supported by the British National Health Service.

Mrs Evans, specialist dyslexia teacher, said she attended parents' evenings or annual reviews regularly. She said that working in the school also enabled her to discuss strategies with teachers.

Nevertheless, Daniel's mother mentioned that when attending parents' evening, she met a teacher who was not aware of her son's dyslexic tendencies. The teacher was not aware of his need for extra time to complete tasks.

In the two countries, issues regarding exchange of valuable information about learners were highlighted during interviews with parents and professionals. Lack of time to discuss teaching approaches or apply IEP/PAI recommendations came across as the main cause of support shortcomings. French teachers clearly said they did not apply recommendations given in the PAI. On the other hand, teachers in the Welsh school did not explicitly say whether they had read IEPs or not. I am their work colleague and I am also responsible for writing IEPs and ensuring their implementation so they therefore might not have felt

comfortable enough to comment. They did nevertheless mention the challenge and sometimes the impossibility of differentiating work for learners with dyslexia in their lessons.

### **5.4.3 Section summary**

This subsection highlights issues regarding partnership work between schools, health services and parents. This was mentioned by participants in both countries. It shows that the interaction between professionals appeared to be crucial to participants and is believed to interfere with learners' development.

## **5.5 Chapter summary**

To conclude, multiple sources of evidence and thematic data analysis enabled me to uncover existing similarities between learners' experiences in the two countries: all learners first experienced difficulties associated to their learning difference in primary school and have experienced further difficulties ever since. Most learners are making slow or satisfactory academic progress and are not confident in class situations. Sébastien was the only learner who seemed to have been able to build on his strengths. Another commonality between participants' perceptions was a concern around a lack of effective support networks and a need for a more child centred approach. Indeed, four of the five professionals interviewed in France mentioned poor partnership work. Three out of six British professionals highlighted similar issues. Both Head Teachers interviewed expressed reservations regarding full and effective implementation of government policies regarding learners with AEN in their schools.



The following diagram provides a non-linear perspective and illustration of the relationship between themes emerging from the data collected and analysed under the four previous sections. I chose to illustrate the main findings in a linear way to show how themes are related to one another and to illustrate differences between the two countries. Nevertheless, the findings from this study support Bronfenbrenner's assertions about the "the principle of interconnectedness applying not only within settings but with equal force and consequence to linkages between settings" (1979, p7), and indicate that relationships within learners' immediate environment and the external influences that affect that environment are equally as important. While discussing the work of Bronfenbrenner, developmental psychologist, Gray and Macblain (2014) highlight the importance of studying child development "in context" and taking into account the wider environmental influences upon the child's development (Gray & Macblain, 2014, p99). The study findings can be tied in with Bronfenbrenner's Bioecology Theory of Human Development (1979) as he looks not only at the relationship between the developing person and their immediate environment such as family and school, but also at how the relationships between these settings and the larger context affect the person or in this case, the learner.

In the following chapter, I discuss the main findings in relation to both my research questions and existing knowledge presented in the literature review (Chapter 2).

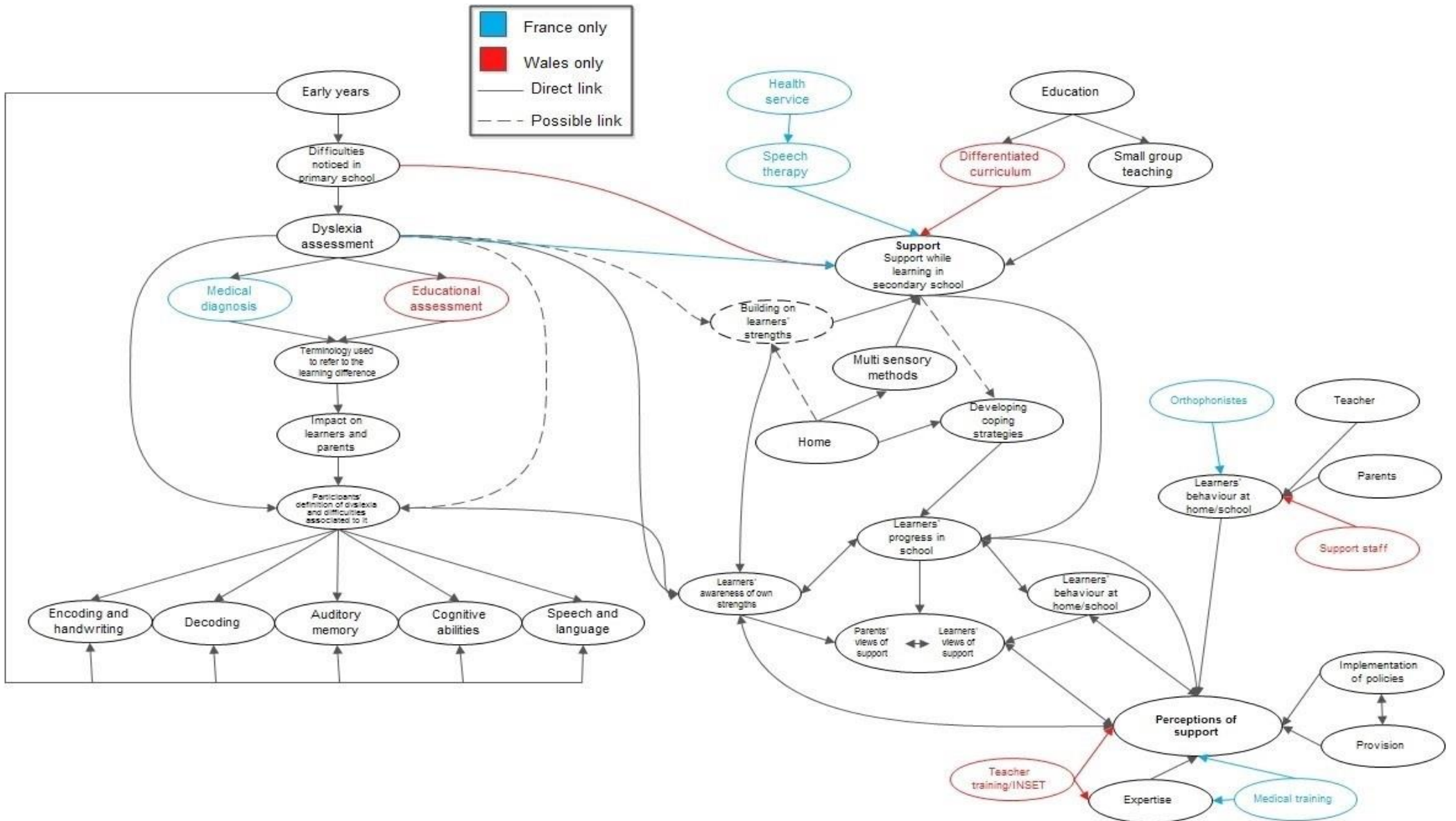


Figure 7: Summary of findings under sections 1, 2, 3 and 4: thematic interrelationship diagram

## **Chapter 6 Discussion**

The cross-cultural dimension of the study makes the analysis of findings pivot around some cultural differences which will provide new insights. The discussion in this chapter first addresses the three specific research sub questions; then the last section is an acknowledgment of the limitations of this work.

### **6.1 Impact of dyslexia on English speaking learners and French speaking learners**

This section aims at answering the following question: How does dyslexia affect English speaking learners and French speaking learners? The impact of dyslexia on French and British secondary school learners' written work and participants' definition of dyslexia are discussed.

#### **6.1.1 French and British learners' literacy acquisition**

Learners who took part in the study had difficulties acquiring the necessary skills needed to become competent readers and spellers in primary school. As mentioned in the literature review, Ziegler and Montant (2005) investigated the link between phonological development, learning to read, becoming a good reader and dyslexia.

The French language is said to present a strong level of consistency in terms of grapheme-phoneme correspondence yet shows very weak correspondence in terms of phoneme-grapheme association. Ziegler and Montant described the English language as opaque since it is irregular in both cases (grapheme-phoneme and phoneme-grapheme).

Ziegler and Montant's findings could thus have suggested that English speaking learners with dyslexia's literacy acquisition could have been affected by the irregularity of the language in comparison with other European learners with dyslexia. However, a study by Ziegler et al. (2003) demonstrated that there were more similarities than differences between learners with dyslexia coming from different European countries. Indeed, there would be more similarities in reading processes between learners with dyslexia from different countries than between "normal" readers. This idea is reinforced by the findings of this research project. In the two countries, learners noticed the first signs of dyslexia in primary school while learning to read and spell. Four learners realised they had difficulties in year 2, one learner in year 3 and one in year 4. Despite French orthography being more consistent than English, learners noticed first signs of dyslexia in primary school. Goswami (2002) explains that children with dyslexia who are learning to read languages with less consistent orthographies, "must develop recoding strategies at multiple grain sizes (whole word, onset, rhyme, phoneme), and these grain sizes are not easily accessible to them in either the phonology or the orthography because of their problems in phonological representation" (Goswami, 2002, p150). Thus the development of phonological recoding and reading acquisition would be expected to be slow in comparison with learners without a learning difference (Goswami, 2008; Hulme & Snowling, 2013).

### **6.1.2 The impact of dyslexia on French and British secondary school learners**

While British and French learners noticed first signs of dyslexia in primary school, the analysis of participants' work showed significant differences at

secondary school level. Indeed, the analysis of French participants' written work showed a wider range of language and was more accurate.

French participants' written work presented spelling mistakes but I could read most words without hesitation. Their difficulties did not seem severe. Learners' handwriting was neat and sentence structures generally accurate. They seemed to have problems meeting classroom expectations: Marion obviously had not read the books she was expected to have read for her French test; Sebastien needed instructions to be clarified during the observed lesson.

On the other hand, British learners' difficulties seemed more pronounced. I had great difficulty understanding what some had written either because of poor letter formation or inaccurate spellings.

This might suggest that learners with dyslexia notice first signs of the learning difference in primary school regardless of the level of consistency of their native language. Nevertheless, findings from this study suggest that native English speakers with dyslexia make slower progress than French native speakers; possibly because the English language is less transparent than French. Alternatively, the British learners in this study's progress might have been hindered by a more severe form of dyslexia.

“Dyslexia is individual:

This means that children with dyslexia may have slightly different characteristics from each other. These characteristics can have a varying impact on the child. In some children this may not be too noticeable, but in others it can be very obvious. Dyslexia therefore can be evident along a continuum, from mild to severe” (Reid, 2011, p16).

Indeed, difficulties British learners presented seemed more severe. Although this might be linked to the nature of each language's orthography, it could also be an illustration of individual differences in dyslexia (Ziegler et al 2008) or be a consequence of teaching approaches adopted in Welsh primary and secondary schools: indeed, as mentioned in the introduction and the literature review (See sections 1.1 and 2.1), the PISA 2009 showed that Wales's performance in reading was significantly below the OECD average. France outperformed Wales and showed a narrower distribution of scores indicating less spread of attainment in reading (Bradshaw et al. 2010, p18). The results of the PISA 2012 reading assessment also showed that France significantly outperformed Wales which could be linked to the nature of the English language's orthography or a consequence of teaching approaches adopted in Welsh schools.

Since 2011 education has become a national priority in Wales (OECD, 2014). The research project was interestingly carried out while Wales embarked on a significant school improvement reform. As mentioned in the Findings chapter (See 5.2.5.2.1), all French learners said they would like to have the opportunity to do more grammar in school. Considering the teaching of grammar is part of the French national curriculum (MEN, 2008, p1) and referred to by French participants as helpful (they would like to more of it), it could suggest that the teaching approaches adopted in Wales should focus on grammatical understanding of the English language. As Myhill et al. mentioned, the teaching of grammar has been left out of national curriculums in some Anglo-phone countries:

“In most Anglo-phone countries, the rigid exercises, parsing and grammar drills of the 1950s were abandoned in the progressive 1960s because of a dramatic loss of faith in the value of grammar amongst the profession. In particular, it was felt that teaching

grammar had no impact upon children and young people's competence in reading, writing and talking, and at best was a body of abstract linguistic knowledge" (Myhill et al. 2012, p29).

Myhill et al. provided strong evidence supporting that although the decontextualised teaching of grammar is not helpful in improving writing, a "writing curriculum which draws attention to the grammar of writing in an embedded and purposeful way at relevant points in the learning is a more positive way forward" (p32) to help learners develop their understanding of language. The researchers have also highlighted some of the broader issues related either to the teaching of grammar or the teaching of writing. Indeed, Myhill et al. highlighted that teachers taking part in their research project were not always comfortable teaching grammatical terminology. This raises another pedagogical question: "to what extent is the grammatical labelling necessary in helping young writers see the possibilities of language?" (Myhill et al. 2012, p37).

Findings from this research project supports Myhill et al.'s findings as learners exposed to the teaching of grammar perceived it as a helpful tool.

### **6.1.3 Participants' definitions mirrored the complexity around defining dyslexia**

As mentioned in the first chapter of the literature review, there is no unique and empirical definition but a plethora of them. Considering hypotheses around the causes of dyslexia gives rise to a great deal of controversy in the field (Elliott & Grigorenko, 2014; Ramus et al. 2013); the British Psychological Society (1999 updated 2005, p20) chose not to refer to the nature or origins of the learning difference in their adopted definition. On the other hand, the British Dyslexia Association adopted a definition which refers to a wider spectrum of difficulties. The traits that are mentioned help

make a difference between a poor reader or speller and a learner with dyslexia. However, the BDA Management Board has since decided to adopt Rose's definition (2009) as it is holistic (See chapter 2.2.3). Indeed, it presents the learning difference as a continuum. It is also said to affect certain skills and a range of abilities. It emphasises the lack of fluency in word reading and spelling but also refers to difficulties in aspects of language, phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speed as well as mental calculation and personal organisation.

The findings of this study mirror the complexity around defining dyslexia (Elliott & Grigorenko, 2014). When learners were asked to define dyslexia, they referred to cognitive abilities, difficulties with speech and language and auditory memory, but also encoding, decoding and handwriting. In the literature review, I mentioned that although it is widely accepted that dyslexia affects learners' phonological skills (Miles, 2006; Ramus et al. 2013), some researchers are still sceptical and made attempts at demonstrating that "phonology" has no precise definition or status and therefore should not have such a central position (Uppstad & Tønnessen, 2007). Some researchers (Hadzibeganovic et al. 2010) want to move away from Miles's and others' views on dyslexia being exclusively a result of a phonological deficit. They challenge the idea that written language is a reflection of spoken language (phonological processing). Considering that phonology can be defined as "the phonetics and phonemics of a language at a particular time" (Merriam-Webster, 2008, p931), language difficulties described by some of the participants suggest that the definition adopted by the British Dyslexia Association is the most pertinent. Indeed, it is holistic as it presents the learning difference as a continuum.

To conclude, first signs of dyslexia were noticed by all learners in primary school. Despite French being slightly more consistent than the English



language, all learners were slower than their peers regarding literacy skills acquisition.

When analysing learners' written work, it became apparent that British learners had more severe difficulties than French learners. As mentioned in the literature review (See chapter 2.4) the nature of a language's orthography can inhibit or facilitate the acquisition of literacy: this theory was supported by the findings, although individual differences in dyslexia could also explain why British learners had more severe difficulties (Reid, 2011; Ziegler et al. 2008).

When combining learners' definitions of dyslexia, it became apparent that the learning difference affected them in different ways. What learners described mirrored the definition adopted by the British Dyslexia Association as it defines dyslexia as a pattern of difficulties affecting several areas of learning, including organisational skills.

## **6.2 Forms of support in Wales and in France**

This section aims at answering the following question: How are learners with dyslexia supported in Wales and in France? Cultural differences regarding dyslexia assessment procedures and support strategies used at home and in school are discussed.

### **6.2.1 Cultural differences: perceptions of dyslexia and role of assessment**

Findings show that the two countries have very different approaches to assessing learners with dyslexic tendencies. As mentioned in the literature review, in France dyslexia is diagnosed by a practitioner working for the French National Health Service. In Britain, Educational Psychology

Services (Local Authority) can carry out free assessments. However, private and specialised support centres also perform assessments but charge for it. Five of the six learners taking part had received a medical diagnosis or were formally assessed for dyslexia by an Educational Psychologist. Daniel had not been assessed.

Since assessments are carried out by the National Health Service in France, the process is medicalised. As Mme Gaillard explained during her interview, the word *handicap* is used to refer to the learning difference. The British approach to assessment is different as it is mainly the responsibility of Education. It is therefore perceived as an educational matter as opposed to a medical one. British parents whose child had been assessed did not comment on the assessment process. On the other hand, all French parents shared their experiences and referred to the process as a rather negative experience.

In the literature review, I referred to Backhouse and Morris (2005, p7) who put forward that there is a need to identify not only the difficulties learners might encounter but also the strengths they have developed. The medicalisation of dyslexia assessments suggest that it is a “condition” that should be “treated”. Mme Coutelet, *orthophoniste*, explained that she carried out assessments using standardised tests. A referral has to be made by a General Practitioner for costs to be covered by *la Sécurité sociale*. It seems that different countries interpret learners’ needs within their own linguistic and cultural context (Smythe et al. 2005) which leads to differences in practices from one country to another.

In the two countries, assessments are carried out in order to address concerns and identify needs. Standardised tests are used to assess children. The outcomes of the assessments are the same in the two countries: assessments mainly aim at diagnosing difficulties rather than

at building on existing competencies. This explains why assessment could be referred to as a negative process which makes children focus on areas of difficulty or on what they cannot do as well as others. When asked about their feelings as regards the terminology used to refer to their difficulties, two out of the three French learners were not concerned about others using the term dyslexia to refer to their learning difference. The third learner said she did not mind the term being used as long as it was not associated to a lack of intelligence. In Wales, learners were comfortable with the term being used. I did not discuss the terminology used to refer to “dyslexia” further for fear of making children feel uncomfortable. Participants’ views regarding the use of the term “handicap” or “learning disability” could have been further investigated in France. Despite assessment processes being different in the two countries, outcomes were similar: children were officially told they had a learning difference. Although learners were too young to be asked to reflect on the advantages of assessment, the psychological impact of assessment appeared valuable. It enabled learners to dissociate their learning difference from cognitive impairment. One participant had not been formally assessed while taking part in the study. Daniel has now been assessed. Following the assessment, Daniel and his mother shook my hand and thanked me for facilitating the process. Both Daniel and his mother seemed relieved. The findings of the study clearly showed that the medicalisation of the assessment process was distressing for families but that the psychological benefits of knowing why learners had difficulties were considerable.

### **6.2.2 Advantages of a differentiated curriculum**

Findings showed that learners with dyslexia have access to more support in the Welsh school setting. On the other hand, British learners do not have access to speech therapy sessions. The French National Health Service supports learners and their families by covering the costs of the sessions. French learners were not keen on receiving support once in secondary school. Sessions took place after school. Parents and learners' viewpoints confirmed Oustric and Bellone's (2000, p199) concerns regarding the responsibilities of speech therapists in France. Indeed, in their article the authors discuss whether literacy difficulties' remediation should be described as therapeutic or pedagogical. Findings combined with the literature (Oustric and Bellone, 2000; Ramus, 2005) reveal ongoing disagreements between the French National Health Service, psychologists or psycho neurologists and educators around the remediation of dyslexia in France. By contrast, George, Daniel and Laura were not reluctant to attend support sessions in the Learning Zone in school. Findings showed more flexibility in the Welsh school. The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (WAG, 2002) provides a framework for the education of children with special or additional needs. The framework specifies some guidelines but it is mainly down to Local Educational Authorities and schools to interpret them. The National Curriculum can therefore occasionally be differentiated to suit the needs of a child. This greater flexibility meant that British learners with dyslexia followed a modified curriculum which suited learners better. The impact of the provision offered in the two countries will be discussed below.

### **6.2.3 Support strategies: the positive impact of a solution focused approach**

As previously discussed, assessments in the two countries are carried out in order to address concerns and identify needs. In the literature review, I referred to Backhouse and Morris (2005, p7) who put forward a need to identify not only the difficulties learners might encounter but also the strengths they have developed. The assessment process would then be a more positive experience. Similarly, Davis (2010) described dyslexia as being a gift (2010, p4). According to him, most learners with dyslexia naturally present eight basic abilities such as natural curiosity or striking imagination (2010, p5). Following assessments or “diagnoses”, parents involved in the study followed professionals’ advice on how to support their children. All parents mentioned using multi-sensory support strategies in order to help learners assimilate what was taught in school. Multi-sensory methods used by parents aimed at helping children memorise lesson contents, spellings or even at reinforcing mathematical concepts. However, despite parental support, learners participating in the study were making slow progress in academic subjects. As the focus of assessments in the two countries is on difficulties associated to dyslexia and that support provided at home aims at developing coping strategies, five out of six learners viewed the learning difference as a learning difficulty. Sébastien was the only participant who was keen on talking about his strengths. His mother mentioned she had read *The Gift of Dyslexia* (Davis, 2010). She believed that dyslexia was a gift. Sébastien therefore was aware of his strengths and came across as the most confident learner. According to Davis, having dyslexia doesn't make every person with dyslexia a genius, but he believes it is good for the self-esteem of all learners with dyslexia to know their minds work in exactly

the same way as the minds of great geniuses. This approach seemed to have a very positive effect on Sébastien.

Regardless of the forms of support put in place by schools or support strategies adopted by parents at home, school reports did not indicate that learners had made significant progress in academic subjects over the course of one academic year. However, Sébastien was keen on talking about his talents; he was creative. I believe the approach his parents took had a very positive impact on his self-esteem: he was told dyslexia was a gift or a natural ability, a talent and that it was something special that enhanced the individual.

To summarise, the medicalisation of dyslexia assessment in France had a negative impact on families. On the other hand, the outcomes of assessment were the same in the two countries: it enabled children and their parents to understand why certain aspects of education seemed so challenging. The format of support differed significantly from one country to the other. However, the French speech therapist and the British specialist teacher used similar teaching/therapeutic methods to support learners with dyslexia. The involvement of the Health Service in France meant learners had to attend support sessions in addition to their school timetable. The lack of flexibility of the French school system seemed to be a barrier to inclusion. It is however important to mention that some differentiated English and Maths lessons were available to learners with literacy difficulties in year 7.

Even though learners had access to support through the French National Health Service or the school, the support approach adopted by parents made a striking difference to one of the learners' behaviour in school.

## **6.3 Perceived effectiveness of support systems in place**

This section aims at answering the following question: What impact does the support offered in the two countries have on learners? Learners' behaviours at home and in school are discussed as well as the quality of the support offered in the two countries.

### **6.3.1 Learners' behaviour**

Nalavany et al. (2011) suggest that mainstream school experience for children with dyslexia could involve bullying issues and feelings of ostracism and stigmatisation due to having to leave the regular classroom to receive specialist tuition. This would unavoidably lead to feelings of low self-esteem. In France, learners with dyslexia are taught in mixed ability groups and follow the same timetable as learners without dyslexia (except in year 7 when they have access to small group Maths and French teaching). However, according to teachers interviewed, five out of the six learners taking part in the study were very withdrawn during lessons. One could therefore conclude that they were not confident enough to become more involved in lessons. My observations only confirmed what teachers had said about learners involved.

Although support systems are different, learners' behaviour in school was overall similar. When I asked parents to describe their children's personalities, they painted a different picture to the one painted by teachers. The only learner who was described as keen and active in lessons was Sébastien. This leads to a discussion around the quality of the support provided in the two countries but also stresses the benefits of the solution focused approach adopted by Sébastien's parents.

## **6.3.2 Perceived quality of support offered in the two countries**

In this section the expertise of the specialists in charge of supporting learners is discussed as well as the quality and perceptions of support offered in the two countries.

### **6.3.2.1 Level of expertise of *orthophoniste* and specialist teacher**

Findings suggest that the French speech therapist had higher education qualifications than the British specialist teacher. Although learners overall enjoyed attending support sessions in the Welsh school, their academic progress was not significant. Teachers' comments on French school reports also indicated slow progress. The comparison drawn between learners regarding academic progress relied on teachers' comments. The use of standardised tests to assess and compare learners' reading comprehension or spelling skills and progress would have been a more reliable measure of progress. Considering The British Dyslexia Association's adopted definition (2009) presents the learning difference as a continuum, expected outcomes of interventions put in place should be discussed with parents. The study showed that the medical training the speech therapist had undergone did not lead to children with dyslexia making faster progress than British learners. I mentioned that British learners' difficulties with writing seemed more severe but probably caused by the opacity of their native language.

Parents' views on the support offered to their children were rather diverse. A lack of communication between the management team and school teachers was highlighted by French parents. The quality of the specialist support offered in Wales was not criticised by parents. Although the



absence of criticism may be due to my position in the school, it could also suggest that medical training is not a necessity. On the other hand, inconsistencies and poor communication were highlighted by professionals and parents in the two countries. The lack of communication between professionals and parents prove there is a need for a more learner centred approach. The interaction between adults involved in supporting learners is crucial to their development. While writing the Findings chapter, I realised that issues relating to lack of communication were similar in both countries and that more time needed to be made for professionals to exchange information to support learners' development.

#### **6.3.2.2 Inconsistencies highlighted related to workload issues**

In the two countries, issues regarding exchange of valuable information about learners were highlighted during interviews with parents and professionals. Lack of time to discuss teaching approaches or apply IEP/PAI recommendations came across as the main cause of support shortcomings. Participants were concerned about a lack of effective support networks. Indeed, four of the five professionals interviewed in France mentioned poor partnership work. Three out of six British professionals highlighted similar issues. Both Head Teachers interviewed expressed reservations regarding full and effective implementation of government policies regarding learners with AEN in their schools. Findings imply that issues regarding excessive workload prevent schools from supporting learners with dyslexia as effectively as required by the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (WAG, 2002) and recommended by Ringard's report (Ringard, 2000). However, child development should be supported by enabling professionals and families

to meet: this was highlighted by Bronfenbrenner's theory of child development (1979). Bronfenbrenner was an American developmental psychologist and researcher, who developed a theory to explain how everything in a child and the child's environment affects how a child grows and develops. This research project's findings support Bronfenbrenner's ideology and his theory will be used as a framework to outline implications of the study.

### **6.3.2.3 Continuous professional development of teachers**

All teachers interviewed said they did not feel knowledgeable enough due to lack of training.

The French Head Teacher organised training sessions for teachers in school as recommended by Ringard's report (2000). Indeed, the report makes five recommendations for improvement of educational provision. These recommendations relate to developing pre-school screening tests, improving support for children and teenagers, creating opportunities for teachers' professional development and strengthening partnerships between medical care and education. The French Head Teacher provided opportunities for teachers to gain an understanding of the learning difference. Teachers were also given practical advice on how to support learners in the classroom. However, French teachers interviewed still felt they could not support learners with dyslexia effectively in a mainstream classroom.

The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (WAG, 2002) states that "all teachers are teachers of special educational needs" (p10). It also recommends that teachers plan their lessons so that the needs of all

learners are met. Estyn highlighted issues regarding differentiation in schools in Wales:

“However, provision is generally not differentiated or targeted carefully enough to meet the needs of these learners” (Estyn, 2011, p13).

Teachers are expected to differentiate work so that all learners can access tasks set in class. However, Estyn found that it is not done consistently across Welsh schools.

Teachers are responsible for learners with dyslexia’s progress (WAG, 2002). In the Welsh school’s Improvement Plan there is no reference to organising training for teachers. The plan focuses on providing opportunities for more able learners to succeed and reach their potential.

The departmental improvement plan of the additional educational needs department refers to a need for further training of school staff.

Findings showed no clear evidence that training of teachers impacted on the quality of support in the mainstream classroom: class size seemed to be the barrier to personalised teaching.

## **6.4 Limitations of the study**

### **6.4.1 Sample size**

The advantage of a case study approach lies in its potential “to gain a rich, detailed understanding of the case by examining aspects of it in detail” (Thomas, 2009, p115). In addition, Yin defines a case study as a means to understand “a real life phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context” (2009, p18). This potential is best achieved by restricting the

study to one or a few cases as “you are not studying this case in order to understand others” (Thomas, 2009, p115) but to understand the case in itself. Thus, a possible shortcoming of a case study is its purported representativeness of the larger population (Yin, 2009, p15).

The small sample of learners selected for the study emphasises depth over breadth. The views of six learners from two secondary schools clearly cannot be taken as representing views of all learners with dyslexia in all secondary schools in Wales and in France. However, the study aims at retaining “the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life events” (Yin, 2009, p4) through thick (Thomas, 2009, p202) and analytical description. Indeed, the research project aims at gaining an insight into the schooling experience of six children who have dyslexic tendencies and not to generalise from a sample to a larger population.

#### **6.4.2 The insider researcher**

Another potential limitation to my study could have been my professional status as I work in one of the schools selected. While collecting data in this particular setting, participants might have been reluctant to share their views. My role in the school consists in coordinating provision for learners with additional educational needs. Part of my responsibilities involves organising support for learners with dyslexia and liaising with their families. Mercer (2007) refers to this approach as “insider research” since the researcher is well-known to most participants. By contrast, at the French school, my research was of a much less “intimate” nature as participants did not know me (Mercer, 2007, p6). British participants might have felt that “pragmatism may outweigh candour” (Mercer, 2007, p14) when preparing for the interviews (participants were given interview questions in advance). In other words, colleagues, learners and parents

could have been concerned with maintaining a positive relationship with me and have chosen to say what they thought I wanted to hear. However, I chose to use semi structured interviews so that I could “go off script” and adapt questions, prompts and probes to participants’ reactions. In order to make participants comfortable, I nodded or showed I understood their point of view in order to encourage them to be genuine. Mercer highlights that structured interviews can make both parties feel constricted:

“(…) a semi-structured approach is usually preferred, although few authors define exactly how much digression from the standardised prompt is considered desirable. Smith (1995, p15), for example, acknowledges that a more interactive/conversational approach may yield more extensive data, and therefore accepts a certain amount of digression and reordering of questions in the interests of establishing rapport” (Mercer, 2007, p17-18).

I felt that interacting with participants, without sharing my own view point, helped to develop trust. Being an “insider researcher” did not affect participants’ answers. For example, Daniel’s teacher expressed her views very clearly:

*“As like Daniel with his, his needs. He needs so much more help than he is getting.”*

She felt he was not receiving enough support in school and despite my being the AENCO she was able to offer criticism. I told participants that I was not looking for specific answers and I believe they felt they could share their views even if it involved pointing at shortcomings in AEN provision in school; even though they may have been guarded or not so vociferous.

I had to become a participant to my own study as I was promoted to the position of Additional Educational Needs Coordinator while carrying out the study. During the data collection stage, issues relating to role duality were addressed by asking one of my colleagues to interview me and to help me reflect on my own answers. I was so concerned about the potential bias of my answers that I was nervous during the process. My colleague suggested I was quite negative and self-critical while commenting on my own professional performance.

I also had to interview my Head Teacher and was nervous during the process as he referred to the need for me or the LA to organise training for members of staff. The fact that he brought up my responsibilities with regards to staff training was unsettling but I had to avoid showing emotion by “wearing my research hat” (Alderson & Morrow, 2011, p6).

Although being an “insider researcher” did not seem to affect the quality of participants’ response; having to analyse my own answers proved to be a challenge. In an attempt at being objective, I might have been too critical of the work we do, as a school, and of the support provided by the Local Authority. Nevertheless, the use of multiple data sources and discussing my own interview answers with my colleague helped maximise the research rigor. There were no overwhelming disadvantages to being an insider in Wales or an outsider in France:

“Whether the researcher is an outsider or insider, there are various issues one should pay attention to for valid data. Ethical considerations must be taken into account, with the benefits outweighing the displacement of subjects, setting and researcher” (Unluer, 2012, p10).

Overall, potential ethical issues were addressed at the planning stage and during the data collection process (3.3.4.1). The advantages of being an

insider researcher outweighed the potential disadvantages discussed in the Methodology chapter (3.3.4). For example, “knowing the formal and informal power structure, and obtaining permission to conduct the research, to interview, and to get access to records, and documents easily” (Unluer, 2012, p5) facilitated the research process.

### **6.4.3 Socio economic profile of the schools’ catchment areas**

The two schools learners attend have very contrasting catchment areas. Learners selected to take part in the study share similar characteristics. They were selected according to their age and learning differences. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, participants were not selected for their representativeness. The sample is purposive (Cohen et al., 2007, p114) as participants were selected in relation to the needs of the study.

In France, the Head Teacher described his establishment’s catchment area as affluent and said it was the wealthiest in the “*département*”:

*“L’établissement se trouve dans un secteur extrêmement favorisé. On est considéré comme un des collèges les plus favorisés des Bouches du Rhône.”<sup>43</sup>*

There are 96 *départements* in France (INSEE, 2014). In the administrative division of the country, the *département* is the second largest unit of local government after the *région*. Mme Gaillard, CPE, commented on how low the percentage of learners entitled to free school meals (7.9%) was. Mr Dupont, Head Teacher, explained that secondary schools are classified

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<sup>43</sup> The school is in an extremely privileged area. It is considered one of the most privileged in the whole of the Bouches du Rhône department.

in relation to parents' professions, the percentage of learners benefiting from free school meals and learners' performance on evaluation tests taken in year 7. These tests are similar to Cognitive Abilities Tests 3 (GL Assessments, 2009). According to this classification, the school has the wealthiest catchment area in the *département*.

According to the Welsh school's self-evaluation document 2012/13, 24% of learners enrolled were eligible for free school meals. Senior Leadership Teams in Welsh secondary schools write self-evaluation documents yearly to review progress made during the academic year. Learners eligible for free school meals come from low income families. Mr Smith, Head Teacher, commented on his establishment's catchment area:

*“Um... there's pockets of high deprivation. (...) and our free school meals mirror that because it's around 24% of our learners that take free school meals and that's high; that's higher than the national average, which I think is around 16%.”*

He also added that the school's percentage of learners eligible for free school meals was the highest in the county.

Differences between the two schools' catchment areas are significant although Mr Smith and Mme Gaillard did not believe there was a link between socio economic background and occurrence of dyslexia. The socio economic dynamics of the schools were referred to several times during the interviews and I was concerned about potential insufficient “equivalence of the comparison situations” (Thomas, 2009, p138). However, I had contacted Bob Adamson, a leading author in the field of comparative education, while designing my project and his expertise in educational research enabled me to validate my design and participant selection criteria. The analysis focused on the learners selected for the



study. Their socio economic backgrounds were never investigated, parents were not asked about their profession or level of education.

## **6.5 Chapter summary**

To conclude, learners' behaviour in school suggested that neither French nor Welsh support systems facilitated progress in learning in the mainstream classroom. However, it was noted that British learners appreciated the benefits of a modified curriculum and the opportunity to work in small groups. French learners mentioned they found the teaching of grammatical concepts helpful as it gave them a better understanding of language therefore making written tasks more accessible.

Both speech therapist and specialist teacher used multi-sensory teaching strategies and referred to the importance of phonic work and of helping learners develop reading comprehension skills. The level of expertise of specialists involved was not raised as an issue by parents. On the other hand, a lack of communication between professionals involved in teaching or supporting learners was highlighted by participants. This suggests that support systems in place might have a greater impact on learners' academic progress if teachers, therapists (France), school management teams and parents worked in a partnership.

Since findings from this research project highlighted the importance of a learner centred approach and the need for families and professionals to work together, it makes sense to investigate how findings tie in with theoretical perspectives for research in human development. The outcome of the discussion ties in with the work of Bronfenbrenner, as he argues that in order to understand human/child development, one must consider the entire ecological system in which a child develops. This

system is composed of five socially organised subsystems that help support and guide child development. Bronfenbrenner's theory of ecological models of human development (1979) will be discussed and used as a framework to outline implications of the study.

## **Chapter 7 Implications, recommendations and conclusions**

This chapter opens with a summary of the main findings followed by an outline of the implications and recommendations which emerged from the findings and discussion chapters.

### **7.1 Summary of main findings**

Despite French being slightly more consistent than the English language (Ziegler et al. 1996, p504), all learners were slower than their peers regarding literacy skills acquisition in primary school. Analyses of learners' written work showed British learners had more severe difficulties than French learners. This might be linked to the nature of each language's orthography; indeed, the opacity of a language such as English can inhibit the acquisition of literacy. Alternatively, British learners' progress might have been hindered by a more severe form of dyslexia or a different approach to the teaching of literacy skills, which excludes a focus on grammatical concepts.

The medicalisation of dyslexia assessment in France had a negative impact on learners and their families. Nevertheless, assessment enabled all learners and their families to understand why their difficulties were persistent. The format of support differed significantly from one country to the other. The lack of flexibility of the French school system seemed to be a barrier to inclusion. It is however important to mention that some differentiated English and Maths lessons were available to learners with literacy difficulties in year 7.

The support approach adopted by parents made a striking difference to one of the learners' behaviour in school: Sébastien was more confident and aware of his strengths.

French learners with dyslexia were taught in mixed ability groups and therefore were often amongst the “weakest” learners in their class in academic subjects. The Welsh setting system meant that work was set according to learners' ability in the subject although even further differentiation would have been needed for George, Daniel and Laura to access the work set. The setting and assessment systems in Wales mean that they are working towards what teachers think they are capable of achieving in their subject (teachers' predicted target levels). The French approach to evaluation of learners' progress prevents learners with learning differences, like dyslexia, from feeling successful, especially in academic subjects. Although it was not possible to compare progress as such, it was obvious that British learners appreciated the benefits of a modified curriculum and the opportunity to work in small groups either in the learning zone or when taught in lower sets.

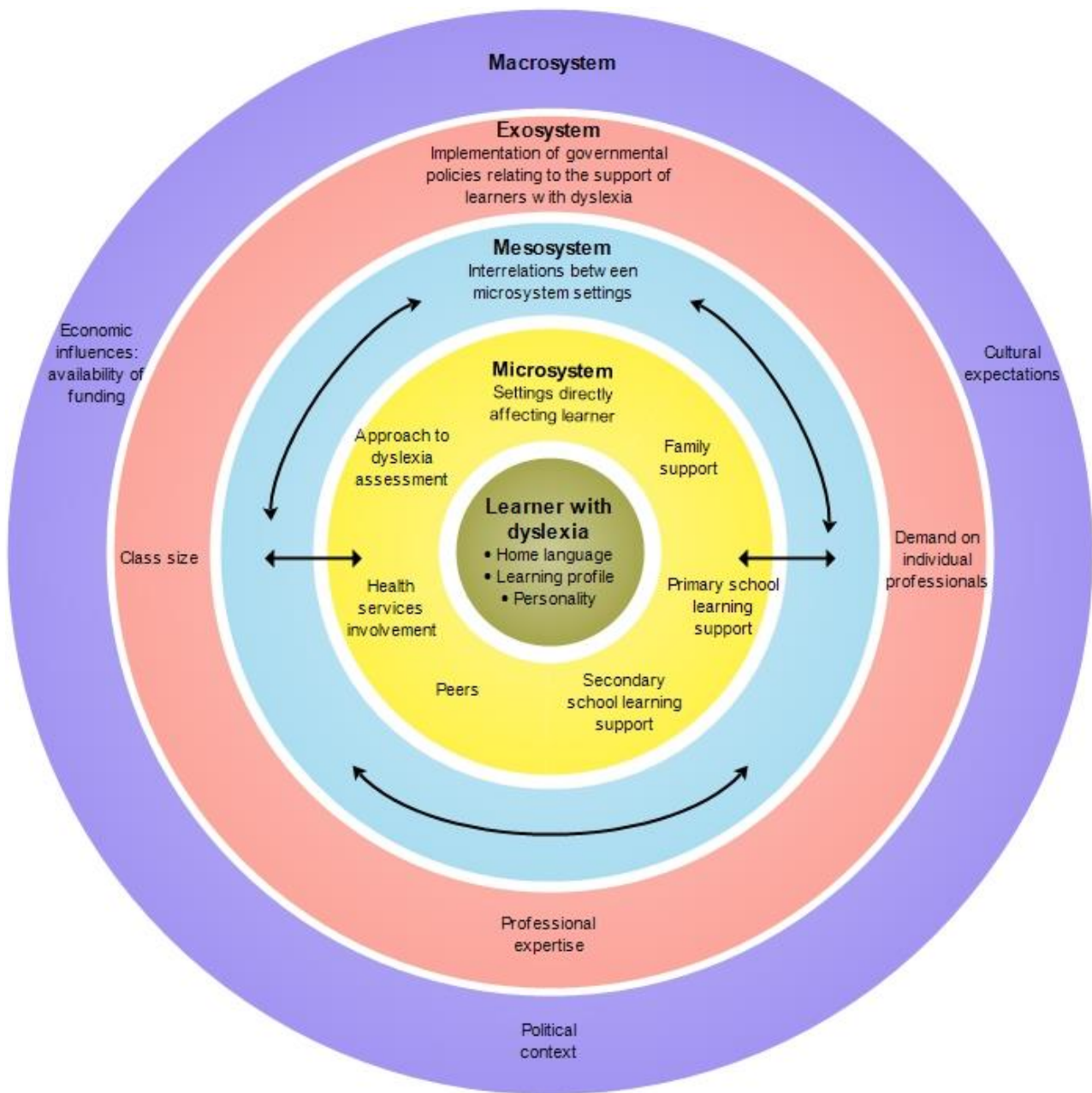
## **7.2 Implications and recommendations**

When planning this research project, I expected learners' progress would be solely influenced by support provided by education or health services. I expected the cross-cultural element of the study to reveal that one approach to support was more beneficial to children than the other. However, a much more complex picture emerged from the findings of this study. As mentioned in the discussion chapter, support systems in France and in Wales are different but learners did not appear to be making significant progress in either of the two countries. A lack of communication

between professionals and families was identified as a real issue and possibly the main reason why learners were not confident in a mainstream classroom.

In order to outline the implications of the study, I will use Bronfenbrenner's model as a framework. Indeed, using Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model (1979) seems pertinent to illustrate the implications of this research project as findings suggest a need for a more learner centred approach to support. The bio-ecological model can therefore be used as a structure to base recommendations on.

Bronfenbrenner's theory considers the impact of the complex relationships that form children's environment on their development. The theory suggests that a child's development is a product of a variety of critical dimensions including environment, process, time, and the child's personal attributes. The theory considers a child's setting and the way in which individual and external forces interact to influence development. It is particularly relevant as it supports findings from this study and places an emphasis on the importance of adopting a child centred approach when supporting learners with dyslexia. The following figure provides a clear picture of how the framework can support findings and suggest implications of this study:



**Figure 8: A schematic diagram of the levels of the environment impacting on learners with dyslexia, adapted from Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979)**

The use of Bronfenbrenner's theory highlights the complexity of the relationships forming each learner's environment. The learner's microsystem consists of settings or support systems which influence him/her directly. The interrelations between support systems and settings are part of the mesosystem. The exosystem represents events which might influence a learner's development. In this case, the inconsistency in implementing governmental policies has a direct influence on learners' progress. Finally, the macrosystem is viewed as "a manifestation of overarching patterns of ideology and organisation of the social institutions common to a particular culture or subculture" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p8). In this case, the economy and cultural expectations.

### **7.2.1 Microsystem: the impact of assessment procedures and support available on the developing learner**

While British and French learners noticed first signs of dyslexia in primary school, the analysis of participants' work showed significant differences at secondary school level. This suggests that learners with dyslexia notice the first signs of the learning difference in primary school regardless of the level of consistency of their native language. Nevertheless, native English speakers with dyslexia made slower progress than French native speakers, possibly because the English language is less transparent than French. On the other hand, it could also imply that British learners were affected by a more severe form of dyslexia. The former comment suggests that a learner assessed with dyslexia in France might not have been in Wales. This highlights a problem of agreement relating to assessment criteria across both cultures.

In the two countries, assessments are carried out in order to address concerns and identify needs. When learners were asked to define

dyslexia, they referred to cognitive abilities, difficulties with speech and language and auditory memory, but also encoding, decoding and handwriting. They were affected by dyslexia in different ways. The complexity surrounding defining dyslexia makes adopting a common set of European assessment criteria, for example, challenging. Dyslexia affects learners in various ways and it should therefore be reflected in the assessment tools used. Unfortunately for practitioners, there is no international assessment of dyslexia that would enable them to assess individuals from any language background. If such a test were to be developed in the future it could be an extremely valuable tool.

Assessments mainly aim at diagnosing difficulties rather than at building on existing competencies. This approach to assessment seemed to have an impact on learners as they experienced difficulties when asked to identify their strengths. The findings of the study clearly showed that the medicalisation of the assessment process, in France, was distressing for families but that the psychological benefits of knowing why learners had difficulties were considerable. This highlights the need for assessment to be a more positive experience. Learners need to be made aware of their strengths so that they can build on them.

The greater flexibility of the Welsh system suited learners better; the National Curriculum can occasionally be differentiated to suit the needs of a child. Modifying learners' timetables so that they can focus on building on their own strengths could contribute towards helping them build a more positive self-image.

Although all learners received support from their parents, learners participating in the study were not making significant progress in school.



As the focus of assessments in the two countries is on difficulties associated to dyslexia and that support provided at home mainly addressed areas of difficulty, five out of six learners viewed the learning difference as a learning disability. Most learners focused on their difficulties rather than on building on their strong points. Sébastien was the only participant who was keen on talking about his strengths. His mother mentioned she had read *The Gift of Dyslexia* (Davis, 2010). She believed that dyslexia was a gift. Sébastien was therefore aware of his strengths and came across as the most confident learner. Regardless of the forms of support put in place by schools or support strategies adopted by parents at home, school reports did not indicate that learners had made significant progress in academic subjects over the course of one academic year. However, Sébastien was keen on talking about his talents and had a clear idea of what he wanted to do when leaving school.

#### Recommendations:

- a. Reports issued by professionals carrying out assessments should highlight areas of strengths so that learners can build on them.
- b. In France, greater flexibility must be allowed regarding adapting the National Curriculum to the needs of a child.
- c. Approaches to supporting learners with dyslexia should not focus solely on addressing areas of difficulties. Learners would benefit from learning how to build on their strengths.

## **7.2.2 Mesosystem: interrelations between microsystem settings**

In the two countries, issues regarding exchange of valuable information about learners were highlighted during interviews with parents and professionals. Mesosystem is defined as “a set of interrelations between two or more settings in which the developing person becomes an active participant” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p209). Given that the learner engages in activities at home, in school, with peers and with a speech therapist (France only), the connections between settings are important in terms of their impact on learners’ development. Comments relating to poor partnership work imply that learners’ do not progress as well when settings in which they participate do not work together.

### Recommendations:

- a. Systems should be put in place so that professionals involved in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia can exchange valuable information and work together. This recommendation should be partly addressed by the new SEN Code of Practice (DFE & DOH, 2014) which will be implemented in England from the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014. The Welsh Government have issued proposals for legislative changes in relation to ALN which should be implemented in 2016/17 (WG, 2014). Although the proposed changes in England and Wales are different, both new Codes of Practice promote or will promote more cooperation between different professionals.
- b. Workload issues of professionals involved in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia should be discussed with

employers and necessary time should be made available in the interest of all learners.

### **7.2.3 Exosystem: implementation of government policies, expertise and training of professionals**

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979, p237), an exosystem consists of one or more settings “that do not involve the developing person as an active participant”. Although the implementation of policies and the expertise of professionals do not directly involve learners with dyslexia, they are affected by both aspects. The study showed that the medical training the speech therapist had undergone did not lead to children with dyslexia making faster progress than British learners. This suggests that medical training is not necessary and that support can be provided by qualified specialist teachers or through mainstream class teaching by differentiating work set.

Both Head Teachers interviewed expressed reservations regarding full and effective implementation of government policies regarding learners with AEN in their schools. Findings imply that issues regarding excessive workload prevent schools from supporting learners with dyslexia as effectively as required by the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (WAG, 2002) and recommended by Ringard (2000). This implies that expectations imposed by policies are unrealistic and that school staff face workload issues.

All teachers interviewed said they did not feel knowledgeable enough due to lack of training. Teachers felt that their lack of expertise prevented them from supporting learners in the mainstream classroom. Findings showed no clear evidence that training of teachers impacted on the quality of

support in the mainstream classroom: teachers still felt that they could not differentiate work due to class sizes.

#### Recommendations:

- a. French secondary school teachers should be given the opportunity to specialise in the teaching of learners with dyslexia so that support can be offered by the school rather than the Health Service. The involvement of the Health Service suggests dyslexia is a *handicap* or an illness that can be cured rather than a learning difference which one must learn to adapt to by developing coping strategies.
- b. Workload issues of professionals involved in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia should be discussed with employers and necessary time should be made available in the interest of all learners.
- c. Learner-teacher ratio is a barrier to effective classroom teaching. Learners with dyslexia needing a differentiated teaching approach should be taught in small groups.

### **7.2.4 Macrosystem: cultural expectations and political context**

This level encompasses the broader political and cultural context in which education is embedded. Although the research project was not concerned about cultural expectations or the political context, these might shed light on some findings.

French speaking learners mentioned wanting more help with assimilating grammatical concepts. On the other hand, British learners did not mention

grammar at all. This suggests that teaching methods in France and Wales are different. French learners found the teaching of grammar helpful, implying it might help them grasp certain linguistic concepts and retain information. Understanding how a language works might make memorising spellings easier than visualising words or memorising sound patterns.

The British Head Teacher referred to lack of funding. Although French schools are not as autonomous in terms of managing their own budget, the economic situation across Europe suggests that governments are concerned with expenditure and keen on saving money. Although the Code of Practice (WAG, 2002) and Ringard's report (2000) outline schools' responsibilities relating to educating learners with additional educational needs, financing interventions and enabling members of staff to meet and exchange information might prove to be difficult.

#### Recommendations:

- a. Help learners develop their understanding of language by teaching relevant grammar rules.
- b. Review allocation of funds so that learners with dyslexia can be supported effectively and so that schools can successfully implement governmental policies.

### **7.3 Further studies**

Bronfenbrenner's theory focuses on human development and is primarily concerned with "the phenomenon of development" (2005, p58). This suggests that it would be pertinent to observe the development of learners

over time as each learner's environment changes and the interaction between the learner and his/her environment evolves.

This research project provides an insight into six learners' experiences at one moment in time. A longitudinal study would enable researchers to see how each learner responds to interaction between home, school and health service (France) over time. Moreover, I previously referred to primary school teaching methods: a longitudinal case study could take into consideration teaching approaches to reading and writing in primary schools in Wales and in France. It would be interesting to see if there is a link between primary school teaching approach and performance in secondary school.

Another discussion point was the role of assessment and the positive impact of a solution focused approach on the learner. Indeed, one of the recommendations involved helping learners build on their strengths by changing the role of assessment. Assessing learners to highlight areas of difficulties is as important as highlighting areas of strength. Sébastien responded positively to his parents' approach: they chose to support their son by helping him to identify his strengths. Findings from this study revealed the positive impact this approach had on the learner (Sébastien). New assessment tools and support interventions in school (or health service) could be developed so that learners can be guided on how to build on their strengths. The impact of such an approach on the learners' development could be observed over time in future studies.

## 7.4 Conclusion

Findings from this study showed that dyslexia affected learners in different ways. The analysis of participants' views combined with the observation of their written work showed that the learning difference was "evident along a continuum from mild to severe" (Reid, 2011, p16). Participants' comments regarding speed of information processing and preferred learning strategies show dyslexia is a learning difference (Reid, 2011, p10). While achieving "a clear, scientific, and consensual understanding" (Elliott & Grigorenko, 2014, p38) of dyslexia remains problematic, what French and British learners described mirrored the definitions adopted by Rose (2009) and the British Dyslexia Association (2009) as dyslexia is referred to as a pattern of difficulties affecting several areas of learning, including organisational skills.

Learners' observed behaviour overall indicated unhappiness and disengagement which suggested that neither French nor Welsh support systems were entirely successful in facilitating progress in learning in the mainstream classroom. The study highlighted that the support systems in both Wales and France have advantages and disadvantages.

It was indeed noted that British learners appreciated the benefits of a modified curriculum and the opportunity to work in small groups. French learners mentioned they found the teaching of grammatical concepts helpful as it gave them a better understanding of language therefore making written tasks more accessible. The flexibility of the Welsh National Curriculum facilitated the implementation of support sessions which were perceived as a relief to participants. Small group provision was perceived as helpful as learners having issues with speed of processing could work at their own pace. Rose and the BDA (2009) mentioned that learners with dyslexia often develop strengths in problem solving but struggle with

reading and spelling accuracy: this could explain why the French linguistic teaching approach was identified as helpful. The teaching of grammar helped learners develop their understanding of language by using problem solving skills (Myhill et al. 2012). This reinforces the idea that dyslexia is a learning difference in how information is processed as well as in speed and style of processing (Reid, 2001, p9).

Disadvantages highlighted by participants in the two countries regarded inconsistent implementation of governmental policies as well as poor communication between families and professionals involved in supporting learners.

The theoretical perspective on human development proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1979, 2005) should be further explored and possibly used as a framework for understanding how learners with dyslexia develop. This approach has particular potential for encouraging the implementation of more holistic forms of support which involve learners' family and school working in partnership. In a highly literate world, poor reading and spelling pose a threat to academic achievement. Yet, adopting a well-coordinated approach to supporting children with a learning difference such as dyslexia could help them develop coping strategies which involve building on their own strengths.



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## Research Study Title:

Perceptions of support for learners with dyslexia in two secondary schools:  
an Anglo-French analysis and comparison.

## AENCO INFORMATION SHEET

### 1. Invitation:

You are invited to take part in a qualitative research study that will focus on the experiences of secondary pupils with dyslexia in two different countries. This study is an exploratory study (non-intervention) using a case study approach.

Before you decide if you would like to take part please take time to read the following information carefully. If you would like any aspect of the study to be clarified or if you would like more information please feel free to contact the researcher, contact details are provided at the end of this information sheet.

Thank you for reading this.

### 2. What is the purpose of the Study?

The purpose of the project is to gain an insight into the schooling experience of children assessed as having dyslexic tendencies.

The study has three main objectives:

1. Gain an insight into the schooling experience of children assessed as having dyslexic tendencies from the perspective of the children themselves, their parents and the school staff.
2. Give the reader a window on British cultural expectations by these being seen against the backdrop of the expectations and practices of another country (France).
3. Offer a new perspective on how to support learners with dyslexia.

### 3. Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen to participate in this study because of your role and responsibilities in relation to learners with dyslexia within the school.



#### **4. Do I have to take part?**

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

#### **5. What will happen to me if I take part?**

You will be invited to take part in an interview with the researcher, Anna McCormack-Colbert. She will ask you questions in relation to your experiences in ensuring support for learners with dyslexia. The interview should last about 30 minutes. The interview will be recorded.

You may request that the recorder be switched off at any time in which case notes will be taken by the researcher. You will be one of two Additional Educational Needs Coordinators to be interviewed.

#### **6. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

There are no foreseeable disadvantages to taking part in this study. The timing of the interview will be discussed with you to cause the least inconvenience.

#### **7. What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

It is anticipated that the results of this study will contribute to offering a new perspective on how to support learners with dyslexia. In addition, the analysis is expected to be more meaningful and give the reader a window on British cultural expectations by these being seen against the backdrop of the expectations and practices of another country (France).

#### **8. Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?**

All information which is collected during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. Only the researcher and her supervisors will have access to the raw data. Anonymity will be ensured as far as possible. In written reports produced as a result of the study, the answers given by participants will not be attributable to them by name, nor will the educational establishment be identified by name. Your answers will not be shared with others without your permission.

#### **9. Who has reviewed the study?**

The following ethics committee has reviewed this study: The Bangor University Ethics Task Group.



**10. What will happen to the results of the research study?**

The results of this study will be submitted in a thesis to meet the requirements of an EdD at Bangor University and could be published as a journal article. The results of this study will be made available to participants by the researcher if they request it.

**11. Who is organising and funding the research?**

The researcher is Anna McCormack-Colbert, who is currently registered as a part time EdD student at Bangor University. It is a self-funded research project.

Anna is employed as a Modern Foreign Language teacher and a Head of Year in a secondary school. She may be contacted at: c/o Ms Janet Thomas (EdD administrator) The School of Education and Lifelong Learning, Normal Site, Holyhead Road, Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 2PZ, United Kingdom. Telephone: +44 (0)1248 383275. Email:annamack13@yahoo.fr.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Anna McCormack-Colbert.



**Research Study Title:**

Perceptions of support for learners with dyslexia in two secondary schools:  
an Anglo-French analysis and comparison.

**PARENT AND CARER INFORMATION SHEET**

**1. Invitation:**

You are invited to take part in a study that will focus on the experiences of secondary school pupils with dyslexia in two different countries. This study is using a case study approach.

Before you decide if you would like to take part please take time to read the following information carefully. If you would like more information please feel free to contact me. (Contact details are provided at the end of this information sheet.)

Thank you for reading this.

**2. What is the purpose of the Study?**

The purpose of the project is to gain an insight into the schooling experience of children assessed as having dyslexic tendencies.

As someone who grew up in France, I couldn't help noticing how different the systems for supporting learners with dyslexia are and I am interested in listening to your point of view and your experience.

**3. Why have I been chosen?**

You have been chosen to participate in this study because of your experience in supporting and parenting a child with dyslexia.



#### **4. Do I have to take part?**

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

#### **5. What will happen to me if I take part?**

You will be invited to take part in an interview. I will ask you questions in relation to your experiences in having a child with dyslexic tendencies in the British school system. The interview should last about 30 minutes. The interview will be recorded.

You may request that the recorder be switched off at any time in which case notes will be taken by the researcher.

#### **6. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

There are no anticipated disadvantages for taking part in this study. The timing of the interview will be discussed with you to cause the least inconvenience.

#### **7. What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

I hope that the results of this study will contribute to offering a new perspective on how to support learners with dyslexia. In addition, the analysis is expected to be more meaningful and give the reader a window on British cultural expectations by these being seen against the backdrop of the expectations and practices of another country (France).

#### **8. Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?**

All information which is collected during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. My supervisors and I will be the only people who will have access to the raw data. Anonymity will be ensured as far as possible. In written reports produced as a result of the study, your answers will not be attributable to you by name, nor will the educational establishment be identified by name. Your answers will not be shared with others without your permission.



### **9. Who has reviewed the study?**

The following ethics committee has reviewed this study: The Bangor University Ethics Task Group.

### **10. What will happen to the results of the research study?**

The results of this study will be submitted in a thesis to meet the requirements of an EdD at Bangor University and could be published as a journal article. The results of this study will be made available to you if you request it.

### **11. Who is organising and funding the research?**

My name is Mrs A. McCormack-Colbert and I am currently registered as a part time EdD student at Bangor University. It is a self funded research project.

I am also employed as a Modern Foreign Language teacher and a Head of Year in a secondary school. You may contact me at: c/o Ms Janet Thomas (EdD administrator) The School of Education and Lifelong Learning, Normal Site, Holyhead Road, Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 2PZ, United Kingdom. Telephone: +44 (0)1248 383275.

Email:annamack13@yahoo.fr.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Anna McCormack-Colbert.



## LEARNER INFORMATION SHEET

### 1. What is this study about?

It is about experiences of learners with dyslexia.

### 2. Invitation:

You are invited to take part in this study.

Thank you for reading this.

### 3. Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen to participate in this study because I would like to learn about your experience as a pupil in a secondary school in Wales.

### 4. Do I have to take part?

You can say Yes or No. Please tick either the Yes box or the No box on the attached form to say if you would like to take part or not. If you decide to take part you are still free to change your mind and withdraw from the study at any time and without giving a reason.



## 5. What will happen to me if I take part?

I will ask a few questions about you and your school life. I will also observe a few of your lessons.

I won't tell other teachers or your parents what you say unless I think you are in danger and the law says I have to tell.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Anna McCormack-Colbert.





### **Titre du projet de recherche:**

Perceptions d'élèves dyslexiques quant au soutien à l'apprentissage scolaire: une analyse et une comparaison anglo-française.

### **Lettre d'information destinée au Conseiller Principal d'Education.**

#### **1. Invitation:**

Vous êtes invité à contribuer à un projet de recherche de nature qualitative qui se concentre sur l'expérience de collégiens dyslexiques dans deux pays différents.

Cette étude est exploratoire et s'appuie sur des études de cas.

Avant de décider si vous souhaitez prendre part au projet, vous êtes invité à lire cette lettre d'information avec attention. Si vous désirez que certains aspects du projet soient clarifiés ou si vous souhaitez tout simplement obtenir davantage de précisions, n'hésitez pas à contacter la chercheuse dont les coordonnées sont données en fin de lettre.

Merci de lire ce qui suit.

#### **2. Quel est le but du projet?**

Le but du projet est de développer une compréhension de l'expérience scolaire d'enfants qui ont été diagnostiqués comme étant dyslexiques.

L'objectif de cette étude est triple:

1. Obtenir un aperçu de l'expérience scolaire d'enfants qui ont été diagnostiqués comme étant dyslexiques du point de vue des enfants eux-mêmes, de leurs parents et du personnel éducatif.
2. Offrir au lecteur une ouverture sur les attentes culturelles britanniques au regard des attentes et pratiques d'un autre pays, en l'occurrence, la France.
3. Offrir une perspective nouvelle sur l'accompagnement et le soutien des apprenants à tendances dyslexiques.





### **3. Pourquoi ai-je été choisi?**

Vous avez été choisi pour votre qualité de conseiller au sein de l'établissement et pour vos responsabilités quant à l'orientation et au soutien des élèves dyslexiques dans votre établissement.

### **4. Dois-je participer au projet?**

Vous êtes libre de participer à cette étude et vous pouvez retirer votre participation à tout moment sans avoir à vous justifier. Si vous décidez de contribuer à cette étude, vous pourrez garder cette lettre d'information et il vous sera demandé de signer un formulaire de consentement.

### **5. Que va-t-il m'arriver si je consens à participer au projet?**

Vous serez invité à prendre part à un entretien avec la chercheuse Mme Anna McCormack-Colbert. Elle vous posera des questions à propos de votre expérience quant à l'orientation et au soutien des élèves dyslexiques dans l'établissement.

L'entretien devrait durer environ 30 minutes. L'entretien sera enregistré. Vous pourrez, si vous le souhaitez, demander à ce que l'appareil soit éteint à tout moment ; dans ce cas des notes seront prises par la chercheuse. Deux CPE seront interviewés dans cette étude.

### **6. Y a-t-il de potentiels risques ou inconvénients à prendre part à cette étude?**

Prendre part à ce projet ne devrait pas causer de gênes prévisibles.

L'horaire et la date de l'entretien seront fixés selon vos disponibilités et pour que cela ne vous cause aucun désagrément.

### **7. Y a-t-il de possibles avantages à prendre part à cette étude?**

Il est espéré que les résultats de cette étude permettront d'offrir une nouvelle perspective sur la manière dont les élèves dyslexiques sont soutenus et accompagnés durant leur scolarité. De plus, l'analyse sera d'autant plus significative qu'elle apportera au lecteur une comparaison avec un autre pays.



### **8. Est-ce que ma participation à ce projet sera confidentielle?**

Toutes informations recueillies pendant la durée de l'étude seront gardées confidentielles. Seules la chercheuse et sa directrice de thèse auront accès aux données brutes. L'anonymat sera assuré autant que possible. Dans les rapports écrits à l'issue de l'étude, ni les noms des participants ni le nom de l'établissement ne seront donnés. Vos réponses ne seront pas partagées avec autrui sans votre permission.

### **9. Qui a passé le projet en revue ?**

Le Comité Universitaire d'Ethique de la Recherche de l'Université de Bangor a examiné et autorisé le projet.

### **10. A quoi vont servir les résultats de cette étude?**

Les résultats de recherche seront inclus dans une thèse qui sera soumise dans le cadre de l'accomplissement d'un doctorat en Sciences de l'Education à l'Université de Bangor au Pays de Galles. Les résultats pourraient éventuellement être publiés en tant qu'article de recherche. Les résultats du projet seront rendus accessibles aux participants s'ils le souhaitent.

### **11. Qui est responsable de l'organisation et du financement du projet?**

La chercheuse se nomme Mme Anna McCormack-Colbert et elle est étudiante à mi-temps en Sciences de l'Education à l'Université de Bangor. Elle finance son propre projet dans le but d'accomplir son doctorat.

Elle est employée comme enseignante en langues vivantes et comme conseillère principale d'éducation des élèves de troisième dans un collège/lycée au Pays de Galles. Elle peut être contactée à l'adresse suivante: c/o Ms Janet Thomas (EdD administrator) The School of Education and Lifelong Learning, Normal Site, Holyhead Road, Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 2PZ, United Kingdom. Numéro de téléphone: +44 (0)1248 383275.

Adresse email: annamack13@yahoo.fr.

En vous remerciant d'avoir pris le temps de lire cette lettre d'information,

Cordialement,

Mme McCormack-Colbert.



### **Titre du projet de recherche:**

Perceptions d'élèves dyslexiques quant au soutien à l'apprentissage scolaire: une analyse et une comparaison anglo-française.

### **Lettre d'information destinée à l'orthophoniste.**

#### **1. Invitation:**

Vous êtes invitée à contribuer à un projet de recherche de nature qualitative qui se concentre sur l'expérience de collégiens dyslexiques dans deux pays différents.

Cette étude est exploratoire et s'appuie sur des études de cas.

Avant de décider si vous souhaitez prendre part au projet, vous êtes invitée à lire cette lettre d'information avec attention. Si vous désirez que certains aspects du projet soient clarifiés ou si vous souhaitez tout simplement obtenir davantage de précisions, n'hésitez pas à contacter la chercheuse dont les coordonnées sont données en fin de lettre.

Merci de lire ce qui suit.

#### **2. Quel est le but du projet?**

Le but du projet est de développer une compréhension de l'expérience scolaire d'enfants qui ont été diagnostiqués comme étant dyslexiques.

L'objectif de cette étude est triple:

1. Obtenir un aperçu de l'expérience scolaire d'enfants qui ont été diagnostiqués comme étant dyslexiques du point de vue des enfants eux-mêmes, de leurs parents et du personnel éducatif.
2. Offrir au lecteur une ouverture sur les attentes culturelles britanniques au regard des attentes et pratiques d'un autre pays, en l'occurrence, la France.
3. Offrir une perspective nouvelle sur l'accompagnement et le soutien des apprenants à tendances dyslexiques.



### **3. Pourquoi ai-je été choisi?**

Vous avez été choisie pour vos connaissances et votre expérience quant à la rééducation et au soutien des collégiens dyslexiques.

### **4. Dois-je participer au projet?**

Vous êtes libre de participer à cette étude et vous pouvez retirer votre participation à tout moment sans avoir à vous justifier. Si vous décidez de contribuer à cette étude, vous pourrez garder cette lettre d'information et il vous sera demandé de signer un formulaire de consentement.

### **5. Que va-t-il m'arriver si je consens à participer au projet?**

Vous serez invitée à prendre part à un entretien avec la chercheuse Mme Anna McCormack-Colbert. Elle vous posera des questions à propos de votre expérience quant à la rééducation et au soutien des collégiens dyslexiques.

L'entretien devrait durer environ 30 minutes. L'entretien sera enregistré. Vous pourrez, si vous le souhaitez, demander à ce que l'appareil soit éteint à tout moment; dans ce cas des notes seront prises par la chercheuse.

### **6. Y a-t-il de potentiels risques ou inconvénients à prendre part à cette étude?**

Prendre part à ce projet ne devrait pas causer de gêne prévisible.

L'horaire et la date de l'entretien seront fixés selon vos disponibilités et pour que cela ne vous cause aucun désagrément.

### **7. Y a-t-il de possibles avantages à prendre part à cette étude?**

Il est espéré que les résultats de cette étude permettront d'offrir une nouvelle perspective sur la manière dont les élèves dyslexiques sont soutenus et accompagnés durant leur scolarité. De plus, l'analyse sera d'autant plus significative qu'elle apportera au lecteur une comparaison avec un autre pays.



### **8. Est-ce que ma participation à ce projet sera confidentielle?**

Toutes les informations recueillies pendant la durée de l'étude seront gardées confidentielles. Seules la chercheuse et sa directrice de thèse auront accès aux données brutes. L'anonymat sera assuré autant que possible. Dans les rapports écrits à l'issue de l'étude, ni les noms des participants ni le nom de l'établissement ne seront donnés. Vos réponses ne seront pas partagées avec autrui sans votre permission.

### **9. Qui a passé le projet en revue ?**

Le Comité Universitaire d'Ethique de la Recherche de l'Université de Bangor a examiné et autorisé le projet.

### **10. A quoi vont servir les résultats de cette étude?**

Les résultats de recherche seront inclus dans une thèse qui sera soumise dans le cadre de l'accomplissement d'un doctorat en Sciences de l'Education à l'Université de Bangor au Pays de Galles. Les résultats pourraient éventuellement être publiés en tant qu'article de recherche. Les résultats du projet seront rendus accessibles aux participants s'ils le souhaitent.

### **11. Qui est responsable de l'organisation et du financement du projet?**

La chercheuse se nomme Mme Anna McCormack-Colbert et elle est étudiante à mi-temps en Sciences de l'Education à l'Université de Bangor. Elle finance son propre projet dans le but d'accomplir son doctorat.

Elle est employée comme enseignante en langues vivantes et comme "Additional Educational Needs Coordinator" dans un collège/lycée au Pays de Galles. Elle peut être contactée à l'adresse suivante: c/o Ms Janet Thomas (EdD administrator) The School of Education and Lifelong Learning, Normal Site, Holyhead Road, Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 2PZ, United Kingdom. Numéro de téléphone: +44 (0)1248 383275.

Adresse email: annamack13@yahoo.fr.

En vous remerciant d'avoir pris le temps de lire cette lettre d'information,

Cordialement,

Mme McCormack-Colbert.



### **Titre du projet de recherche:**

Perceptions d'élèves dyslexiques quant au soutien à l'apprentissage scolaire: une analyse et une comparaison anglo-française.

### **Lettre d'information destinée aux parents/tuteurs.**

#### **1. Invitation:**

Vous êtes invité à contribuer à un projet de recherche qui se concentre sur l'expérience de collégiens dyslexiques dans deux pays différents.

Cette étude s'appuie sur des études de cas.

Avant de décider si vous souhaitez prendre part au projet, vous êtes invité à lire cette lettre d'information avec attention. Si vous souhaitez obtenir davantage de précisions, n'hésitez pas à contacter la chercheuse dont les coordonnées sont données en fin de lettre.

Merci de lire ce qui suit.

#### **2. Quel est le but du projet?**

Le but du projet est de développer une compréhension de l'expérience scolaire d'enfants qui ont été diagnostiqués comme étant dyslexiques.

L'objectif de cette étude est triple:

1. Gagner un aperçu de l'expérience scolaire d'enfants qui ont été diagnostiqués comme étant dyslexiques du point de vue des enfants eux-mêmes, de leurs parents et du personnel éducatif.
2. Offrir au lecteur une ouverture sur les attentes culturelles britanniques au regard des attentes et pratiques d'un autre pays, en l'occurrence, la France.
3. Offrir une perspective nouvelle sur l'accompagnement et le soutien des apprenants à tendances dyslexiques.



### **3. Pourquoi ai-je été choisi?**

Vous avez été choisi pour votre qualité de parent/tuteur. La chercheuse voudrait gagner une meilleure connaissance de votre expérience quant au soutien apporté à votre enfant.

### **4. Dois-je participer au projet?**

Vous êtes libre de participer à cette étude et vous pouvez retirer votre participation à tout moment sans avoir à vous justifier. Si vous décidez de contribuer à cette étude, vous pourrez garder cette lettre d'information et il vous sera demandé de signer un formulaire de consentement.

### **5. Que va-t-il m'arriver si je consens à participer au projet?**

Vous serez invité à prendre part à un entretien avec la chercheuse Mme Anna McCormack-Colbert. Elle vous posera des questions à propos de votre expérience quant au soutien apporté à votre enfant.

L'entretien devrait durer environ 30 minutes. L'entretien sera enregistré. Vous pourrez, si vous le souhaitez, demander à ce que l'appareil soit éteint à tout moment ; dans ce cas des notes seront prises par la chercheuse.

### **6. Y a-t-il de potentiels risques ou inconvénients à prendre part à cette étude?**

Prendre part à ce projet ne devrait pas causer de mécontentements prévisibles.

L'horaire et la date de l'entretien seront fixés selon vos disponibilités et pour que cela ne vous cause aucun désagrément.

### **7. Y a-t-il de possibles avantages à prendre part à cette étude?**

Il est espéré que les résultats de cette étude permettront d'offrir une nouvelle perspective sur la manière dont les élèves dyslexiques sont soutenus et accompagnés durant leur scolarité. De plus, l'analyse sera d'autant plus significative qu'elle apportera au lecteur une comparaison avec un autre pays.



### **8. Est-ce que ma participation à ce projet sera confidentielle?**

Toutes informations recueillies pendant la durée de l'étude seront gardées confidentielles. Seules la chercheuse et sa directrice de thèse auront accès aux données brutes. L'anonymat sera assuré autant que possible. Dans les rapports écrits à l'issue de l'étude, ni les noms des participants ni le nom de l'établissement ne seront donnés. Vos réponses ne seront pas partagées avec autrui sans votre permission.

### **9. Qui a passé le projet en revue ?**

Le Comité Universitaire d'Ethique de la Recherche de l'Université de Bangor a examiné et autorisé le projet.

### **10. A quoi vont servir les résultats de cette étude?**

Les résultats de recherche seront inclus dans une thèse qui sera soumise dans le cadre de l'accomplissement d'un doctorat en Sciences de l'Education à l'Université de Bangor au Pays de Galles. Les résultats pourraient éventuellement être publiés en tant qu'article de recherche. Les résultats du projet seront rendus accessibles aux participants s'ils le souhaitent.

### **11. Qui est responsable de l'organisation et du financement du projet?**

La chercheuse se nomme Mme Anna McCormack-Colbert et elle est étudiante à mi-temps en Sciences de l'Education à l'Université de Bangor. Elle finance son propre projet dans le but d'accomplir son doctorat.

Elle est employée comme enseignante en langues vivantes et comme conseillère principale d'éducation des élèves de troisième dans un collège/lycée au Pays de Galles. Elle peut être contactée à l'adresse suivante: c/o Ms Janet Thomas (EdD administrator) The School of Education and Lifelong Learning, Normal Site, Holyhead Road, Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 2PZ, United Kingdom. Numéro de téléphone: +44 (0)1248 383275.

Adresse email: annamack13@yahoo.fr.

En vous remerciant d'avoir pris le temps de lire cette lettre d'information,

Cordialement,

Mme McCormack-Colbert.





## **Lettre d'information destinée à l'apprenant.**

### **1. A quoi cette étude s'intéresse-t-elle?**

L'étude s'intéresse à l'apprentissage scolaire d'apprenants dyslexiques.

### **2. Invitation:**

Tu es invité à participer à l'étude.

Merci de lire ce qui suit.

### **3. Pourquoi ai-je été choisi?**

Tu as été choisi car je voudrais gagner une meilleure connaissance de ton expérience en tant que collégien(ne) dyslexique.

### **4. Est-ce que je dois participer à l'étude?**

Tu es libre de participer à cette étude et tu pourras retirer ta participation à tout moment sans avoir à expliquer pourquoi. Si tu décides de dire oui, tu pourras garder cette lettre d'information et tu devras signer un formulaire de consentement.



**5. Que va-t-il m'arriver si je participe à l'étude?**

Je te poserai quelques questions à propos de toi et de ta vie en tant que collégien(ne). Je vais aussi observer quelques unes de tes leçons.

Je ne partagerai tes réponses avec aucun prof et je ne dirai rien à tes parents non plus à moins que je réalise que tu sois en danger et que la loi m'y oblige.

Merci d'avoir pris le temps de lire cette lettre d'information.

Mme Anna McCormack-Colbert.



COLEG ADDYSG Y CELFYDDYDAU A'R DYNIAETHAU  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ARTS & HUMANITIES

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SCHOOL OF EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING



**CONSENT FORM FOR THE DOCTORATE IN EDUCATION STUDY**

**Research Study Title:**

Perceptions of support for learners with dyslexia in two secondary schools:  
an Anglo-French analysis and comparison.

You are invited to take part in a study that will focus on the experiences of secondary pupils with dyslexia in two different countries.

In signing this document, I am giving my consent to be interviewed by Anna McCormack-Colbert, as part of her study for a **Doctorate in Education**.

I understand that I will be interviewed at a time and place convenient to me. I understand that I was selected to participate in this study because of my knowledge and/or experience of the subject matter.

This interview is granted freely. I have been informed that the interview is entirely voluntary, and that even after the interview begins I can refuse to answer any specific questions or decide to stop the interview at any point. I understand that the interview will be recorded and that I may request that the recorder be switched off at any time in which case notes will be taken by the researcher. I understand that all information collected will be kept confidential and that my answers will not be shared with others without my permission.

I understand that Anna McCormack-Colbert will give the results of this study to me if I ask for them.

I can contact Anna McCormack-Colbert at: c/o Ms Janet Thomas (EdD administrator) The School of Education and Lifelong Learning, Normal Site, Holyhead Road, Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 2PZ, United Kingdom. Telephone: +44 (0)1248 383275.

Email:annamack13@yahoo.fr.

Participant's Signature.....

Researcher's Signature.....

Date.....

## LEARNER CONSENT FORM FOR A DOCTORATE IN EDUCATION STUDY

What is the study about?

It is about the experiences of learners with dyslexia.



I would like you to think about whether you would like to take part in my study.

Please tick the relevant box!

YES



NO



## Appendix IX

COLEG ADDYSG Y CELFYDDYDAU A'R DYNIAETHAU  
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Please put a tick in the correct box:

I have read this information sheet.

I have had the information sheet read to me.

Your signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your parent's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Your parent's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**FORMULAIRE DE CONSENTEMENT**

**DEPARTEMENT DES SCIENCES DE L'EDUCATION**

**Titre du projet de recherche:**

**Perceptions d'élèves dyslexiques quant au soutien à l'apprentissage scolaire: une analyse et une comparaison anglo-française.**

Vous êtes invité à contribuer à un projet de recherche de nature qualitative qui se concentre sur l'expérience de collégiens dyslexiques dans deux pays différents. Cette étude est exploratoire et s'appuie sur des études de cas.

Je reconnais avoir lu le présent formulaire de consentement et consens volontairement à participer à ce projet de recherche. Je consens à participer à un entretien dirigé par Mme McCormack-Colbert dans le cadre d'un doctorat en Sciences de l'Education. Je consens à ce que la date de l'entretien soit convenue en fonction de mes disponibilités.

Je reconnais aussi que l'interviewer a répondu à mes questions de manière satisfaisante et que j'ai disposé de suffisamment de temps pour réfléchir à ma décision de participer. Je comprends que j'ai été choisi en tant que participant pour ma connaissance du sujet. Je comprends que ma participation à cette recherche est totalement volontaire et que je peux y mettre fin en tout temps, sans pénalité d'aucune forme, ni justification à donner. Il me suffit d'en informer la responsable du projet. Je comprends que mon nom ne figurera pas dans les rapports de recherches et que mon anonymat sera préservé.

Enfin, je comprends que Mme McCormack-Colbert rendra les résultats du projet accessibles aux participants s'ils le souhaitent.

Je peux contacter la responsable du projet à l'adresse suivante: c/o Ms Janet Thomas (EdD administrator) The School of Education and Lifelong Learning, Normal Site, Holyhead Road, Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 2PZ, United Kingdom. Numéro de téléphone: +44 (0)1248 383275. Adresse email:annamack13@yahoo.fr.

Signature du participant.....

Signature de la chercheuse.....

Date.....

**FORMULAIRE DE CONSENTEMENT DESTINE A L'ELEVE**

**DEPARTEMENT DES SCIENCES DE L'EDUCATION**

**A quoi cette étude s'intéresse-t-elle?**

L'étude s'intéresse à l'apprentissage scolaire d'apprenants dyslexiques.



**Je t'invite à participer à mon étude. Tu es libre de refuser.**

**Dessine une croix dans la case de ton choix!**

**OUI**



**NON**



## Appendix XI

COLEG ADDYSG Y CELFYDDYDAU A'R DYNIAETHAU  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ARTS & HUMANITIES

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Dessine une croix dans la bonne case:

J'ai lu la lettre d'information.

Quelqu'un a lu la lettre d'information pour moi.

Signature de l'élève: \_\_\_\_\_

Nom de l'élève: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature des parents: \_\_\_\_\_

Noms des parents/tuteurs: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Interview schedule: Head teacher.

### Introduction.

I really appreciate you giving up your time to talk to me.

My study will focus on the experiences of secondary school pupils with dyslexia in two different countries.

You have been chosen to participate in this study because of your role and responsibilities in relation to learners with dyslexia.

The interview should last no longer than 30 minutes and will be recorded. Is that ok with you? I am not looking for any particular answers; I am just interested in what you have got to say. All information which is collected during the course of the interview will be kept strictly confidential. Your answers will not be shared with others without your permission. Do you have any questions regarding the study or the interview? Was the information sheet clear enough?

### Start of the recording procedure:

- **Question 1.**

Have you been working in this school for long?

- **Question 2.**

How would you describe the school's catchment area?

- **Question 3.**

Please tell me about your role in relation to pupils with Additional Educational Needs in general in your establishment.

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anything else?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So what you do at present is...</li> <li>• How do you do this at present?</li> <li>• How will that develop in the future?</li> </ul>



- **Question 4.**

What are your responsibilities towards pupils with dyslexia?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you see your role as a Head teacher in relation to pupils who struggle with literacy such as those with dyslexia, in the light of the Estyn's emphasis on literacy development?</li> <li>• Anything else?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So what you do at present is...</li> <li>• How do you do this at present?</li> <li>• How will that develop in the future?</li> </ul>

- **Question 5.**

In relation to secondary schools' responsibilities, what are your views on the Welsh Government's Special Educational Needs Code of Practice?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you think of the practical advice given to schools in the SEN Code of Practice?</li> <li>• Anything else?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So you think that...</li> </ul>

- **Question 6.**

How do you try and implement governmental recommendations in the school?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The code of practice states that secondary schools must carry out their statutory duties to identify, assess and make provision for children's special educational needs. How is this done in your school?</li> <li>• The code of practice states that secondary schools must carry out their statutory duties to identify, assess and make provision for children's special educational needs. Do you think this is always done successfully in your school?</li> <li>• Do you think children with dyslexia are supported as well as they should be according to the Code of Practice?</li> <li>• Anything else?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So you are saying that...</li> <li>• How will that develop in the future?</li> </ul>

## Appendix XII

COLEG ADDYSG Y CELFYDDYDAU A'R DYNIAETHAU  
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- **Question 7.**

What support does the Local Educational Authority give to the school to help support pupils with Additional Educational Needs?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do you think the school's resources are adequate?</li><li>• Anything else?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• So you are saying that...</li><li>• How could that change in the future?</li></ul>

- **Question 8.**

Have you personally had any initial or in-service training on dyslexia?  
Can you tell me about it?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is this a dyslexia friendly school?</li><li>• If so, how did you get that title?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• So you are saying that...</li><li>• How useful did you find it?</li></ul>

- **Question 9.**

Is there anything else you would like to mention with regards to current provision for children with dyslexia in the school?

Thank you very much for taking part in this study.

### Interview schedule: Head teacher.

- **Question 1.**

Have you been working in this school for long?

- **Question 2.**

How would you describe the school's catchment area?

- **Question 3.**

Please tell me about your role in relation to pupils with Additional Educational Needs in general in your establishment.

- **Question 4.**

What are your responsibilities towards pupils with dyslexia?

- **Question 5.**

In relation to secondary schools' responsibilities, what are your views on the Welsh Government's Special Educational Needs Code of Practice?

- **Question 6.**

How do you try and implement governmental recommendations in the school?

- **Question 7.**

What support does the Local Educational Authority give to the school to help support pupils with Additional Learning Needs?

- **Question 8.**

Have you personally had any initial or in-service training on dyslexia?  
Can you tell me about it?

- **Question 9.**

Is there anything else you would like to mention with regards to current provision for children with dyslexia in the school?

Thank you very much for taking part in this study.

## Interview schedule: parent.

### Introduction.

I really appreciate you giving up your time to talk to me.

I am conducting a study which focuses on the experiences of secondary school pupils with dyslexia in two different countries.

You have been chosen to participate in this study because of your experience in supporting and parenting a child with dyslexia.

The interview should last no longer than 30 minutes and will be recorded. Is that acceptable to you? I am not looking for any particular answers; I am just interested in what you have got to say. You can stop the interview at anytime and you can refuse to answer particular questions if you feel they are not appropriate. All information which is collected during the course of the interview will be kept strictly confidential. Your answers will not be shared with others without your permission. Do you have any questions regarding the study or the interview? Was the information sheet clear enough?

### Start of the recording procedure:

- **Question 1.**

Could you tell me about xxxxx? His/her personality?

- **Question 2.**

Tell me about the school he/she goes to.

- **Question 3.**

What does dyslexia mean to you?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What makes a person dyslexic?</li><li>• What do you think a dyslexic person does differently?</li><li>• Has dyslexia ever been a problem for xxx in school? Outside of school?</li><li>• Anything else?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• So what you are saying is...</li><li>• How does dyslexia affect the learning?</li></ul>

• **Question 4.**

Is it important to you that the word dyslexia is used or could we just talk about a learning difference?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why?</li> <li>• Any other reason?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So you think that...</li> </ul>

• **Question 5.**

At what age did you realise your son/daughter was having difficulties?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there anything you feel that he/she could not do as well as they would want to?</li> <li>• Anything else?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So you are saying that...</li> <li>• So what they do is...</li> </ul>

• **Question 6.**

Who first suspected it was dyslexia?  
When was this confirmed? By whom?  
What steps were then taken? By whom?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What support was offered? By whom?</li> <li>• Anything else?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So you are saying that...</li> </ul>

• **Question 7.**

What are the difficulties your son/daughter faces in lessons?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What type of mistakes do they make when writing? Reading?</li> <li>• How well do they respond to instructions given? Can they follow multiple instructions?</li> <li>• Do they understand grammatical/subject terminology? How do you know? Do they use these terms?</li> <li>• How does xxx think feel about themselves? Why do you think this happens?</li> <li>• What's the reaction of the classmates to their problems?</li> <li>• Anything else?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So you are saying that...</li> <li>• So what you think is...</li> </ul>

- **Question 8.**

Do you think this learning difference could influence your son/daughter's future? How?

- **Question 9.**

Are there any factors which you think have helped to alleviate his/her dyslexia? What are they?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there anything that the school does which you think helped make dyslexia easier to deal with?</li> <li>• Does xxx get help from a teaching assistant?</li> <li>• Does xxx have a modified timetable?</li> <li>• Is there someone xxx can talk to in school? (SENCO, TA, learning coach)</li> <li>• What help does xxx get at home? Outside of school?</li> <li>• Does xxx have strategies to help with organisation of school work? (planner..)</li> <li>• How does it make things better?</li> <li>• Anything else?</li> <li>• Does xxx get extra time when doing a test?</li> <li>• Does xxx see a learning coach?</li> <li>• Does xxx have an IEP? Are teachers aware of xxx's learning difference?</li> <li>• Are you or have you been invited to meetings with the SENCO to review xxx's progress?</li> <li>• What do you value the most?</li> <li>• Is there anything you are unhappy with?</li> <li>• Anything else?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So you are saying that...</li> </ul>

- **Question 10.**

Have school expectations ever made your son/daughter's dyslexia difficult to manage?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does/did it make things hard for them to work around?</li> <li>• Anything else?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So you are saying that...</li> </ul>

- **Question 11.**

Dyslexia is not just about difficulties. What strengths do you think your son/daughter has?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is he/she aware of his/her strengths? What can be done about it? What do you do about it?</li> <li>• And outside the classroom?</li> <li>• Anything else?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So you are saying that...</li> <li>• So what he/she is good at is...</li> </ul>

- **Question 12.**

How do you think he/she is progressing in school?

- **Question 13.**

Do you think dyslexia has an impact on the way he/she perceives himself/herself?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How?</li> <li>• What can be done about it?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So you are saying that...</li> </ul>

- **Question 14.**

How do you think he/she is coping with his/her learning difference?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does he/she talk about how he/she feels in school/about school?</li> <li>• How has he/she been supporting himself/herself?</li> <li>• Any specific strategies?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So you are saying that...</li> </ul>

- **Question 15.**

As a parent what strategies have you used to support your child?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you think it was successful?</li> <li>• Any other strategies?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So you are saying that...</li> </ul>

- **Question 16.**

Is there anything else you would like to say about the support offered to your child?

Thank you very much for taking part in this study.



### Interview schedule: parent.

- **Question 1.**  
Could you tell me about xxxxx? His/her personality?
- **Question 2.**  
Tell me about the school he/she goes to.
- **Question 3.**  
What does dyslexia mean to you?
- **Question 4.**  
Is it important to you that the word dyslexia is used or could we just talk about a learning difference?
- **Question 5.**  
At what age did you realise your son/daughter was having difficulties?
- **Question 6.**  
Who first suspected it was dyslexia?  
When was this confirmed? By whom?  
What steps were then taken? By whom?
- **Question 7.**  
What are the difficulties your son/daughter faces in lessons?
- **Question 8.**  
Do you think this learning difference could influence your son/daughter's future?  
How?
- **Question 9.**  
Are there any factors which you think have helped to alleviate his/her dyslexia? What are they?
- **Question 10.**  
Have school expectations ever made your son/daughter's dyslexia difficult to manage?
- **Question 11.**  
Dyslexia is not just about difficulties. What strengths do you think your son/daughter has?

- **Question 12.**

How do you think he/she is progressing in school?

- **Question 13.**

Do you think dyslexia has an impact on the way he/she perceives himself/herself?

- **Question 14.**

How do you think he/she is coping with his/her learning difference?

- **Question 15.**

As a parent what strategies have you used to support your child?

- **Question 16.**

Is there anything else you would like to say about the support offered to your child?

## Interview schedule: pupil.

### Introduction.

Thank you for taking part in my study. It is about experiences of learners with dyslexia.

You have been chosen to participate in this study because I would like to learn about your experience as a pupil in a secondary school in Wales.

I will ask a few questions about you and your school life. The interview will go on for as long as you are happy answering my questions. It should last no longer than 30 minutes and you can stop the interview at anytime or refuse to answer particular questions.

Your answers will not be shared with anyone and not with others at school without your permission.

### Start of the recording procedure:

- **Question 1.**

How old are you?

- **Question 2.**

What year are you?

- **Question 3.**

What job would you like to have in the future?

- **Question 4.**

What do you enjoy doing at the weekends? Any hobbies?

- **Question 5.**

Do you think of yourself as dyslexic?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What makes a person dyslexic?</li><li>• What do you think a dyslexic person does differently?</li><li>• Can dyslexia be a problem in school? Outside of school?</li><li>• Do you have any friends who have dyslexia?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• So what you are saying is...</li><li>• How does dyslexia affect your learning?</li></ul>



• **Question 6.**

How do you feel when someone calls you dyslexic?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why?</li> <li>• Is it important to you that the word dyslexia is used or could we just talk about a difficulty?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So you think that...</li> </ul>

• **Question 7.**

What are the things that you are good at?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the things that you enjoy doing? In school? Your favourite subjects?</li> <li>• And outside of school?</li> <li>• Why?</li> <li>• Anything else?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So you are saying that...</li> <li>• What is it about this that you like?</li> </ul>

• **Question 8.**

At what age did you realise you were having difficulties?

Can you tell me what difficulties you associate with your dyslexia?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there anything you feel that you cannot do as well as you would want to?</li> <li>• Do you think it has anything to do with dyslexia?</li> <li>• Do you enjoy writing? Reading? Why?</li> <li>• Do you participate in lessons? How?</li> <li>• Do you find it easy to understand instructions given by teachers?</li> <li>• Do you have a planner? Do you find it useful? How do you use it? (Do you write down the homework you have to do or things you have to bring to school? Do you use it to check your timetable? )</li> <li>• Do you feel different from your classmates? How do they respond to you?</li> <li>• Anything else?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So you are saying that...</li> <li>• So what you do is...</li> </ul>



• **Question 9.**

Is there anything that your school does which you think helped make your dyslexia easier to deal with?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you have the opportunity to work with a teaching assistant in lessons?</li> <li>Do teachers give you more time in tests?</li> <li>Do you feel that teachers give you extra help?</li> <li>Have you ever spoken to a learning coach?</li> <li>Can you think of a time you did really well in a test? What subject was it? What do you think helped you do well?</li> <li>Is this your favourite subject? If not, what is your favourite subject? Why?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>So you are saying that...</li> </ul>

• **Question 10.**

Is there anything which you think has made your dyslexia more difficult to cope with?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does it make things worse?</li> <li>Anything else?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>So you are saying that...</li> </ul>

• **Question 11.**

Is there anything you think your school could do to help you more?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How would it make things better?</li> <li>Anything else the school could do?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>So you are saying that...</li> </ul>

• **Question 12.**

Do you get any help with your work when you are at home?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What type of help?</li> <li>Who helps you?</li> <li>Have you ever had extra tuition?</li> <li>Anything else?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>So you are saying that...</li> </ul>



- **Question 13.**

If you could change something about your school, what would it be?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Why?</li><li>• Anything else?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• So you are saying that...</li></ul>

- **Question 14.**

If you need some help with your school work, who do you go to?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If you need to talk to someone about a school issue, who do you go to?</li><li>• Why that person?</li><li>• Anyone else?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• So you are saying that...</li></ul>

- **Question 15.**

Does dyslexia affect the way you feel about yourself?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How? Why?</li><li>• Any other reason?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• So you are saying that...</li></ul>

- **Question 16.**

Is there anything else you would like to say about the support you get in school?

Thank you very much for taking part in this study.

### Interview schedule: learner.

- **Question 1.**  
How old are you?
  
- **Question 2.**  
What year are you?
  
- **Question 3.**  
What job would you like to have in the future?
  
- **Question 4.**  
What do you enjoy doing at the weekends? Any hobbies?
  
- **Question 5.**  
Do you think of yourself as dyslexic?
  
- **Question 6.**  
How do you feel when someone calls you dyslexic?
  
- **Question 7.**  
What are the things that you are good at?
  
- **Question 8.**  
At what age did you realise you were having difficulties?  
Can you tell me what difficulties you associate with your dyslexia?
  
- **Question 9.**  
Is there anything that your school does which you think helped make your dyslexia easier to deal with?
  
- **Question 10.**  
Is there anything which you think has made your dyslexia more difficult to cope with?

- **Question 11.**

Is there anything you think your school could do to help you more?

- **Question 12.**

Do you get any help with your work when you are at home?

- **Question 13.**

If you could change something about your school, what would it be?

- **Question 14.**

If you need some help with your school work, who do you go to?

- **Question 15.**

Does dyslexia affect the way you feel about yourself?

- **Question 16.**

Is there anything else you would like to say about the support you get in school?



### Entretien: Chef d'établissement.

#### Introduction.

Merci d'avoir accepté de participer à ce projet de recherche. Je sais que vous êtes très occupé, merci de consacrer du temps à cet entretien.

Le but de la recherche est de développer une compréhension de l'expérience scolaire d'enfants qui ont été diagnostiqués comme étant dyslexiques.

L'entretien ne devrait pas durer plus de 30 minutes. Si cela ne vous dérange pas, je vais enregistrer l'entretien à l'aide de cet appareil. Je n'attends pas de réponses particulières à mes questions, ce qui m'intéresse, c'est d'écouter ce que vous avez à dire. Vos réponses seront gardées confidentielles et ne seront pas divulguées sans votre permission.

Avant de commencer, avez-vous des questions ?

#### Début de l'enregistrement.

- **Question 1.**

Depuis combien de temps travaillez-vous dans cet établissement ?

- **Question 2.**

Pouvez-vous décrire le secteur de l'établissement ?

- **Question 3.**

Quelles sont vos responsabilités envers les élèves qui ont des difficultés d'apprentissage en général ?

Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Donc, ce que vous faites à présent consiste à....</li><li>• Comment faites-vous pour...</li><li>• Comment pensez-vous que cela va évoluer ?</li></ul>

- **Question 4.**

En tant que chef d'établissement, quelles sont vos responsabilités envers les élèves dyslexiques ?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certains élèves, comme les élèves dyslexiques, ont des difficultés à lire et à écrire. En tenant compte de l'importance du bon développement d'aptitudes linguistiques, quel type de soutien est-ce que le collège doit légalement offrir aux élèves dyslexiques?</li> <li>• Mais encore...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Donc, ce que vous faites à présent consiste à....</li> <li>• Comment faites-vous pour...</li> <li>• Comment pensez-vous que cela va évoluer ?</li> </ul>

- **Question 5.**

Que pensez-vous des directives ministérielles concernant les élèves dyslexiques ?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Que pensez-vous de la mise en place de PPS et de PPRE pour les élèves dyslexiques?</li> <li>• Que pensez-vous de l'aménagement des examens et concours pour les candidats dyslexiques ?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Donc, vous pensez que...</li> </ul>

- **Question 6.**

En tant que chef d'établissement, comment supervisez-vous la mise en place de PPS et de PPRE ?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Est-ce que vous pensez que ces mesures sont efficaces?</li> <li>• Est-ce que vous pensez que les élèves concernés sont satisfaits du soutien dont ils bénéficient ?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Donc, vous pensez que...</li> </ul>

- **Question 7.**

Comment les autorités académiques soutiennent-elles les collèges qui reçoivent des élèves éprouvant des troubles spécifiques d'apprentissage ?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pensez-vous que ses aides soient suffisantes ?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Donc, vous pensez que...</li> <li>• Comment pensez-vous que cela va évoluer ?</li> </ul>

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- **Question 8.**

Avez-vous déjà eu l'occasion de participer à un stage sur la dyslexie ?

<b>Prompts</b>	<b>Probes</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pouvez-vous m'expliquer en quoi cela consistait ?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Donc, vous pensez que...</li><li>• Avez-vous trouvé cela utile ?</li></ul>

- **Question 9.**

Avez-vous quelque chose à ajouter ?

Merci d'avoir pris le temps de répondre à mes questions.

### Entretien: Chef d'établissement.

- **Question 1.**

Depuis combien de temps travaillez-vous dans cet établissement ?

- **Question 2.**

Pouvez-vous décrire le secteur de l'établissement?

- **Question 3.**

Quelles sont vos responsabilités envers les élèves qui ont des difficultés d'apprentissage en général ?

- **Question 4.**

En tant que chef d'établissement, quelles sont vos responsabilités envers les élèves dyslexiques ?

- **Question 5.**

Que pensez-vous des directives ministérielles concernant les élèves dyslexiques ?

- **Question 6.**

En tant que chef d'établissement, comment supervisez-vous la mise en place de PPS et de PPRE ?

- **Question 7.**

Comment les autorités académiques soutiennent-elles les collèges qui reçoivent des élèves éprouvant des troubles spécifiques d'apprentissage ?

- **Question 8.**

Avez-vous déjà eu l'occasion de participer à un stage sur la dyslexie ?

- **Question 9.**

Avez-vous quelque chose à ajouter ?

## Entretien: élève.

Merci d'avoir accepté de participer à ce projet de recherche. Je sais que tu es très occupé, merci de consacrer du temps à cet entretien.

Tu as été choisi car je voudrais gagner une meilleure connaissance de ton expérience en tant que collégien(ne) dyslexique.

L'entretien ne devrait pas durer plus de 30 minutes. Si cela ne te dérange pas, je vais enregistrer l'entretien à l'aide de cet appareil. Tes réponses seront gardées confidentielles et ne seront pas divulguées sans ta permission. Je n'attends pas de réponses particulières à mes questions, ce qui m'intéresse, c'est d'écouter ce que tu as à dire.

Avant de commencer, est-ce que tu as des questions à me poser?

- **Question 1.**

Quel âge as-tu?

- **Question 2.**

Tu es en quelle classe?

- **Question 3.**

Quel métier voudrais-tu faire plus tard?

- **Question 4.**

As-tu des passe-temps? Qu'est-ce que tu aimes faire au week-end?

- **Question 5.**

Pour toi, qu'est-ce que l'expression "être dyslexique" veut dire?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Penses-tu que « les dyslexiques » font des choses différemment ?</li><li>• Est-ce qu'être dyslexique pose des problèmes quand on est au collège ? Et dans la vie de tous les jours ?</li><li>• As-tu des ami(e)s dyslexiques ?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Donc, tu penses que...</li><li>• La dyslexie a-t-elle un impact sur la manière dont tu travailles ?</li></ul>



• **Question 6.**

Que ressens-tu lorsque quelqu'un utilise le terme « dyslexique » en faisant référence à toi?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pourquoi ?</li><li>• Est-ce important pour toi que les gens utilise le terme dyslexie ? ou pourrait-on simplement utiliser l'expression « difficultés d'apprentissage » ?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Donc, tu penses que...</li></ul>

• **Question 7.**

Tu es bon en quoi?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quelles sont tes matières préférées ?</li><li>• Pourquoi ?</li><li>• Quoi d'autre ?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Donc, tu penses que...</li><li>• Donc ce que tu fais consiste à...</li></ul>

• **Question 8.**

Quel âge avais-tu quand tu as réalisé que tu avais des difficultés?

Quelles difficultés associes-tu à ta dyslexie?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Y-a-t-il des choses que tu as des difficultés à faire ?</li><li>• Penses-tu que c'est lié à ta dyslexie ?</li><li>• Aimes-tu écrire ? lire ? Pourquoi ?</li><li>• Participes-tu lorsque tu es en classe ?</li><li>• Penses-tu que c'est facile pour toi de suivre les consignes données par les professeurs ?</li><li>• Est-ce que tu as un agenda ? A quoi te sert-il ?</li><li>• Penses-tu que tu es différent(e) de tes camarades ? t-entends-tu bien avec eux ?</li><li>• As-tu quelque chose à ajouter ?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Donc, tu penses que...</li><li>• Donc ce que tu fais consiste à...</li></ul>

• **Question 9.**

Comment le collège t'aide-t-il à surmonter tes difficultés?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Reçois-tu de l'aide pendant les cours ?</li><li>A qui t'adresses-tu si tu as besoin d'aide ?</li><li>Est-ce que les profs te donnent plus de temps pendant les contrôles ?</li><li>Est-ce que les profs t'aident ?</li><li>Te rappelles-tu avoir eu une bonne note à un contrôle ? C'était en quelle matière ? Qu'est-ce qui t'as aidé à obtenir cette note ?</li><li>Est-ce que c'était ta matière préférée ? Si non, quelle est ta matière préférée ? Pourquoi ?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Donc, tu penses que...</li></ul>

• **Question 10.**

Est-ce difficile d'être dyslexique lorsqu'on est au collège?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Pourquoi ?</li><li>As-tu quelque chose à ajouter ?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Donc, tu penses que...</li></ul>

• **Question 11.**

Comment le collège pourrait-il d'avantage t'aider?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Pourquoi est-ce que ça améliorerait les choses ?</li><li>As-tu quelque chose à ajouter ?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Donc, tu penses que...</li></ul>

• **Question 12.**

Est-ce que quelqu'un t'aide à faire tes devoirs lorsque tu es à la maison?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Comment t'aident-ils ?</li><li>Qui t'aide ?</li><li>Prends-tu des cours particuliers ?</li><li>As-tu quelque chose à ajouter ?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Donc, tu penses que...</li></ul>

• **Question 13.**

Si tu pouvais changer quelque chose au collège, qu'est-ce que ce serait?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pourquoi?</li><li>• As-tu quelque chose à ajouter ?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Donc, tu penses que...</li></ul>

• **Question 14.**

Lorsque tu es au collège, à qui t'adresses-tu si tu as besoin d'aide avec ton travail?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Si tu as un problème, à qui t'adresses-tu?</li><li>• Pourquoi cette personne en particulier ?</li><li>• Pourrais-tu t'adresser à quelqu'un d'autre?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Donc, tu penses que...</li></ul>

• **Question 15.**

Est-ce que le fait d'être dyslexique te préoccupe?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• De quelle manière ?</li><li>• Pourquoi ?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Donc, tu penses que...</li></ul>

• **Question 16.**

As-tu quelque chose à ajouter à propos du soutien que tu reçois au collège?

Merci d'avoir répondu à mes questions.



## Entretien: élève.

- **Question 1.**  
Quel âge as-tu?
  
- **Question 2.**  
Tu es en quelle classe?
  
- **Question 3.**  
Quel métier voudrais-tu faire plus tard?
  
- **Question 4.**  
As-tu des passe-temps? Qu'est-ce que tu aimes faire au week-end?
  
- **Question 5.**  
Pour toi, qu'est-ce que l'expression "être dyslexique" veut dire?
  
- **Question 6.**  
Que ressens-tu lorsque quelqu'un utilise le terme « dyslexique » en faisant référence à toi?
  
- **Question 7.**  
Tu es bon en quoi?
  
- **Question 8.**  
Quel âge avais-tu quand tu as réalisé que tu avais des difficultés?  
Quelles difficultés associes-tu à ta dyslexie?
  
- **Question 9.**  
Comment le collègue t'aide-t-il à surmonter tes difficultés?
  
- **Question 10.**  
Est-ce difficile d'être dyslexique lorsqu'on est au collège? Pourquoi ?

- **Question 11.**

Comment le collège pourrait-il davantage t'aider?

- **Question 12.**

Est-ce que quelqu'un t'aide à faire tes devoirs lorsque tu es à la maison?

- **Question 13.**

Si tu pouvais changer quelque chose au collège, qu'est-ce que ce serait?

- **Question 14.**

Lorsque tu es au collège, à qui t'adresses-tu si tu as besoin d'aide avec ton travail?

- **Question 15.**

Est-ce que le fait que tu sois dyslexique te préoccupe?

- **Question 16.**

As-tu quelque chose à ajouter à propos du soutien que tu reçois au collège?

## Entretien: parent.

### Introduction.

Merci d'avoir accepté de participer à ce projet de recherche. Je sais que vous êtes très occupé, merci de consacrer du temps à cet entretien.

Vous avez été choisi car je voudrais gagner une meilleure connaissance de votre expérience en tant que parent d'un(e) collégien(ne) dyslexique.

L'entretien ne devrait pas durer plus de 30 minutes. Si cela ne vous dérange pas, je vais enregistrer l'entretien à l'aide de cet appareil. Vos réponses seront gardées confidentielles et ne seront pas divulguées sans votre permission. Je n'attends pas de réponses particulières à mes questions, ce qui m'intéresse, c'est d'écouter ce que vous avez à dire.

Avant de commencer, avez-vous des questions à me poser?

### Début de l'enregistrement:

- **Question 1.**

Pouvez-vous me parler un peu de xxx ? De sa personnalité ?

- **Question 2.**

Pouvez-vous me parler du collège ?

- **Question 3.**

Pour vous, qu'est-ce que l'expression "être dyslexique" signifie?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pensez-vous que « les dyslexiques » font des choses différemment ?</li><li>• Est-ce qu'être dyslexique pose des problèmes à xxx au collège ? Et dans la vie de tous les jours ?</li><li>• Avez-vous autre chose à ajouter ?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Donc, vous pensez que...</li><li>• La dyslexie a-t-elle un impact sur la manière dont xxx travaille?</li></ul>



• **Question 4.**

Est-ce important à vos yeux que le terme "dyslexie" soit employé plutôt que l'expression « difficultés d'apprentissage » ?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pourquoi?</li> <li>• Y-a-t-il d'autres raisons?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Donc vous pensez que...</li> </ul>

• **Question 5.**

Quel âge avait xxx quand vous avez réalisé qu'il/elle avait des difficultés?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Y-a-t-il des choses que xxx a des difficultés à faire ?</li> <li>• Avez-vous quelque chose à ajouter ?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Donc, vous pensez que...</li> <li>• Donc ce que vous faites consiste à...</li> </ul>

• **Question 6.**

Quelle fut la première personne à émettre l'hypothèse que votre enfant soit dyslexique?

Qui a donné le diagnostique?

Pouvez-vous me détailler les étapes que vous avez eu à franchir afin d'obtenir un diagnostique?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quel soutien vous a été offert?</li> <li>• Par qui?</li> <li>• Avez-vous autre chose à ajouter?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Donc vous dites que...</li> </ul>

• **Question 7.**

Pouvez-vous me parler des difficultés auxquelles votre fils/fille doit faire face lorsqu'il/elle est en classe?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quels types d'erreurs fait-il/elle en écrivant? En lisant ?</li> <li>• Arrive-t-il/elle à suivre les instructions données par les professeurs? Et lorsqu'un professeur donne plus d'une consigne à la fois?</li> <li>• Est-il/elle bon en grammaire? Pourquoi?</li> <li>• Quelle image a xxx de lui même/ d'elle même?</li> <li>• Les camarades de xxx savent-ils que xxx est dyslexique ? Comment réagissent-ils?</li> <li>• Avez-vous autre chose à ajouter?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Donc vous dites que...</li> <li>• Donc vous pensez que...</li> </ul>



• **Question 8.**

Pensez-vous que la dyslexie pourrait avoir un impact sur l'avenir professionnel de votre enfant? Pourquoi?

• **Question 9.**

Comment le collège aide-t-il xxx à surmonter ses difficultés?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reçoit-il/elle de l'aide pendant les cours ?</li> <li>• A qui s'adresse-t'il/elle s'il/elle a besoin d'aide ?</li> <li>• Est-ce que les profs lui donnent plus de temps pendant les contrôles ?</li> <li>• Est-ce que les profs l'aident ?</li> <li>• Suit-il/elle le même emploi du temps que ses camarades de classe ?</li> <li>• Est-ce qu'il/elle demande de l'aide pour faire ses devoirs ? Reçoit-il/elle de l'aide en dehors du collège ?</li> <li>• Comment xxx gère-t-il l'organisation de son travail scolaire ?</li> <li>• Cela l'aide t'il/elle ?</li> <li>• Avez-vous été convoqué pour des réunions au collège ? S'agissait-il de discussions au sujet de la progression de votre enfant ?</li> <li>• Les professeurs sont-ils au courant des difficultés auxquelles votre enfant fait face ?</li> <li>• Qu'est-ce qui a été mis en place par le collège ?</li> <li>• Quelle mesure semble être efficace ?</li> <li>• Reçoit-il/elle de l'aide en dehors du collège? Qu'en pensez-vous ?</li> <li>• Avez-vous autre chose à ajouter ?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Donc, vous pensez que...</li> </ul>

• **Question 10.**

En quoi les attentes scolaires ont-t-elles rendu la dyslexie de votre enfant difficile à gérer?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comment est-ce que cela a rendu/rend les choses plus difficiles pour lui?</li> <li>• Avez-vous autre chose à ajouter?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Donc vous dites que...</li> </ul>

• **Question 11.**

Nous avons tendance à beaucoup parler des difficultés auxquelles les dyslexiques doivent faire face. Cependant, les élèves dyslexiques ont aussi leurs points forts. Qu'est-ce que xxx aime faire ?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Est-il conscient de ses points forts? Que peut-on en faire ? Qu'en faites-vous?</li><li>Et en dehors du collège?</li><li>Avez-vous autre chose à ajouter?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Donc, vous dites que...</li><li>Donc, il est fort en ...</li></ul>

• **Question 12.**

Comment pensez-vous qu'il évolue à l'école?

• **Question 13.**

Pensez-vous que le fait d'être dyslexique préoccupe xxx?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Pourquoi?</li><li>Comment faudrait-il l'aider?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Donc vous dites que...</li></ul>

• **Question 14.**

Comment gère-t-il/elle le fait d'être différent?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Parle-t-il/elle de ce qu'il/elle ressent?</li><li>Comment arrive-t'il/elle à surmonter cela?</li><li>A-t-il/elle adopté une stratégie?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Donc vous dites que ...</li></ul>

• **Question 15.**

En tant que parent, que faites-vous pour l'aider?

Prompts	Probes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Pensez-vous que cela fait une différence?</li><li>Avez-vous employé d'autres stratégies?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Donc vous dites que ...</li></ul>

• **Question 15.**

Avez-vous quelque chose à ajouter à propos du soutien qu'il/elle reçoit au collège?

Merci d'avoir répondu à mes questions.

## Entretien: parent.

- **Question 1.**

Pouvez-vous me parler un peu de xxx ? De sa personnalité ?

- **Question 2.**

Pouvez-vous me parler du collège ?

- **Question 3.**

Pour vous, qu'est-ce que l'expression "être dyslexique" signifie?

- **Question 4.**

Est-ce important à vos yeux que le terme "dyslexie" soit employé plutôt que l'expression « difficultés d'apprentissage » ?

- **Question 5.**

Quel âge avait xxx quand vous avez réalisé qu'il/elle avait des difficultés?

- **Question 6.**

Quelle fut la première personne à émettre l'hypothèse que votre enfant soit dyslexique?

Qui a donné le diagnostic?

Pouvez-vous me détailler les étapes que vous avez eu à franchir afin d'obtenir un diagnostic?

- **Question 7.**

Pouvez-vous me parler des difficultés auxquelles votre fils/fille doit faire face lorsqu'il/elle est en classe?

- **Question 8.**

Pensez-vous que la dyslexie pourrait avoir un impact sur l'avenir professionnel de votre enfant? Pourquoi?

- **Question 9.**

Comment le collège aide-t-il xxx à surmonter ses difficultés?

- **Question 10.**

Les attentes scolaires ont-t-elles parfois rendu la dyslexie de votre enfant difficile à gérer?

- **Question 11.**

Nous avons tendance à beaucoup parler des difficultés auxquelles les dyslexiques doivent faire face. Cependant, les élèves dyslexiques ont aussi leurs points forts. Qu'est-ce que xxx aime faire ?

- **Question 12.**

Comment pensez-vous qu'il/elle évolue à l'école?

- **Question 13.**

Pensez-vous que le fait d'être dyslexique préoccupe xxx?

- **Question 14.**

Comment gère-t-il/elle le fait d'être différent?

- **Question 15.**

En tant que parent, que faites-vous pour l'aider?

- **Question 16.**

Avez-vous quelque chose à ajouter à propos du soutien qu'il/elle reçoit au collège?



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### Interview with the Head Teacher

Interviewer: Question one: have you been working in this school for long?

Head Teacher: Just over five years. 2008 I came here, January 2008.

Interviewer: How would you describe this school's catchment area?

Head Teacher: Mixed. Um... there's pockets of high deprivation. We are one of the schools that has three, at present, Community First wards in its catchment area. Community Firsts are, as you know, organisations that are aimed at supporting deprived areas throughout Wales and our free school meals mirror that because it's around 24% of our pupils that take free school meals and that's high; that's higher than the national average, which I think is around 16%. And it's certainly the highest in XXXX and it's one of the highest in XXXX Wales. On the other hand, there are pockets of, I don't know what the word is...

Interviewer: ... what?...

Head Teacher: ... middle-class, you know, well-off families and I think over the last few years we've actually attracted more of those. So, generally speaking I think XXXX is a working-class area with pockets of deprivation within that but also in our catchment out in somewhere like XXXX, XXXX, XXXX there are areas where families are, you know, comparatively very well-off.

Interviewer: Yes, huge differences between certain neighbourhoods, aren't there?

Head Teacher: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Please can you tell me a bit more about your role in relation to pupils with additional educational needs in general? ...

Head Teacher: ... OK. OK...

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Interviewer: ... not just dyslexia.

Head Teacher: Well as head teacher I'm mostly responsible for the safety and well-being of all the pupils as much as for their education but obviously I delegate a lot of those responsibilities to people like yourself. And as regards to additional educational needs, I rely on you and Mark and other colleagues to do the day-to-day support for those pupils. I obviously trust you and Mark implicitly. I'm obviously interested in the progress that we are making for all our pupils and because this is about AEN, particularly with the AEN pupils. I think, again I think we've got a fairly high proportion of AEN. I think we're above national average again for schools...

Interviewer: ... it's 20%...

Head Teacher: ... yeah, yeah, and I think it's important that allied with the fact that some of those would be from these deprived areas I think we've got, you know, added responsibility to ensure that we try to support them as much as possible. 'Cos, if you like, they're a "double whammy"; they've got additional needs but also they come from deprived families which in a sense isn't bad...

Interviewer: ... do you see a link there?

Head Teacher: ... well, as I said, not necessarily but on occasions if, if... because as you know, you can get kids from, from well-off families with AEN - I'm thinking of Andy in Year 8 now - he's a classic example, very supportive parents, you know, a well-to-do family but, you know, AEN. But I think where there is that "double whammy", I don't want to be sort of too general, but I think some deprived families probably haven't got the support systems for the pupils, for their children that other families have. Some have, as you know again, some are very supportive - if you think of that pupil in Year 5 in Parc who's come just now - you know, I'm not saying they're from a deprived family but, you know, it's a working-class family, but they're very proactive, very supportive. And so I sort of don't want to be, you know, too generic.

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Interviewer: It can be a vicious circle as if one of the parents suffers from a learning difficulty himself...

Head Teacher: ... yeah...

Interviewer: ... he won't necessarily be successful professionally and then the child will suffer with a similar learning difficulty and it's just kind of...

Head Teacher: ... yeah, yeah, and also, you know, as I said, you get to the situation we've had in the past where a pupil with additional needs is actually doing a lot of the caring in the family either for an adult or another sibling. Um... you know...

Interviewer: ... Oliver...

Head Teacher: ... Oliver comes to mind obviously, you know, so... so I think those are the ones we've got to be careful of, where there's a "double whammy"; they've got AEN but also they're from, you know, a deprived family as such. So, you know, I don't know whether there's any sort of academic link between the two. I wouldn't be surprised... to be honest...

Interviewer: ... that's what I'm going to be... I'm waiting for the data. I'm going to be working on this because I think it's quite interesting...

Head Teacher: ... yeah, I'm going to get myself but I wouldn't be surprised...

Interviewer: The next question is a bit similar to the previous one but, basically, what do you think your responsibilities are towards pupils with dyslexia this time, not just AEN in general?

Head Teacher: Um... I wouldn't necessarily distinguish between them because I think... I think we've got, if you like, an added responsibility to all pupils with AEN, I really do. And obviously, dyslexia... well it seems to me as more or less a layman field. It seems to me that there seems to be more occurrence of dyslexia coming through now. I might not be right, I don't know. But I wanted to say, you

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know... OK, we've got to focus on one particular group of pupils because they're dyslexic... at the... you know...

Interviewer: What about in the light of the Estyn emphasis on literacy, do you know what I mean?

Head Teacher: Yeah, yeah it's a fair comment. Well there's... you know... there's lots of... you know... I... I wouldn't want a recommendation from Estyn to... um...influence the way that the school treated all their pupils. I think we've got a responsibility to all our pupils. Yes, obviously dyslexic is important for these pupils to improve their literacy skills but I think there's other groups of pupils with AEN that... you know... are equally important for other skills that they need. So, whereas I recognise the importance of improving the pupils' literacy who have got dyslexia, and they will need extra support... I appreciate that, but... I don't see... I wouldn't see a rational way by we would say OK we'll prioritise the dyslexic pupils because Estyn have said we've got to improve literacy. Yeah? I... I... you know... I would want to support them to increase the literacy but I wouldn't want that with a driver behind it.

Interviewer: OK. Good.

Head Teacher: Good. That's why I trust you.

Interviewer: There you go. Now a tricky question...

Head Teacher: OK

Interviewer: In relation to secondary schools' responsibilities, what are your views on the SEN code of practice? What do you think? It puts a lot of responsibility on secondary schools and head teachers and governing bodies...

Head Teacher: Yeah, yeah...

Interviewer: ...um... what is your view on it?

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Head Teacher: I think there's pros and cons. I think, certainly since I've been involved with, if you like, senior leadership in schools well... yeah... in schools 'cos in Birkenhead, Friars and here... um... I've seen more of a shift coming into school. More emphasis on the school to take responsibility for AEN, SEN in school. Now, then, you may say that that is a good thing, and I think it probably is a good thing, but the thing that concerns me is actually the lack of support we get from outside school. The lack of resources we get from outside school. Um... I think... I think that's... you know... that's a big worry if you like because, especially with us having so many kids with AENs... You know, when they brought in the school action... the school action plus there was (*inaudible*) brought into schools. The statementing then seems to me that... you know... the statementing has become harder for pupils as the years have gone on. And certainly I think the last twelve to eighteen months we've experienced that. I've been speaking to other colleagues, heads on the island... you know... we are quite bemused by the fact that the pupil can have a statement in Year 6 in the primary school and then miraculously become Year 7... um... there's no need. I know that they've got to be assessed annually to make sure that they still are statemented pupils... um... So... the code of practice, to come back to the start of the question, I think... you know... I think it's good that there's a definitive code of practice that all schools should adhere to it. I think that's important obviously. And I think it is important when we are inspected that that should be inspected. Again, that can be hit and miss, I think, in some schools. The degree which Estyn inspectors will actually look at that which makes you sort of... um... question their rationale, if you like, behind the inspection. Um... do I think it's a good thing? I say probably pros and cons. You know... I am concerned that the extra work which is put on yourself and other colleagues and on the school staff to support pupils... um... isn't fully resourced. And I think local and national government are expecting more and more from schools by giving less and less.

Interviewer: Yeah. I've been to an observation panel yesterday for primary schools. Basically, most statements were removed unless the child had very serious learning problems.

Head Teacher: And you have to be honest or cynical and think... well, you know... is there a financial motive in it because we know XXXX is in a state of... you know... peril as regards finances. The education budget has year in year on overspent. And even

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with the... um... cutting of the LSAs I think there's still question marks over to balancing the budget.

Interviewer: I think they're looking at primary schools now. And the dyslexia budget is not being touched, she said yesterday.

Head Teacher: Ah, that's good.

Interviewer: We were surprised.

Head Teacher: If you're dyslexic, yeah.

Interviewer: If you're dyslexic, yeah. XXXX is one of the only counties with this pot of money for dyslexia teachers, specialist teachers going around schools.

Head Teacher: Well, that's good, then.

Interviewer: It's one good thing! I think you've already answered this... what support does the LEA give to the school to help support pupils with additional educational needs?

Head Teacher: OK, OK. Right... well there is a designated officer, obviously, in the authority who is there to support schools. I honestly don't know whether the level of professional development that staff get is up to scratch. You know better than me. Obviously there's the support that we get via the LSAs which were funded centrally but now will be delegated to schools. I think for this coming financial year it's going to be an in/out budget really, so we won't have that much control. I think that's probably a good thing, actually, that the school can control the budget. But there again there have been expense cuts. I do question the professional development that the LSAs have got in the past. I don't know how... just as an aside, our vice chair of governors, Pat Price, has come across a scheme in XXXX where LSAs are getting very good professional development. She's going to email it to me. I think they pay £50 a year, or something, and they have access to a wide variety of courses. Specifically with relation to literacy and numeracy.

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Interviewer: I asked a question about that yesterday again and I was told that they'd have to be trained for free and it'd have to be through the educational psychology service.

Head Teacher: OK. Well Pat is going to email me stuff so we'll wait and see what she comes back with.

Interviewer: OK, that sounds good.

Head Teacher: But... um... 'cos.. you know... it sounded very encouraging. And... and that's going on in XXXX at the present she said. As you said it was based in XXXX. Anyway I'll let you know when it comes through.

Interviewer: Oh, great. OK. Um... I'm almost finished. Have you personally had any initial or in service training on dyslexia while you did... you know... your PGCE or... ?

Head Teacher: No... no. It was obviously a long time ago. You don't have to agree so quickly! No, no I didn't. It was in the 70s. It was obviously recognised then. I think it was probably mentioned then but no... you know...no great shakes to be honest. I wonder how much is then, actually 'cos my partner's son did his PGCE two years ago in XXXX and... um... I think it was highlighted more there. I think it is more prevalent now with PGCE courses. I think that they do... but there again the length of the course there is so much to get in.

Interviewer: Yes.

Head Teacher: You won't get that much... yeah, yeah... and again probably that's where, to come back to the previous question, perhaps the Authority or more obviously the school should be looking to provide development for all staff really. I suppose, in a way, that comes to your role as well but also... you know... the school organising stuff from outside as well.

Interviewer: Well, is there anything else you'd like to mention with regards to current provision in the school? Criticism?



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Head Teacher: No, no. Well I think, well obviously at a state of flux... and then you've taken over at a time, a very important time for the school. I think... you know... you've seen what was in place. Certainly the previous AENCO was in post for four years? three years? four years...?

Interviewer: ... three or four years...

Head Teacher: ... yeah, yeah, but obviously there's still a lot of work to do and things are changing... you know... the LSAs' situation has changed drastically and I think they're going to have a far more important role in the school delivering the pupils learning... far more important. And I think it's important that they realise that. I think most do, in fairness, but I think they all need to realise that and realise they need to be some more proactive probably. But I think I'm pleased with the structure that you've put in place. I'm pleased with the way you bring on Mark as well, Mark Davies because I think... you know... what you're doing with the More Able and Talented that's important as well. Yeah, so... you know... I'm pleased with the way things are progressing... you know, to use a cliché, it's going to be a long journey. I think it's important that we try to take one step at a time and don't try to... you know... run before we can walk. Just makes a few more metaphors.

Interviewer: OK. Well thank you very much for taking part.

Head Teacher: Well, thank you and good luck with your studies.



### Interview with Dan

Interviewer: OK. So, how old are you Dan?

Dan: I'm thirteen.

Interviewer: You're thirteen. And what class are you in?

Dan: Um... I'm 8R.

Interviewer: 8R. So I've got an idea, we talked about it before, have you got an idea of what job you'd like to do in the future?

Dan: Oh, I've got lots of jobs. I'd like to be a zookeeper, archaeologist, game creator 'cos I'm kinda good at art and that so...

Interviewer: ... so you've got a lot of ideas.

Dan: Yeah.

Interviewer: Brilliant. Have you got any hobbies? Is there anything you like doing at the weekend?

Dan: Well, I do like going on my X Box, or drawing or going on trampoline jumping and that.

Interviewer: Go and watch...

Dan: ... what?

Interviewer: Go and watch what? Plane jumping?

Dan: ... jumping on a trampoline.

Interviewer: Ah, trampoline. OK.

Dan: Or else I'd read a book.

Interviewer: Ah, good. Read a book. That's very good of you. So, to you, we talked about, you know, being dyslexic before, didn't we? To you, what does that mean? What does that expression mean?

Dan: What? Dyslexia?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Dan: I think it's... like... things people can't read, they can't say words properly or... like... sort of, like, really crummy. Like... can't read, can't spell, can't really talk properly, things like that.

Interviewer: You can talk properly.

Dan: Yeah, I can talk properly but some words I can't really say it so...

Interviewer: Ah, really. Like what?

Dan: Like if it's some type of words 'cos sometimes when I'm speaking to my mum my tongue gets a little tangled and that.

Interviewer: Ah, alright. OK, that's interesting. So if somebody ever used the word dyslexia to refer to you how would that make you feel?

Dan: It would make me feel kind of sad but it's just dyslexia so I can still get rid of it.

Interviewer: You can get rid of it.

Dan: Uh-huh.

- Interviewer: Why would it make you sad then?
- Dan: It's just because I got that thing. Can't spell, can't read, can't... um... talk properly so...
- Interviewer: I think you can talk properly.
- Dan: Yeah, but some words I can't really say so... like...
- Interviewer: OK. I never notice. So what are your strengths?
- Dan: My strengths?
- Interviewer: In work in school? What are you good at in school?
- Dan: Well I'm good at science, maths, drawing and English.
- Interviewer: OK. Excellent. So you're good at quite a lot of things then, aren't you?
- Dan: Mmm.
- Interviewer: Yes. Right, so you've said art, English um... science... maths?
- Dan: Uh-huh.
- Interviewer: So you're good at quite a lot of things really. So how old were you when you realised you were struggling with your reading, with your writing?
- Dan: I think it started when I was in Year 3 and I think my mum first noticed... or was it the teachers? I think it was the primary teachers what noticed. So... yeah.
- Interviewer: OK. And what type of difficulties were you having then?

Dan: What, in Year 3?

Interviewer: Yes.

Dan: Well, I couldn't really spell... I couldn't spell, I couldn't kind of read but kinda like Year 3... there's... in Year 3 people think... ah they still... still can't spell and that but when I was in Year 4 I still couldn't read... read or...

Interviewer: Right. OK. So for you it was reading and spelling mainly?

Dan: Uh-huh.

Interviewer: OK. Now how does this school, this big school, help you with all this then?

Dan: Well, it's kind of really helping me with the spelling and doing flaps of words and the library... I go to the library sometimes to find some books to read and...

Interviewer: Do you go by yourself?

Dan: No. I go with some friends.

Interviewer: OK.

Dan: Or I can go by myself so...

Interviewer: That's very good. And the Learning Zone as well?

Dan: The Learning Zone. Yeah. Yeah I do... it's quite good the Learning Zone 'cos you got... like... computers, you got some books, you can draw... I can draw in the Learning Zone after lesson and play games and so...

Interviewer: So you're finding it helpful?

Dan: Yeah, very helpful.

Interviewer: Oh, good. And is it difficult for you to be dyslexic... ?

Dan: ... yeah...

Interviewer: ... in this school?

Dan: It's kind of hard with everyone getting all the spellings right and I'm... like... getting it all wrong. If they're reading something and I always get stuck on it and the teachers have to say how. Things like that.

Interviewer: Right. So... so what's... what's the worst thing for you about it?

Dan: The worst thing? Well, the worst thing is kind of... um... spelling and reading because if you're... like... have to read this form... like... you've got a job and you need to read this form ...  
(*interruption*)

Interviewer: Right. OK. Where were we? So we were talking about what's hardest for you, the hardest thing.

Dan: Yeah. So, um... yeah... like... the teachers always have to... you know... spell it out for me and that.

Interviewer: Right. OK. So do you ask your teachers for help then?

Dan: Yeah, I do. Like I say, "Miss what does this say"? or "do you know how to spell this"?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Dan: "Do you need to know how to spell this?" ... like... so...

Interviewer: And how do you think the school could help you more then?

Dan: Well, I think the school can help me quite well with all these cards reading things. In English I got spelling tests and I always... it's hard to get it all right and that so...

Interviewer: So you can't think of anything that the school could do to make it better?

Dan: I can't really think of anything actually.

Interviewer: Right. Should we take that as a compliment? OK. And when you're at home, is there somebody that can help you with your homework?

Dan: Well, there is my mum. She comes around and helps me read what the letters say and um... every homework I don't write my homework. I go on the computer because I keep on making spelling mistakes when I write it so I go on the computer, do my homework on that.

Interviewer: OK. Well that's helpful, isn't it? If you could change something about this school, what would it be?

Dan: Um...

Interviewer: I can see a little smile on your face!

Dan: I don't know.

Interviewer: You don't know? Come on. You're allowed to say anything. Anything.

Dan: I got... mainly the... people who, like... like, the Year 8s and 9s, like that sort of thing 'cos they keep always boring me and that. That's what I would like to change. Like... like... be nice to me or like that sort of thing change.

Interviewer: So other pupils...

Dan: ... yeah...

Interviewer: ... you would like them to be nice to you?...

Dan: ...yeah, 'cos they keep on calling me "ginger" and that sort of stuff so...

Interviewer: You don't listen to them, do you?

Dan: No. It's quite irritating when they all say that.

Interviewer: I bet, yes. They're just jealous.

Dan: Yeah. That's what my mum says.

Interviewer: Well, you know, if you're blond or ginger people have a go at you.

Dan: Yeah.

Interviewer: There you go. It's just because there's not many of us. Not many blond people and not many ginger people.

Dan: Mmm.

Interviewer: OK, so... and when you're in school, if you need extra help, if you're stuck with something, who would you go to for help with your work?

Dan: What? If I was in the classroom?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Dan: I would mainly ask the helper or the teacher if there's no helper there.

- Interviewer: OK. Right. And if you're not in a classroom?
- Dan: Ask a friend. I'd ask a friend if he could help me spell it or read it.
- Interviewer: So, what about people in the Learning Zone? Or people running Homework Club?
- Dan: Um... I don't really go to the Homework Club 'cos I always finish my homework.
- Interviewer: Yeah.
- Dan: Um... Learning Zone, they do kind of help you really a lot, you know the Learning Zone, if you're stuck with spellings or... like... all that sort of stuff.
- Interviewer: OK. So... are you worried about the fact that you may be dyslexic? Are you worried about the fact that you can't... you're struggling with your reading and your writing?
- Dan: Yes, I am really struggling.
- Interviewer: Does that worry you?
- Dan: It does kind of really worry me so... like... if I get a job and it says... like... "do not enter" and I couldn't really read it I could get in trouble, something like that.
- Interviewer: Right. OK. Well, you've improved on your reading test lately, haven't you?
- Dan: Uh-huh.
- Interviewer: Has Miss told you about it?



- Dan: Yeah. She said I improved 75%.
- Interviewer: Yeah. I think that's quite good. I think it's a big jump actually...
- Dan: ...yeah, it does...
- Interviewer: ...from the last time. So it shows all the work you're doing is working. Um...is there anything you'd like to add about school, the support you get in school?
- Dan: Um... not really. I can't really think of anything.
- Interviewer: So you're going to do your SAFMEDS today.
- Dan: SAFMEDS?. What do you mean?
- Interviewer: These cards.
- Dan: Ah, these. Yeah. I do them with the teacher, I've forgot, what's her name? oh Miss Moore...
- Interviewer: Miss Morecombe.
- Dan: Yes, Miss Morecombe.
- Interviewer: So, who's made these cards then?
- Dan: Um... Miss Morecombe made these cards...
- Interviewer: ...yeah...
- Dan: ... so if I... like... if I have a book, if I was stuck with any um... reading words she will write them down.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Dan: And so while in the future I could um... read, try reading them.

Interviewer: That's a good idea, isn't it?

Dan: Uh-huh.

Interviewer: Does it work?

Dan: Mmm, it does, kind of.

Interviewer: Does it help?

Dan: It does help.

Interviewer: Well, that's what we like to hear. Well, thank you very much, Dan.

**Interview with la Conseillère Principale d'Education**

Interviewer: Depuis combien de temps travailles-tu dans cet établissement ?

CPE: Ça fait 11 ans que je travaille ici.

Interviewer: Est-ce que tu as travaillé ailleurs avant ou... ?

CPE: C'était mon premier poste.

Interviewer: Est-ce que tu pourrais décrire le secteur de l'établissement ?

CPE: C'est un établissement qui est dans une zone favorisée sur le plan social avec des classes socio-professionnelles plutôt aisées mais pas seulement. La proportion d'enfants boursiers par exemple, pour avoir un indicateur, est assez faible. Sur 530 élèves, on a 42 élèves boursiers. Donc, ça veut pas dire...c'est pas beaucoup, quoi...Au niveau taux de réussite également, on est au-dessus de la moyenne académique. Donc, on doit être à 80 et quelque % de réussite au Brevet, pareil au niveau du passage en seconde. Donc on est plutôt dans un établissement « favorisé. » parce que ça n'empêche pas qu'il y ait des élèves et des familles en difficulté sur le plan social et...

Interviewer: Est-ce qu'il y a des logements sociaux dans le secteur ?

CPE: Très peu ; c'est un habitat qui est assez dispersé, beaucoup de lotissements et il vient seulement de se...enfin dans le centre de XXXX, tu as quelques logements sociaux quand même et il s'est construit là, enfin les gens ont emménagé au mois de septembre, il y a des bâtiments qui ont été construits à la sortie du village, et plutôt destinés à des catégories, enfin défavorisées, le mot est trop fort parce que, pour pouvoir y accéder, il fallait quand même...enfin, je pense qu'il y a quelques appartements en location, il y a quelques maisons aussi. Mais il faut quand même avoir certains revenus pour pouvoir habiter sur XXXX, hein...

Interviewer: Oui.

CPE: Voilà. Donc globalement une zone favorisée. Mais, et, du coup, ça fait une grande disparité avec des gens qui sont en grande difficulté vis-à-vis d'un public qui l'est pas du tout, quoi, donc tu as un grand écart, tu vois, entre les catégories de publics.

Interviewer: Donc, est-ce que les élèves qui sont en grande difficulté, est-ce que tu as remarqué une corrélation avec le niveau social ?

CPE: Je suis un peu obligée...enfin, c'est difficile d'y répondre mais... Tu vois, par exemple, enfin, je ne sais pas si ça te sera utile, par exemple cette zone qui a été construite là-bas, à la sortie du village, tu as beaucoup de ces gamins là-bas, qui sont en grande enfin ou en difficulté. Tu vois...donc on ne peut pas nier qu'il y ait une corrélation quand même, après..., moi, mon souci surtout, c'est que l'école n'arrive plus, ces gamins-là, à les tirer suffisamment vers le haut...c'est là où l'ascenseur social fameux est plutôt en panne là, tu vois...mais, ceci dit par rapport aux gamins dyslexiques, sur onze années-là, moi je trouve qu'il y a eu des gamins qui...c'est pas forcément des classes sociales défavorisées qui avaient des enfants dyslexiques. Bon, il y en a qui cumulent les handicaps, c'est vrai,

Interviewer: Des fois, ça peut être héréditaire, alors...

CPE: Tout à fait...

Interviewer: Si c'est un problème que les parents ont eu eux-mêmes,...

CPE: C'est ça...Ça pourrait les freiner dans leurs études, etc...

Interviewer: Voilà et ça expliquerait que socialement, ils soient plutôt défavorisés.

CPE: A moins qu'ils aient réussi...

Interviewer: A compenser...que la dyslexie soient assez légère mais euh,

CPE: Je vais prendre ma liste, que je regarde un petit peu...c'est pas forcément des enfants boursiers, hein, ceux qui sont dyslexiques, donc...non, pas forcément hein...

Interviewer: Ça, c'est intéressant...

CPE: Pas forcément...non, je dirais, des classes moyennes (....) le mot défavorisé, ...ça fait presque gros mots, il y a différents degrés dans ce que...pour arriver à classifier la réussite...

Interviewer: Quelles sont tes responsabilités envers les élèves qui ont des difficultés d'apprentissage en général, pas que les élèves dyslexiques ?

CPE: C'est le suivi, le suivi quotidien qui entre dans le cadre du travail de CPE, de la remotivation....mettre ne place aussi un partenariat avec les enseignants qui me signalent par exemple que le gamin pose des problèmes ou quoi, enfin même si en France tu sais, le CPE, il est vu comme le flic de service...mais euh, moi, j'ai la chance ici, peut-être parce que ça fait longtemps que j'y travaille aussi, les profs ne me voient pas uniquement comme ça, alors quand je rencontre d'autres CPE, pour eux, c'en est encore là, c'est-à-dire c'est le flic, le gendarme, le surgé à l'ancienne etc...moi, dans cet établissement, j'ai la chance d'avoir les autres missions du CPE qui sont reconnues également. Donc il y a un vrai travail de partenariat avec les enseignants autour des gamins en difficulté, c'est-à-dire, on communique beaucoup, ils me signalent et moi les entretiens que j'ai avec le gamin me permettent d'en avoir une vision plus globale que celle qu'ils ont en classe à travers les difficultés scolaires, tu vois...

Interviewer: Oui, oui.

CPE: Et d'apporter des compléments ou de dire bon, OK, c'est vrai, il pose des difficultés etc. mais il y a telle et telle circonstance qui explique ça...ça excuse pas tout mais...ça explique...donc il y a un travail de suivi et qui se traduit au quotidien par des entretiens avec les gamins...par ma présence en conseil de classe par exemple ou quand on évoque les cas des gamins, moi, je ...

Interviewer: Et les parents...Est-ce que tu les vois régulièrement ?...

CPE: Très régulièrement, oui, aussi. C'est vrai que,...je ne sais pas si toi ça te le fait également mais...je connais bien mieux les gamins en difficultés que les autres. Et les familles, c'est pareil...Donc, il y a des parents que j'ai l'habitude de voir de façon régulière et que je connais bien donc il y a ce travail-là avec les parents , avec les gamins et avec les profs...à essayer de d'accompagner au mieux et d'apporter une vision peut-être un peu plus globale du gamin...

Interviewer: Oui...

CPE: Voilà, d'apporter la vision que je peux avoir moi, sur sa vie de famille aussi...et pas seulement...c'est- à- dire plus l'enfant et pas seulement l'élève quoi...

Interviewer: Oui, oui. Se détacher du rôle du flic...

CPE: Oui, parce que les collègues, tu vois, alors c'est pas tout le temps mais ils vont entrer ici...ils sont en colère après un gamin qui a fait une bêtise ou quoi...ils attendent souvent que tu piques la même colère qu'eux...sur commande, bon il y a des ...sur les petits, des fois, ça peut marcher, de piquer une colère...

Interviewer: Oui, ça leur fait peur..

CPE: Voilà...après, si c'est que ça, ça sert à rien. Il faut un travail de suivi et donc pour pas mal de gamins en difficulté, ceux qui posent des problèmes de comportement, ils sont généralement en difficulté...on a des fiches de suivi. Alors on ne les systématise pas. Et ça a ses limites, c'est une feuille de papier...je pourrais t'en montrer un exemplaire et ...en fait le gamin doit la présenter à chaque heure à son professeur qui note si il a fait des efforts dans le comportement ; s'il avait son matériel, s'il a fait son travail...voilà et à la fin de la semaine, moi ; le vendredi,...je reçois tous ces gamins, là j'en ai 5 ou 6, c'est des 5èmes essentiellement. Et on passe en revue les flèches, si elles sont vers le haut, vers le bas...donc moi,

chaque semaine, je dis là, ça ne va pas, on se fixe des objectifs pour la semaine suivante, et au besoin, s'il y a eu trop de bavardages...je sanctionne aussi. Ils sont prévenus, ils le savent, s'il y a des flèches vers le bas ou quoi, je leur dit, vous êtes mis en retenue. Vous n'avez pas joué le jeu etc...Donc ça permet aussi d'avoir ce suivi régulier des gamins ...et...c'est rigolo parce que le vendredi, ils m'attendent tous là avec leur fiche, il y en a qui , du coup, surtout quand ils ont des flèches vers le haut...ils sont contents de venir aussi, tu vois et même pour moi, c'est une autre relation avec le gamin, là aussi, c'est pas que le garde-chiourme qui va gronder etc...Ils viennent me voir parce qu'ils sont contents d'avoir des flèches vers le haut...Quand ils ont des flèches vers le bas, ils ne sont pas contents , moi non plus. Mais ça permet d'avoir aussi, même sur ces gamins qui posent des problèmes de comportement, d'avoir des moments où tu vas les encourager...là c'est bien, continue...etc. Voilà parce sinon tu peux être cantonné très vite par les collègues enseignants sur le rôle de flic, quoi...

Interviewer: Disons que sanctions, sanctions, sanctions, ça marche pas...

CPE: Mais non, même moi, je m'aperçois bien souvent que t'as un gamin où ça va accentuer les problèmes...tu as tous les profs qui vont bloquer dessus et ...à raison parce qu'il pose des problèmes mais en fait comme tout le monde lui met le pression, le gosse il explose et il en fait encore plus. Bien souvent le remède est pire que le mal parce que du coup, il... Les profs me disent, tu as vu, on a fait ci, on a fait ça et ça marche pas...et justement, c'est peut-être parce qu'on a trop mis de pression.et à un moment donné, il faut arrêter quoi...il faut prendre du recul et lâcher...et pas bloquer sur un gamin parce que ça...on obtient chaque fois l'inverse, enfin, moi je trouve que...et les retenues, c'est pareil...il y a des gamins, ils ont l'habitude, hein...leur emploi du temps eux, ils savent que du lundi au vendredi, ils sont là de 8h à 16h30 ! Ca n'a plus d'impact après sur eux si ça reste pas ponctuel, voire exceptionnel...après les autres...ça reste une heure de plus et ils en ont l'habitude, hein...Ils sont au chaud, ils sont là...On en a même un, en 5<sup>ème</sup>, un gamin en grande difficulté avec sa prof principale, on se dit...c'est son seul moyen...on a l'impression quand on l'engueule, il est là, il est content. Parce que quelque part, on s'intéresse à lui parce que à la maison...il est livré à lui-même, il est tout seul et quand je l'engueule et tout...il dit «...oui, Mme Gaillard... »...et avec la prof principale on se fait la même remarque quoi...Les profs le mettent tout le temps en retenue et

tout mais...quelque part, on obtient pas ce qu'on veut parce que, lui, il est content de rester là...

Interviewer: Oui, c'est...

CPE: C'est difficile de savoir, de trouver l'équilibre...de savoir ce qui va marcher avec les gamins ; puis on a pas beaucoup de ressources quoi...même au niveau de la sanction...une fois que tu as mis l'heure de retenue, le travail supplémentaire, le mot dans le carnet...et après ?

Interviewer: Après ça tourne en rond...on refait tout le temps pareil...jusqu'à ce qu'ils quittent l'établissement...c'est pareil pour nous...

CPE: Ce qui est difficile, ...c'est vrai que les...ces actions là qu'on met...ou les punitions ou quoi, on attend un effet immédiat. Et pour beaucoup de gamins, tu en as pas...et les profs, ils ont du mal avec ça, à pas comprendre que ça puisse...ne pas marcher (...). après tu as le sentiment en haut...que fait la police ? Mais parfois je leur dit un peu sur le ton de la boutade mais je vais pas l'adopter le gamin ! Ca m'est déjà arrivé de leur dire vous voulez que je fasse quoi ? que je l'adopte ? Enfin, à un moment donné, on est pas des magiciens non plus...alors on essaie, on essaie des choses...ça marche et puis parfois ben non ! voilà ! ,le gamin, il a son histoire, il a l'éducation qu'il reçoit à la maison...parce que on est pas tout seul, l'école, elle n'est pas toute seule le gamin, il a sa personnalité aussi et... et puis, il y a une part d'échec dans l'éducation...voilà, hein, c'est difficile à accepter mais...

Interviewer: Il y en a qui se calment d'eux-mêmes...

CPE: Aussi, tout à fait...

Interviewer: On a remarqué vers la 3<sup>ème</sup> ...la 5<sup>ème</sup>, c'est le pire...

CPE: La 5<sup>ème</sup>, c'est le pire...c'est ce que je dis chaque année, je travaille essentiellement pour les 5<sup>èmes</sup>.Et...tu as les 4<sup>èmes</sup> aussi car ils croient que ça y est...qu'ils sont grands,...ça t est,



c'est arrivé, mais en général ça va en se calmant...et après, tu as les 2 ou 3 irréductibles de 3<sup>ème</sup> qui jouent les caïds...voilà, tu as ceux-là, mais c'est vrai que les 6èmes, quand tu arrives au printemps-là, qu'est-ce qu'ils sont chiants ! ...on appelle ça le printemps des 6èmes !

Interviewer: D'un pays à l'autre, c'est la même chose...

CPE: Je vois que c'est pareil chez toi aussi...d'accord..

Interviewer: Oui, oui...C'est exactement pareil..

CPE: OK ben tu me rassures parce que je me disais il n'y a que moi qui m'aperçois de ça...

Interviewer: Ah non, non, c'est exactement la même chose...nous on dit en 6<sup>ème</sup>, attention, février, ça y est...des fois, on arrive en mai, juin, on en peut plus des 6èmes...Personne n'en veut quoi...

CPE: C'est ça...C'est pareil... ..Et là, cette année, la cohorte qu'on...Il y a beaucoup de gamins en grande difficulté...mais. vraiment, il y a un nombre d'enfants, justement, dyslexiques qui ont été dépistés en 6<sup>ème</sup>...mais...il y a les 2 classes de 6<sup>ème</sup>, 6<sup>e4</sup> et 6<sup>e5</sup> où il y a les PPRE, tu sais,...

Interviewer: Oui...

CPE: Ben...et dans les autres classes de 6<sup>ème</sup>, tu as des gamins qui ont peut-être pas été dépistés...et qui en relèveraient voilà, comme cette petite- là, alors, c'est pas des problèmes de comportement mais ce sont de gros, gros problèmes de compréhension...il y a un niveau en 6<sup>ème</sup> qui est assez bas...et là-dessus tu greffes trois, quatre petits caïds qui croient que ça y est, quoi, c'est arrivé...et qui sont déjà ingérables...je les reçois au moins une fois par semaine...et chaque semaine tu recommences, tu revois les parents, tu...bon alors ceux-là, parfois ils se calment après, tu vois, ces 6èmes qui démarrent très fort, il arrive qu'après, ils se calment en 5<sup>ème</sup>, ceux-là...mais

tu en sas de nouveaux qui se révèlent en 5<sup>ème</sup>...donc tu en finis jamais...

Interviewer: C'est clair...les adolescents sont pareils dans le monde entier...et en tant que CPE, quelles sont tes responsabilités envers les élèves dyslexiques ?

CPE: En fait, ce qui se passe, c'est que généralement...quand ils arrivent en 6<sup>ème</sup>, les parents vont me contacter moi, parce que je suis là tous les jours sauf le mercredi...et c'est moi qui vais faire le relais avec le personnel médico-social pour leur dire il y a tel et tel cas et puis j'assiste, au mois de juin, ça c'est pour les 6èmes...on fait une réunion avec les instits et au cours de cette réunion, eux vont nous faire une pré-liste...des gamins dys...ou pour d'autres sujets également, tu vois...et en fait les classes de 6<sup>ème</sup> sont constituées par les instits...ils viennent ici, il y a aussi des profs de chez nous qui y participent mais la constitution des classes de 6<sup>ème</sup>, elle se fait essentiellement par les instits parce que eux connaissent les enfants. Et donc il y a cette réunion-là au mois de juin où déjà on fait des listes, moi je me fais ma pré liste de gamins...dys et ensuite c'est moi qui transmets à l'infirmière et au médecin scolaire...pour qu'après il y ait les PAI qui soient mis en place.

Interviewer: D'accord...

CPE: Et donc, en fait, j'assiste aux réunions de PAI avec le médecin, le Principal ou le Principal Adjoint et le prof principal...

Interviewer: Et le médecin.... ?

CPE: C'est le médecin scolaire.

Interviewer: Et l'infirmière ?...

CPE: L'infirmière y assiste si elle est là...Et en fait c'est moi qui, en début d'année, collecte...que ce soit pour les 6èmes ou autre, les parents me remettent à moi...tu vois, ça je l'ai eu mardi, le certificat médical...

- Interviewer: Ça vient du médecin scolaire ?
- CPE: Ça, c'est pas le médecin scolaire, c'est le médecin qui suit cette gamine.
- Interviewer: Donc quel est le rôle du médecin scolaire exactement ?
- CPE: Elle va centraliser toutes les demandes de PAI...et c'est elle qui va animer les réunions au cours desquelles les parents sont présents.et où, à partir de documents fournis par l'orthophoniste, l'ergothérapeute, tous les intervenants auprès du gamin à l'extérieur,...ils peuvent être présents également...souvent on invite l'orthophoniste à venir à cette réunion, pour le 1<sup>er</sup> PAI qu'on fait en début d'année - enfin, maintenant c'est de plus en plus tard...donc le médecin anime cette réunion et à partir des préconisations des autres médecins...etc...va lister les moyens à mettre en œuvre...ou les moyens adaptés au cas du gamin.
- Interviewer: D'accord...
- CPE: Mais généralement, ce sont toujours les mêmes choses qui reviennent...les mêmes préconisations.
- Interviewer: Et en ce qui concerne les directives ministérielles ?enfin ce qu'ils pensent que les collègues devraient faire... ?Est-ce que c'est réaliste ? Qu'est-ce que tu en penses ?
- CPE: Non, ce n'est pas du tout réaliste. Moi je trouve qu'il y a deux choses, il y a deux types de réponses...Il y a la réponse qui est donnée aux parents par l'institution, c'est-à-dire votre enfant est dyslexique, ça relève du handicap, donc on va faire un PAI pour alléger les contrôles, mettre en place les photocopies etc...donc les parents, pour eux, quand ils entendent ce discours-là, c'est bon...tout va bien, on va prendre en charge mon gamin...et ça va très bien se passer .Et on fait croire ça aux parents. Alors que sur le terrain, évidemment on est tenu donc de faire des PAI mais concrètement, on ne peut pas mettre vraiment en application...il y a certains collègues qui vont y être sensibles et qui vont le faire...qui vont appliquer mais pas tous...sur les dix

profs, là, j'ai une maman qui m'a appelée ce matin en me disant qu'elle n'a pas vraiment de problème dans telle ou telle matière mais que dans telle autre on ne tient pas vraiment compte du handicap de sa gamine etc...donc, c'est pas réaliste parce que les collègues sont pas formés, chez nous en tout cas, c'est un souci, certains le demandent d'ailleurs...à être former et à mieux adapter, et à mieux individualiser sa pédagogie...et techniquement quand ils ont 30 gamins dans la classe, c'est difficile. C'est très difficile.et du coup, moi, ce qui me dérange c'est qu'on fait croire aux parents que ça va être formidable et que ça va tout résoudre...pas résoudre mais du moins que ça va aider le gamin etc...or, en fonction des équipes, en fonction du prof principal , en fonction de tas de choses ben...ça marche pas.

Interviewer: La dyslexie en plus, c'est pas une maladie qui se guérit donc, c'est quelque chose qui dure et...malheureusement ça reste quoi...

CPE: Oui, donc, c'est un peu de la poudre aux yeux, on veut faire croire que... et ce qui engendre, du coup, une incompréhension...et une animosité de la part de la famille vis-à-vis de l'institution. Parce que ce qu'on leur promet euh...dans les faits ça n'existe pas.

Interviewer: Et qu'est-ce qu'ils pensent en général des PPRE ?

CPE: Les PPRE, c'est quelque chose qui est mis en place par les instits, c'est à dire qu'il y a un travail... dès le CM2, ils disent aux parents « oui, il serait peut-être bien qu'il soit dans une classe allégée en math et en français parce que...il n'y arrive pas » donc....

Interviewer: C'est pas seulement pour les élèves dyslexiques ça...

CPE: Non, non, mais là cette année, en 6<sup>e</sup>, on a , parmi tous les PPRE, je pense qu'on a ...à 80%, ils sont tous dyslexiques. Et donc ya ce travail qui est fait en amont...

Interviewer: Qu'est-ce que tu en penses ?

CPE: Oui, je pense que ça a au moins une vertu, c'est que les gamins sont sortis de la classe donc en math et en français, certains qu'en math ou qu'en français et certains dans les deux disciplines, ils sont sortis de la classe et dans des petits groupes. Et les profs qui font ça soit en math ou en français sont assez investis...Et même les profs principaux qui ont été mis dans ces classes-là sont investis là-dedans tu vois...ils cherchent par eux-mêmes à aider ces gamins...à mettre en place des choses etc...donc c'est bien parce que ces gamins ça leur permet d'être à un moment donné rassurés et de pas forcément souffrir de la comparaison avec le reste du groupe qui est en réussite et d'aller à leur rythme et je pense que...au moins ça a la vertu de leur permettre de souffler.et d'aller à un autre rythme que le reste de la classe. Et ça je trouve déjà que ça c'est bien. Après le souci, c'est que c'est pas forcément...là on va le mettre en place en 5<sup>ème</sup>... (parce qu'en fait on avait pas assez d'heures pour le faire en 5<sup>ème</sup>...) et ça n'existait qu'en 6<sup>e</sup>.

Interviewer: Et donc ça se passera seulement ici ou c'est national ?

CPE: Non, c'est national...les PPRE, c'est national, par contre chaque établissement adapte et fait en fonction de son autonomie. Donc les formules sont peut-être diverses sûrement même ailleurs.

Interviewer: Donc vous avez la liberté...

CPE: Oui, d'attribuer des heures...et l'idéal pour moi serait qu'on le perpétue sur... de la 6<sup>ème</sup> à la 3<sup>ème</sup> en fait...comme tu dis, ils en guérissent pas ces gamins...et au moins ça leur permet de souffler un peu...et de pas être en classe en se disant ,ce qu'on me raconte, c'est du chinois, je comprends rien...Alors, là où il faut être vigilant, c'est que, il y a certains gamins qui ne sont pas forcément dyslexiques...l'objectifs, tu vois, ce serait de rattraper le niveau et de réintégrer une classe ordinaire. L'idée de départ des PPRE, c'était ça, de les mettre à niveau. Or, pour bon nombre de ces gamins-là, on ne les remet pas à niveau...c'est pas vrai, donc, au moins, comme je te dis, ça a le mérite de créer un sas où ils ne sont pas en échec, ils ont des notes qui les valorisent parce que elles sont adaptées au travail qu'ils fournissent et, mais, en revanche pour des parents, et on a un gamin, alors lui en plus, il est autiste...donc tu vois, il est avec les PPRE et, comme il a des bonnes notes, pour les parents c'est : « Ah, mais puisqu'il a ces notes-là...du coup il peut

intégrer...et là, déjà, ils se projettent ...il pourra aller en...au lycée, en terminale...etc et c'est là ,et encore une fois on a eu une réunion là dernièrement, avec.. pour cet enfant mais c'est vrai pour les autres aussi...où..., c'est le cessad (?) (ça veut dire quoi déjà ?) C'est une association qui prend en charge des gamins, alors lui, il est autiste, il y a des éducateurs, des travailleurs sociaux, et qui le font travailler, des psychologues aussi, pendant le temps scolaire, je crois que c'est sur Aix, il est pris...là-bas, ils lui font faire des ateliers, des choses adaptées. Et on en discutait avec eux parce qu'ils nous disaient que, pour ce gamin-là qui est autiste, les parents ont eu le même sentiment...c'est bon, il a 12 de moyenne donc, c'est là où c'est difficile parce que pour les parents, parce qu'il faut chaque fois leur dire attention, un 12 en PPRE, ce n'est pas la même chose qu'un 12 dans une 6<sup>ème</sup> ordinaire.

Interviewer: Ça doit être difficile, surtout si l'élève est là, de dire ça.

CPE: Oui.

Interviewer: De dire ça devant lui (...)...Quand un él. dyslexique entre en 6<sup>e</sup>, quelles sont les toutes premières mesures mises en place ?

CPE: PPRE, pas pour tous les dyslexiques. Ce sont les instits qui nous les désignent car nous ne les connaissons pas. Donc c'est eux qui nous disent que tel enfant relève du PPRE. Donc on a un autiste mais on a aussi...une majorité de dyslexiques.

Interviewer: Et hormis les PPRE, y-a-t-il des ressources particulières auxquelles les dys auraient accès quand ils sont en classe, dans les classes normales ? Nous utilisons des transparents colorés...

CPE: Ça, c'est le prof qui va le faire, ça dépend de la volonté du prof...Il n'y a pas d'outil spécifique qui nous soit donné pour faire travailler ces gamins-là. Donc ça va dépendre du prof qui va s'investir et les faire travailler différemment.

Interviewer: Et les élèves disposent-ils encore de laptops/ ordinateurs portables pour tous les élèves... ?

CPE: Ça existe toujours dès le niveau 4e...ce n'est pas que pour les dys...mais on a des gamins, parfois dès la 6<sup>e</sup>...des gamins dysgraphiques qui ont un portable. On en a en 5<sup>e</sup> qui ont un portable depuis la 6<sup>e</sup>.L'un est équipé depuis le CE2 d'un ordinateur. Il a le droit d'être en classe et de prendre des notes avec son ordinateur...Mais alors les profs...ça ne leur plaît pas !

Interviewer: Ah !

CPE: Mais pas tous...

Interviewer: Pourquoi ? les ordinateurs sont en général bloqués, non ?

CPE: Oui, mais il y a un prof de français, cette année, le gamin est en 4<sup>e</sup>,qui est dysgraphique et il a carrément dit à la mère, non, votre fils n'utilisera pas chez moi son ordinateur ! donc il a fallu que je travaille avec le collègue et que je lui explique qu'il n'avait pas le droit de lui interdire. Alors c'est vrai que le gamin en jouait, il se cachait derrière son ordinateur et le collègue me disait « il fait n'importe quoi avec son ordinateur et.... »alors je lui ai suggéré de le changer de place pour qu'il voit ce qu'il fait avec son ordi. Mais je lui ai dit « Tu ne peux pas lui interdire de l'utiliser, ça fait partie des préconisations du PAI, donc tu n'as pas le droit...de lui interdire » ....mais tu peux avoir ce genre d'attitude chez les profs par exemple...

Interviewer: Oui, une prof dans mon établissement demandait aux élèves de s'asseoir dans l'autre sens ainsi elle voyait tous les écrans ! et elle restait derrière...

CPE: Mais là le réflexe du prof a été non, non, pas dans mon cours ! Hors de question ! Donc voilà, il n'y a pas une volonté de chercher...car il suffisait effectivement de faire tourner le gosse...lui, ce n'est peut-être pas satisfaisant pour lui car il a envie d'avoir ses élèves face à lui mais voilà lui, il lui fait tourner le dos au moment où il écrit...et au moins lui, il voit l'écran ...

Interviewer: L'élève, ça l'embêtera sûrement et il aura envie de bien se comporter pour pouvoir s'asseoir dans l'autre sens...



CPE: Donc voilà...mais sinon il n'y a pas d'outils spécifiques qui soient mis à notre disposition

Interviewer: Et quand un él. non diagnostiqué semble présenter des difficultés et que les profs te le signalent, tu gères comment?

CPE: Et bien cette année, on en a basculé un sur le PPRE, on l'a changé de classe. Et on l'a mis en PPRE.

Interviewer: D'accord..

CPE: Mais encore une fois les PPRE, ce n'est pas uniquement pour les gamins dys...Cette année, il se trouve que...Depuis deux ans , on a de plus en plus de gamins diagnostiqués dys...qui arrivent et on est pas forcément très compétent...pour les aider. Donc j'ai le sentiment maintenant moi, que tout gamin qui est en échec est dyslexique ou dys...quelque chose, tu vois...Parce qu'ils ont tous...je sais pas si c'est un phénomène de mode ou quoi...mais j'ai vraiment le sentiment que tout gamin en échec...si on le fait tester, va présenter un trouble dys. Je ne sais pas toi, si tu le remarques aussi, mais...

Interviewer: Il y a eu une période comme ça, et maintenant chez nous c'est l'inverse. Peut-être parce que les gens connaissent mieux le problème...etc, mais maintenant ça redescend. On s'aperçoit qu'il y a des él. qui ont simplement des problèmes à l'écrit et ils sont pas forcément dyslexiques. C'est simplement que c'est pas leur fort comme moi j'étais pas douée en math; ça ne voulait pas dire que j'avais une dyscalculie, j'étais pas douée en math, quoi ! Donc maintenant, on revient là-dessus, c'est l'inverse, on se rend compte que dans nos petites classes qui sont nos PPRE, en fait les dyslexiques sont une minorité. La plupart des élèves qu'il y a là sont simplement des élèves en difficulté, c'est tout ! Mais parfois ils peuvent présenter des troubles assez similaires, c'est pas facile de faire la différence.

CPE: Ce qu'on a aussi maintenant, je trouve, c'est de plus en plus de gamins (c'est triste ce que je vais dire mais) qui ne relèveraient pas du collège...Là, cette petite, en l'occurrence, il y a quelques années, il y aurait eu un travail de fait en primaire pour qu'elle soient orientée en Segpa.(section d'enseignement général et professionnel adapté).Ce sont des classes qui sont dans les collèges dans certains collèges...mais le problème c'est que



ça a été complètement dévoyé et qu'on y a mis des gamins handicapés et que du coup les parents si tu leur parle de Segpa, ...et s'ils vont voir un peu comment ça se passe, il y a des gamins avec des troubles autre que de la dyslexie ou quoi !des troubles du comportement carrément, donc ça a été quand même dévoyé. Et on ne s'en sert pas efficacement. J'en parlais avec sa prof principale et...le but c'est donc très tôt en fait de continuer à faire faire du français, des maths, de l'histoire-géo, tout ça mais à leur niveau...et d'arriver en fin de collège vers une orientation professionnelle. Donc cette petite , il y a quelques années, elle aurait pu relever et relèvera toujours d'une Segpa mais je comprends les parents, ça fait un peu peur quand on te parle de Segpa, souvent c'est dans des collèges très défavorisés où on cumule bien tous les handicaps tu vois, donc les parents n'ont pas envie...et puis ça fait une orientation très tôt, donc en tant que parent je peux tout à fait comprendre mais parce que le système fonctionne mal à ce niveau là parce que sinon, si c'était bien utilisé, ça permettrait à ces gamins non pas de subir le collège mais de ne pas avoir toujours cette image négative d'eux et de leurs résultats, c'est le cas pour elle, et au moins d'être en réussite quelque part.

Interviewer: Et pour cette petite fille par exemple, quelles sont les difficultés auxquelles elle a à faire face au collège dans la vie de tous les jours en cours? qu'est-ce qui va lui poser le plus de problèmes ?

CPE: Pour elle, c'est la compréhension, la compréhension de consignes,...

Interviewer: Oui, et copier ?....

CPE: Copier, transcrire quelque chose qui est sur le tableau, le mettre...c'est quelque chose qui lui est très difficile...et mémoriser, il n'y a pas pour elle de possibilité de mémorisation. Il y a une autre élève en 4<sup>e</sup> que je t'ai sélectionnée, sa prof d'allemand est venue me voir en me disant je ne sais pas quoi faire, elle inverse toutes les lettres, elle n'a pas du tout compris les consignes que j'avais notées, elle est complètement à côté du devoir et je n'arrive même pas à lire ce qu'elle écrit. Au demeurant, elle est adorable, elle est gentille, elle essaie et tout mais comment faire...est-ce que je lui mets quand même une note ? Et je lui ai suggéré de mettre une appréciation plutôt

qu'une note parce que si tu lui mets une note et qu'elle a 4/20 ça va complètement...et puis la gamine et les parents aussi là...ont bien conscience des difficultés et ont déjà travaillé sur une orientation.si tu veux, elle est plus épanouie.. parce que les parents sont derrière et ne lui fixent pas la barre trop haute non plus...Donc je dirais qu'elle vit plutôt bien sa dyslexie...

Interviewer: Oui, en fonction des attentes, ça change tout ! Et penses-tu que les mesures mises en place au collège (PAI,PPRE etc...) sont toujours adéquates pour aider les dyslexiques ?

CPE: Ce qui me dérange dans les mesures c'est que ce sont les mêmes pour tous les gamins quel que soit le degré de dyslexie. En même temps, c'est ce qu'il y a de difficile pour les profs, de différencier à ce point leur pédagogie, mais en gros c'est chaque fois les mêmes préconisations. C'est peut-être ce qu'il faut faire, moi je ne suis pas spécialiste, photocopies des cours qui ne sont généralement pas faites, d'écrire (on parlait tout à l'heure des transparents) en mettant des couleurs, des choses bien lisibles, visuellement toujours ils accrochent plus, pour mémoriser, des choses comme ça...mais voilà, on préconise la même chose à tous les gamins. Et quel que soit le degré de dyslexie. Je ne pense pas que ce soit adapté à chacun.

Interviewer: Oui, c'est exactement pareil chez nous...Et est-ce que tu es en contact régulier avec les parents d'élèves dyslexiques ?

CPE: Oui, parce qu'ils savent que c'est moi qui transmet au médecin...Du coup j'ai une maman qui m'a appelée en me disant...je ne sais pas si je te l'avais dit- notre médecin est sur dix établissements- donc quand j'ai fait ma liste de demandes de PAI pour cette année, j'en avais 18 de nouveaux à faire...et 24 renouvellements ! donc ça faisait en tout 42 PAIs et ça supposerait 42 réunions ! Tu imagines...alors ce que me dit les médecins, c'est qu'il y a certains collèges défavorisés où les gamins ne sont pas dépistés, pas autant, donc elle en a peut-être moins ailleurs mais elle n'a pas que les enfants dys...il y a des PAIs pour d'autres pathologies, pour d'autres problèmes. Mais en tout cas ici à Marie Mauron, il y aurait eu 42 réunions à faire ! Donc pratiquement on ne peut pas faire, et l'appel de la maman mardi c'était pour dire que la réunion n'avait toujours pas eu lieu pour. mettre en place le PAI de ma fille et aujourd'hui elle m'a rappelée donc c'est moi leur interlocuteur

car ils savent que je suis là tous les jours...et que c'est moi qui transmet. Et du coup je suis en porte à faux aussi car la maman ce matin, je lui ai dit... » écoutez, ce qui compte c'est que les profs en classe mettent en place les dispositions pour aider votre fille après, je comprends que officiellement vous souhaitiez qu'il y ait un papier qui dise que...mais là, ça ne dépend pas de moi, ça dépend du médecin »...et voilà...donc oui, je suis en lien très régulier avec les familles.

Interviewer: Et donc les parents en général, sont-ils satisfaits ?

CPE: Ca dépend...ça dépend des équipes de profs sur lesquelles ils tombent...Donc en 6<sup>e</sup>, je pense qu'ils sont satisfaits. Après quand on arrive en 4<sup>e</sup> et 3<sup>e</sup>, les profs ont des attentes vis à vis du lycée, du Brevet et souvent ces profs ont beaucoup moins de patience et comme en général les gamins qui ont des troubles dys ont ...enfin il y a aussi des problèmes de comportement qui arrivent dessus, les profs me disent : »il n'y a pas que la dyslexie...tu peux m'expliquer pourquoi il n'écoute pas en classe, pourquoi... donc souvent le discours des profs c'est : il y a un manque de travail, quand tu sais le temps que ça leur prend à ces gamins pour bosser, enfin moi je comprends qu'ils se découragent...qu'ils aient plus envie ces gamins mais les profs eux voient qu'il y a des problèmes de comportement et que c'est pas normal ...donc 6<sup>e</sup>,5<sup>e</sup>...je trouve que ça va encore, les profs sont sensibilisés à ça, là, ils sont plus dans l'accompagnement ;4<sup>e</sup>/3<sup>e</sup>...tu vas en avoir un ou deux par équipe qui vont effectivement faire un peu plus attention mais...

Interviewer: Et donc quand les parents se plaignent c'est donc par rapport à ça....

CPE: Oui, ils m'appellent en disant que les photocopies n'ont pas lieu...En principe, les él qui ont un ordinateur, le travail doit être donné sur clé USB, il y a des collègues qui ne jouent pas le jeu....donc si tu veux les colères, c'est moi qui les ai au téléphone. Il y a des parents qui m'appellent en disant c'est pas normal alors moi je transmets, je dis aux profs n'oubliez pas, il faut faire...et puis après je transmets aussi directement au principal, l'an dernier je lui ai dit de rappeler que quand il y a un PAI il y a une obligation. pour les photocopies etc...donc l'an dernier il avait refait un mail aux profs en leur rappelant ça

mais...je te dis, autant c'est efficace en 6/5<sup>e</sup>, en 4/3<sup>e</sup> les parents ne sont pas trop contents de ce qui est fait.

Interviewer: D'accord. C'est un peu pareil chez nous aussi. En 6<sup>e</sup> les profs sont plus patients parce qu'ils sont tout petits, en 5<sup>e</sup> ils sont encore petits. En 4<sup>e</sup> quand ils commencent à se rebeller, surtout les élèves en échec, ils sont plus agressifs etc. donc les profs perdent patience...

CPE: Et ce qu'ils disent, c'est qu'ils n'ont pas forcément envie de faire d'efforts pour un gamin qui ne le mérite pas...

Interviewer: Mais le problème c'est que ces élèves sont agressifs...c'est à cause de leurs difficultés que ces gamins sont agressifs.

CPE: C'est un cercle vicieux et on en sort pas...et c'est ça qui est dommage quoi...

Interviewer: Et les élèves dyslexiques viennent-ils te voir pour te parler ?

CPE: Pas forcément, non.

Interviewer: De leurs soucis ou...

CPE: Non, c'est plutôt à la fin et encore, je trouve que les gamins dys, surtout petits, plus ils se cachent,...ils n'aiment pas trop ...montrer leur différences par rapport aux autres gamins donc je trouve pas que ce soit des gamins très demandeurs...leurs parents le sont mais pas forcément les gamins.

Interviewer: Ils ont honte...

CPE: Oui, peut-être pas tous mais c'est discret en général...J'en ai un en 6<sup>e</sup> qui vient constamment me voir pour savoir quand aura lieu la réunion...voilà ils viennent me voir sur le plan technique pas pour une aide pédagogique. Même si, cette année j'ai mis en place de l'aide aux devoirs le soir de 15h30 à 16h30 , c'est les surveillants qui le font donc on a dedans quelques gamins dys

mais pas toujours non plus parce qu'en fait quand je leur ai proposé, les parents me disent que comme il y a déjà un suivi à l'extérieur avec l'orthophonie, c'est des gamins qui souvent ont beaucoup d'heures en plus à la maison ou chez l'orthophoniste ou quoi...donc ils ne restent pas forcément en plus à l'aide aux devoirs au collège.

Interviewer: D'accord.

CPE: Donc d'un point de vue pédagogique c'est ce que j'ai pu mettre en place. Mais c'est pas seulement pour les enfants dys. Et c'est pas ceux qui en profitent le plus.

Interviewer: Et ceux qui ont de l'aide, qui vont voir un orthophoniste, c'est une ou deux fois par semaine ?

CPE: Oui.

Interviewer: C'est lourd quand même !

CPE: Oui, c'est lourd. Surtout quand on voit qu'il y en a qui n'ont pas que ça. Ils ont parfois une rééducation orthoptiste parce que parfois il y a des troubles associés. ergothérapie pour certains( ?) la psychomotricienne, ils ne cumulent pas tout, mais ce qu'il y a c'est que souvent en 6<sup>e</sup>/5<sup>e</sup>, ils en ont beaucoup, en 4<sup>e</sup>/3<sup>e</sup> en général ils en ont marre...il y a souvent à la fois de la part des parents une demande à l'institution que l'on mette en place un PAI mais de leur côté à eux un arrêt de tout traitement. Par exemple au lycée, j'en parlais avec l'assistante sociale, il y en a très peu qui ont des séances d'orthophonie...Arrivés au Lycée, il n'y a plus de suivi.

Interviewer: Ça fait un choc la transition...

CPE: Donc il y a beaucoup de parents qui attendent de l'institution de faire des choses mais ils ne mettent plus rien en place à l'extérieur.

Interviewer: Et les autorités académiques, comment soutiennent-elles les collègues ? Les ordinateurs portables ne sont pas pour tous les élèves...

CPE: Ça, c'est le Conseil Général, c'est pas l'Inspection Académique.

Interviewer: D'accord.

CPE: Attention, il y a les ordis pour tous les 4<sup>e</sup> et ça c'est le CG et tu as la MDPH, la Maison pour le Handicap, quand les gamins se font dépister par réseaudys ou que les parents ont fait suivre dès leur plus jeune âge, qui peut octroyer des fonds pour l'achat d'un ordinateur. Donc ce sont deux choses différentes...Et donc dans le cas des enfants dys ; ils relèvent de la MDPH. Ceux qui sont appareillés d'un ordinateur, par exemple celui dont je te parle depuis le CE2, lui, c'est dans le cadre de la MDPH.

Interviewer: Et la MDPH est-elle subventionnée par l'état ?

CPE: Oui. Et ça dépend de l'I.A. (inspection académique).En tout cas, ça dépend de l'état. Par contre, un des dispositifs, c'est que pour ces gamins-là, qui sont dépistés, qui ont un ordinateur etc...quand ça relève vraiment du handicap, on a des réunions avec une référente de la MDPH une à deux fois par an, en décembre / janvier et c'est elle qui évalue et qui fait éventuellement les demandes d'ordinateur. Essentiellement, je vois que ça qui leur est attribué. Il n'y a que l'ordinateur !

Interviewer: Et les tiers temps ?

CPE: Oui, ça, on le fait.

Interviewer: L'ordinateur, chez nous, c'est difficile d'en obtenir un. On a des transparents, des règles pour les aider à lire mais souvent ils ne veulent pas s'en servir car ils ne veulent pas être...

CPE: Ça, on n'a pas; parce que même tu vois les prises en charge, les gamins qui sont suivis par une psychomotricienne, tout ça, je ne suis même pas sûre qu'ils soient remboursés. Tu sais les

graphothérapeutes, tout ça, c'est pas remboursé. Je ne crois pas que ça soit pris en charge .

Interviewer: Et l'orthophoniste ?

CPE: Oui. Mais le reste, psychomotricien etc, je pense que ce n'est pas remboursé.

Interviewer: Ça revient cher !

CPE: Oui. Si la séance est à 25 ou 30 €, même faire un bilan ! Moi, l'an dernier, j'ai fait faire un bilan pour mon gamin, parce que je pensais qu'il avait des problèmes de graphisme ou quoi, j'en ai eu pour cent et quelques euros, non remboursés. Bon, elle l'a gardé pendant 4 heures..

Interviewer: Je crois qu'au Pays de Galles, on peut passer par le privé pour faire un bilan à un enfant et ça coûte 300£.ça fait à peu près 320€ mais par contre maintenant justement l'es psychologues scolaires ne font plus de bilans comme ça pour les élèves dys. Ils considèrent qu'on ne peut pas diagnostiquer une dyslexie comme ça , c'est un ensemble de choses. Il faut recevoir l'opinion des profs etc...c'est un ensemble de choses qui fait qu'un enfant est dyslexique. C'est pas simplement un test qu'on peut lui donner.

CPE: Oui. Nous, les dépistages, par exemple, les instits, nous, si le gamin n'a pas été dépisté avant, on va dire aux parents, voilà, nous on pense que....mais après, ça va être le corps médical qui s'en charge. Ici, c'est tout médicalisé. Et on envoie généralement les gamins chez des neuros...neurologues Oui, lui est généraliste mais sinon,(cherche dans ses dossiers/ certificats médicaux) oui.des neurologues et en fait il y a une telle recrudescence de demandes que l'inspection académique a demandé systématiquement un bilan neuro l'an dernier ou il y a 2 ans...

Interviewer: Et ça veut dire quoi un bilan neuro ? Un IRM ou quoi ?

CPE: Que ce soit un médecin qui ...Exemple, cette petite...tu vois, elle est suivie au centre hospitalier d'Aix, c'est signé par...(...) ça c'est dans le cadre du réseau dys...c'est le service de pédiatrie/néonatalogie, mais il n'y a pas...si, c'est un service de neuropédiatrie, elle, elle est neuropédiatre.

Interviewer: D'accord. Il semble qu'il y a beaucoup de docteurs différents qui gèrent ces problèmes. C'est fou car au R.U, il n'y en a pas. C'est pas médicalisé du tout

CPE: A l'hôpital nord Marseille, c'est le professeur Habib qui est très connu, qui a ...Tu as Mancini aussi. Et ça c'est la Timone (Marseille)...Ce sont des neuropédiatres. Voilà regarde...neuropédiatrie, neurologue, phoniatre, psychomotricité, orthophonie, psychologue, neuropsychologue...et le secrétariat. Et eux ils sont « centre de référence des troubles des apprentissages »Professeur Josette Mancini.Carrément...

Interviewer: Donc les gamins dyslexiques sont considérés comme malades...

CPE: Malades. C'est un handicap. En France, c'est un handicap.

Interviewer: C'est pas évident pour les enfants à gérer...As-tu eu l'occasion de participer à un stage sur la dyslexie ?

CPE: Non, enfin j'ai assisté à des conférences de Habib, justement. Et là ; le Principal, devant le nombre croissant de PAIs, etc., on va avoir un stage-établissement de 2 jours là-dessus où des intervenants extérieurs vont venir nous parler de la dyslexie.

Interviewer: Donc ça, c'est lui qui va l'organiser lui-même ?

CPE: Oui, c'est lui qui va l'organiser, c'est lui qui en a fait la demande, ça passe par le PAF, Projet Académique de Formation. Donc individuellement dans le cadre du PAF, tu peux choisir une formation dans l'année, quelque chose que tu as envie de faire mais les chefs d'établissements peuvent aussi faire des



demandes spécifiques pour leur établissement. Donc lui en a fait une, ça a été accepté et on est nombreux du coup à ...

Interviewer: Donc tous y auront accès ?

CPE: Non, pas tous quoiqu'il m'a dit qu'il banalisait l'établissement parce que...je ne sais plus lesquels il a sélectionné. Je ne pense pas qu'il y ait tous les profs mais on doit quand même être une quinzaine.

Interviewer: Ça va être intéressant !

CPE: Oui, je pense.

Interviewer: As-tu quelque chose à ajouter ?

CPE: Non...

Interviewer: PPS, j'ai vu ça ;..

CPE: Projet Personnalisé de Scolarisation.

Interviewer: Et la différence avec le PAI ?

CPE: Alors la PAI ...attends, le PPS, c'est quand il y a un traitement médical. Le PAI pas forcément parce que le PAI, on le fait pour les gamins genre dyslexiques où il n'y a pas de traitement médical.

### Interview with l'orthophoniste in France

- Orthophoniste: (...) donc la sociologie, la psychologie, la psychiatrie, la neurologie, donc c'est vrai que les études universitaires sont justifiées puisqu' on voit l'enfant au travers de tous ces domaines et c'est complexe...et donc, nous, avant de faire une quelconque rééducation, on pratique d'abord un bilan. Et c'est le bilan qui nous dit si l'enfant a besoin d'orthophonie ou pas. En fait le bilan permet de faire un diagnostic différentiel avec tout ce qui est retard scolaire parce que nous, on intervient pour de la pathologie, c'est-à-dire que la prise en charge sécurité sociale ne s'effectue que dans la mesure où on considère que l'enfant souffre d'une pathologie.
- Interviewer: D'accord donc c'est remboursé...
- Orthophoniste: C'est remboursé par la sécurité sociale. Et par la mutuelle.
- Interviewer: C'est intéressant.
- Orthophoniste: Donc il y a une prise en charge à 60% Caisse Primaire et 40% Mutuelle. Et donc en général ce sont des rééducations assez longues...en ce qui concerne la dyslexie pas toujours mais, ...
- Interviewer: Et donc vous m'avez déjà un peu parlé de vos études mais quelles études avez-vous faites ?
- Orthophoniste: Donc moi, j'ai d'abord passé un concours qui était un tronc commun avec kinésithérapie, ergothérapie, audiophonologie. C'était en 79 et ensuite, on avait un concours spécifique à l'orthophonie ; si on obtenait des notes suffisantes au concours du tronc commun, voilà, donc j'ai passé un concours qui était un concours d'abord écrit avec français, physique, biologie et math je crois. Le tronc commun était sous forme de QCM, on avait physique, biologie et math, français et ensuite on avait un concours spécifique en français, on avait des épreuves d'orthographe, de dissertation et ensuite une

fois qu'on avait réussi, qu'on était admis à l'écrit, on passait l'oral. C'était un oral psychotechnique en fait et à l'issue de cet entretien, on avait l'autorisation d'intégrer l'école d'orthophonie. Moi, j'ai étudié à Lyon. Donc à partir de 79, c'était trois ans donc j'ai eu mon diplôme en septembre 82.

Interviewer: Donc en tout, depuis le concours jusqu'à l'obtention de votre diplôme, il y a eu trois ans.

Orthophoniste: Oui, parce que le concours, j'ai dû le passer l'année précédente parce qu'en fait j'ai fait un an de médecine avant. A l'époque c'était la première année d'un concours sérieux, on va dire. Parce qu'avant, le concours, c'était une dictée !Moi, je l'avais passé mais je l'avais raté parce qu'on était en amphithéâtre et je n'entendais que la moitié de la dictée :quand le professeur était en bas j'entendais mais quand il était en haut, je n'entendais pas et au bout d'un moment, j'ai tout arrêté, j'ai posé mon crayon et je me suis dit, cette année, ce n'est pas pour moi, ce concours et ensuite ,juste avant mon entrée en 79, j'ai passé un concours vraiment sérieux , bien organisé, avec une sélection en fait. Et on a eu une promotion de 50 étudiants à peu près. Mais il y a deux ans, ma nièce a voulu le passer et il y avait 3000 étudiants à Lyon et 37 ont été sélectionnés à la fin...donc il y a vraiment une sélection...

Interviewer: Et donc ça correspond à un Master 1 ?

Orthophoniste: Oui, alors là, c'est passé à cinq ans, peut-être au bout d'une vingtaine d'année, c'est passé à quatre ans...et récemment là, on a eu le Master cinq ans. Et c'est vrai qu'il y a vingt -cinq ans à peu près on avait demandé d'accéder au doctorat pour faire de la recherche. Puis on continue, c'est ce qu'on désire le plus...

Interviewer: Ça paraît bizarre qu'il n'y ait pas de doctorat....

Orthophoniste: Il y a des doctorats mais en sciences du langage par exemple, c'est ce que j'ai fait , après, j'ai bifurqué vers les sciences du langage....il y a une équivalence pour passer

une licence alors j'ai passé une licence et ensuite j'ai fait une maîtrise puis j'ai pas eu le temps de poursuivre parce que...bon...sur le plan familial, il y a eu des changements qui ont fait que j'ai pas pu .poursuivre mais c'est vrai que maintenant, j'aimerais bien obtenir un doctorat pour valider les recherches que j'aurais envie d'entreprendre .Là je veux faire une recherche concernant la précocité. J'ai travaillé avec une psychologue et une psychomotricienne. On va faire une étude à trois en fait...dans une école. Dans une école primaire.

Interviewer: Et vous faites ça avec une université ?

Orthophoniste: Non, (...) on est toutes les trois en libéral .On travaille toutes les trois avec des enfants précoces. Voilà, on a une expérience assez importante depuis quelques années avec ces enfants et donc c'est ce qui nous a motivées à coordonner notre travail et notre désir c'est de partir de la pratique en fait...C'est-à-dire qu'on a monté un projet pour pouvoir entrer dans cette école qui est une école privée, catholique, et on a obtenu un accord de la directrice. Et on va faire une sorte d'échange dans un premier temps sur quatre rencontres...voilà .Et on désire aboutir à un écrit ( ?) du fait...à la suite de cet échange.

Interviewer: Publier un article....

Orthophoniste: Voilà, oui. Publier un article ou faire un petit livre, on sait pas trop pour l'instant. Notre désir, c'est d'échanger avec les enseignants pour voir ce qu'on peut faire pour mieux aider ces enfants qui sont en grande souffrance à l'école. Vraiment...ils sont vraiment en souffrance.

Interviewer: C'est intéressant, on en parle peu finalement...

Orthophoniste: On en parle peu mais de plus en plus, c'est vrai que, ici, en France on accepte les sauts de classe alors que il y a cinq ans, c'était compliqué.

Interviewer: Les sauts de classe ?

- Orthophoniste: Les sauts de classe, c'est-à-dire (...) passer de CE1 à CE2 ( ?) de CP à CE2...souvent on fait un saut de classe de CM1 à 6<sup>e</sup> souvent Le CM2 étant une redite du CM1.On estime que l'enfant qui a bien travaillé en CM1 et qui a un bon niveau et qui s'ennuie en fait ,en tant qu'enfant précoce, il peut peut-être sauter le CM2 et puis passer directement en 6<sup>e</sup>.Puisque la 6<sup>e</sup>, c'est encore la révision....mais quand même avec une nécessité d'adaptation....à un rythme différent , à une structure scolaire un peu différente...
- Interviewer: D'accord...et vous avez commencé à pratiquer ici ou à Lyon ?
- Orthophoniste: Non, à Lyon...17 ans à Lyon. En fait, j'ai pratiqué à Lyon de 82 à 97 et ensuite j'ai travaillé ici. Je me suis arrêtée trois ans pour ma fille...
- Interviewer: Ça fait combien d'années que vous êtes ici ?
- Orthophoniste: Alors je suis arrivée en 97.Et je me suis arrêtée trois ans entre temps pour ma fille. Mais bon, mon esprit était toujours dans ma passion, dans mon travail en fait...J'ai pas vraiment décroché parce que...ma fille, ça a été vraiment pour moi l'opportunité d'observer ce qui se passait de l'état de bébé jusqu'à maintenant et ma fille est une enfant précoce, en fait...
- Interviewer: D'accord...
- Orthophoniste: Donc c'est aussi ce qui a motivé mon étude...ma recherche parce que...ça a été très difficile à l'école...très, très difficile...on a même envisagé la déscolarisation....On ne l'a pas fait parce qu'on a été soutenus par les psychologues, et puis en tant que professionnelle, j'ai eu la possibilité d'échanger avec de nombreux spécialistes , ça m'a permis de l'aider au mieux...mais il y a eu des périodes de sa vie scolaire qui ont été très difficiles et on a envisagé parfois peut-être de la déscolariser dans les moments où elle était très, très mal, où elle faisait un petit peu de la dépression, des grosses angoisses, et puis les choses se sont arrangées

à partir de la 6<sup>e</sup> justement...Bon, elle a intégré l'école de la Nativité qui est une école...c'est l'école dans laquelle on va faire notre recherche...qui est une école qui reçoit énormément d'enfants précoces...C'est pour cela qu'on a choisi cette école pour faire notre étude et pour partager nos connaissances concernant l'enfant précoce. Donc elle est intégrée dans cette école, elle n'est pas dans une classe précoce mais elle est quand même dans une classe dans laquelle il y a énormément d'enfants précoces, des enfants qui ont jusqu'à deux ans d'avance. Et elle est très bien dans cette classe. C'est une classe qui propose le chinois comme deuxième langue.

Interviewer: Ah, c'est intéressant, c'est nouveau, ça !

Orthophoniste: C'est nouveau et elle a choisi une option orientale au bac. Donc elle a cinq heures de chinois par semaine. Langue et civilisation.

Interviewer: C'est bien, ça !

Orthophoniste: C'est très intéressant.

Interviewer: Quand j'étais à l'école, c'était allemand ou anglais...

Orthophoniste: Donc là dans cette école, il y a aussi la possibilité de faire un Bac Européen avec l'allemand. Anglais et allemand, les deux...

Interviewer: C'est bien...Donc si vous pouviez me parler de la nature de votre travail ? C'est assez...vaste ?

Orthophoniste: Alors de toute façon, l'orthophonie, c'est la rééducation des troubles du langage oral, du langage écrit...des troubles de l'articulation et de la parole...des troubles de la voix, c'est-à-dire qu'on rééduque tous les étages...qui permettent la communication-expression. On commence(...) j'aurais dû commencer par l'articulation, par la voix, la parole, le langage oral, le langage écrit. La communication aussi, plus globalement...donc c'est

assez vaste hein...Bon, moi, je ne travaille qu'avec les enfants parce que l'orthophoniste a la possibilité de travailler avec les enfants et avec les adultes.

Interviewer: Et ça c'est votre choix personnel ?

Orthophoniste: Oui c'est un choix personnel parce que je trouve que travailler avec les enfants me correspond davantage...sur le plan de la personnalité, du caractère...je trouve très intéressante la rééducation de l'adulte mais c'est plus compliqué pour moi sur le plan relationnel. J'ai fait mon choix, voilà...

Interviewer: D'accord. Et quelles sont d'après vous les compétences requises pour exercer votre profession ? Donc avec les enfants puisque...

Orthophoniste: Alors, je pense qu'il faut de bonnes capacités d'analyse, de bonnes capacités d'observation....de synthèse...voilà, tout ça c'est sur le plan scientifique et...de très grandes capacités d'écoute, très grande patience, beaucoup d'empathie....c'est très important de pouvoir se mettre à la place du patient...essayer de comprendre sa problématique et puis, il faut beaucoup d'imagination aussi...il faut savoir se mettre à la portée de l'enfant parce que c'est sûr que comme j'explique aux enfants, à l'école on est obligé d'y aller, chez l'orthophoniste, non ! Donc il se passe quelque chose de l'ordre du choix et de la liberté de cette relation qui va se passer au travers du langage. Et c'est une opportunité vraiment très très intéressante pour l'enfant, hein...de pouvoir s'exprimer de manière très personnelle...et très spontanée aussi...donc il faut que l'orthophoniste soit capable de recevoir ce désir d'exprimer tout ce que l'enfant a en lui....et après il y a la technique évidemment hein...il faut bien connaître...sur le plan scientifique, il faut connaître,...voilà...le langage évidemment mais tout ce qu'il y a autour du langage aussi....puis il y a la psychologie...puis les problèmes psychiatriques, les problèmes sociologiques ,voilà, il faut de très grandes compétences à différents niveaux, c'est pourquoi...je pense que les études de cinq ans, c'est justifié...Et je pense qu'il faudrait qu'on ait la possibilité d'avoir ce statut de docteur en orthophonie...parce qu'on fait beaucoup de

dépistage aussi...on peut faire des dépistages de surdit , de troubles visuels,

Interviewer: Et donc, est-ce que vous faites des d pistages pour la dyslexie ? Est-ce que c'est vous ?...

Orthophoniste: Ah oui, c'est s r, enfin ce sont les orthophonistes qui font le diagnostic de dyslexie, dysorthographe..., dysphasie, retard de langage, retard de parole...oui, ce sont les orthophonistes qui le font...alors apr s on est d pendant du m decin, parce que c'est le m decin qui prescrit le bilan...

Interviewer: D'accord, alors les parents,...ce serait les parents qui vont voir...

Orthophoniste: ...viennent en consultation d'orthophonie apr s avoir obtenu une ordonnance. On est pas oblig  de travailler sur ordonnance mais sans ordonnance, on ne peut pas obtenir de prise en charge de la S curit  Sociale. Il faut vraiment une ordonnance pour avoir une prise en charge financi re en fait...

Interviewer: D'accord.

Orthophoniste: Et on fait d'ailleurs une demande de prise en charge aupr s de la S curit  Sociale. Avec ce qu'on appelle une Demande d'Entente Pr alable. Un formulaire qu'on envoie   la S curit  Sociale.

Interviewer: Et pour vous, qu'est-ce que le terme dyslexie signifie ?

Orthophoniste: La dyslexie c'est un dysfonctionnement de la lecture chez un enfant qui est intelligent et qui a eu un enseignement de la lecture tout   fait coh rent...qui est all  r guli rement   l' cole, qui a eu un enseignement de la lecture « normal » et cet enfant qui est intelligent ne parvient pas   apprendre,   lire comme les autres enfants ; et la manifestation de la dyslexie, elle peut  tre tr s vari e,  a peut  tre des confusions de sons, des



inversions de sons, de lettres, ça peut être une difficulté dans le rythme de la lecture, ça peut être des troubles de la compréhension, enfin les manifestations de la dyslexie sont vraiment très diverses.

Interviewer: Et en tant qu'orthophoniste, quelles sont vos responsabilités envers les élèves dyslexiques, leurs familles, et les établissements scolaires ? Comment est-ce que vous travaillez avec les établissements scolaires, les familles, est-ce que vous êtes en contact avec les familles ?

Orthophoniste: Ah oui. Je travaille beaucoup en coordination avec l'école, avec les familles pour que l'enfant profite au mieux de ce que je lui apporte en rééducation. Alors c'est vrai que je ne fais pas du tout la même chose que ce qu'on fait à l'école, hein ! Mais on part quand même du même support et donc il y a quand même un lien avec ce qui se passe à l'école.

Interviewer: D'accord alors vous travaillez avec des manuels... ?

Orthophoniste: Alors moi, je travaille beaucoup avec des jeux, avec des petits tableaux, avec des couleurs, j'utilise beaucoup des codes couleurs et puis l'oral, en fait je pars toujours de l'oral...parce que l'oral c'est la base de l'acquisition du langage écrit. Et souvent les troubles du langage écrit sont associés aux troubles du langage oral ; donc très, très souvent on est obligé de revenir à ce langage oral pour soigner ce langage écrit, en fait. Et je travaille en grande collaboration avec les parents aussi, hein...alors après, tout dépend dans quel secteur social on se trouve...j'ai eu la chance de travailler dans deux secteurs très différents parce que à Lyon je travaillais dans une banlieue très défavorisée...donc là, la communication était très compliquée parce qu'il y avait beaucoup de bilinguisme en plus, donc je me sentais un petit peu isolée quand même...j'avais du mal à...bon les parents étaient très volontaires mais ils se trouvaient quand même assez démunis du fait de leur langue et je me sentais assez seule pour travailler et j'avais du mal aussi à faire accepter aux enseignants de coordonner leur travail avec le mien. Ils avaient du mal à...

Interviewer: Et vous trouvez ça plus facile ici ?

Orthophoniste: Ici, c'est plus facile... Ici, il y a du bilinguisme mais très, très peu, hein... Et puis la culture était différente parce que c'était beaucoup des enfants arabes que j'avais à Lyon donc la culture était très, très différente alors qu'ici, je peux avoir des enfants bilingues mais c'est des petits anglais, des allemands... voilà, c'est une culture européenne. C'est moins compliqué sur le plan de la communication, de l'intercompréhension culturelle, hein... alors c'était passionnant... moi, j'ai adoré travailler à Lyon... Ca a été pour moi une grande école... et en plus ça a été tout de suite après mes études d'orthophoniste, j'ai eu mon diplôme en 82 en septembre et j'ai commencé en octobre 82 dans le libéral... donc c'était pas facile... j'ai été plongée directement dans la complexité de ce travail... Bon, après j'ai fait une collaboration quand même pour avoir de l'aide... J'ai travaillé dans mon cabinet et en collaboration dans un autre cabinet avec d'autres orthophonistes pour pouvoir échanger

Interviewer: Et qu'est-ce qui faisait que c'était plus difficile de travailler avec les professeurs à Lyon qu'avec les professeurs ici ?

Orthophoniste: Je pense que c'était, comment dire... l'environnement social, il y avait beaucoup plus de tension parce que c'était beaucoup plus difficile pour les enseignants, hein... C'était plus complexe... parce que eux aussi je pense avaient des difficultés de communication. Parce que de toute façon, tout parent a des exigences mais après quand il y a du bilinguisme... c'est complexe, et puis il y a deux cultures différentes... donc les exigences en France ne correspondaient peut-être pas forcément à ce que pouvaient exiger les parents dans leur culture donc c'était un peu compliqué... c'était superintéressant Il y avait un échange évidemment. Moi, j'ai adoré travailler avec ces familles mais c'était complexe hein... Cette complexité m'a permis vraiment de m'améliorer en fait. Elle m'a obligée à aller au plus profond de l'individu en fait, à vouloir comprendre les mécanismes du langage parce que justement on était dans le bilinguisme. C'était passionnant et c'est vrai que quand je suis arrivée là, j'ai dû revoir la norme. Parce que à Lyon j'avais des cas de trouble du langage assez graves parfois... des dysphasies assez graves, enfin... des choses difficiles à

rééduquer et parfois j'attendais un an pour avoir des résultats et ça demandait justement beaucoup de persévérance, beaucoup de patience. Ça demandait de se remettre en question régulièrement donc je trouve que ça a été une grande école... Cette pratique dans un milieu culturel très différent.

Interviewer: Et ici comment est-ce que vous communiquez avec les professeurs ? Avec le collègue ?

Orthophoniste: Alors ce qui est intéressant c'est qu'ici pour les enfants qui sont en grande difficulté parfois on demande ce qu'on appelle des réunions d'intégration. On fait ce qu'on appelle des équipes éducatives pour essayer d'aider au mieux les enseignants en classe. Car souvent ils ont des difficultés à motiver les enfants dyslexiques, ils sont souvent beaucoup plus lents que les autres, ils ont des difficultés de mémorisation, de perception... du langage... ils ont aussi... et ça sur le plan auditif mais aussi sur le plan visuel, hein... donc, on les aide, on leur explique comment ils peuvent aider au mieux les enfants On leur donne des méthodes aussi, on leur propose des méthodes d'adaptation... la communication n'est pas toujours facile non plus hein... parce qu'on est dans deux domaines complètement différents. Et donc parfois c'est pas très simple. Et puis ils ont le groupe et le groupe c'est déjà un très, très gros travail ! Donc après lorsqu'il faut s'intéresser à l'enfant individuel... ça demande encore un investissement complémentaire. Ils font des choses extraordinaires... c'est vrai que....

Interviewer: C'est très difficile quand on gère des groupes...

Orthophoniste: On leur demande beaucoup mais en même temps, c'est intéressant pour les autres élèves aussi... de comprendre l'individualité.

Interviewer: Oui, et puis ce n'est pas forcément (... ?) des méthodes qui peuvent s'appliquer à d'autres enfants...

- Orthophoniste: Ça permet de mieux comprendre comment se font les apprentissages, ça ne peut que les enrichir en fait. Et puis il y a cet échange que l'on a avec eux et puis nous, ça nous enrichi aussi. Moi, j'aime beaucoup savoir ce qui se passe en classe, ça me permet de mieux comprendre l'enfant, souvent il a une attitude très différente ici et à l'école, hein....
- Interviewer: Est-ce que ça ne viendrait pas d'un manque de formation des professeurs à l'IUFM.... ?
- Orthophoniste: Oui, tout à fait....ils ont un manque de formation, ils le disent, ils le crient haut et fort d'ailleurs...
- Interviewer: C'est pareil chez nous...
- Orthophoniste: Et je trouve qu'il n'y a pas assez d'échanges avec les professionnels justement, les psychologues, les psychomotriciennes, les orthophonistes on devrait introduire des échanges plus réguliers en fait...peut-être des temps de travail...
- Interviewer: ...des temps de réunion...
- Orthophoniste: Il y a des temps de réunion mais c'est toujours autour d'un enfant, c'est intéressant aussi parce que c'est la pratique qui apporte beaucoup...mais après on devrait avoir la possibilité de faire une synthèse et d'échanger de manière un peu plus générale pour déculpabiliser un peu tout le monde parce que on est engagé dans ce soin, hein même les enseignants...moi, je leur dit, vous aussi vous êtes quelque part des thérapeutes, ils n'aiment pas trop ça, hein...ils n'aiment pas trop entendre ce terme...mais quand même, ce qu'on leur demande, ça fait partie de la thérapeutique....Enfin, disons que l'école n'est pas là pour traiter la pathologie, hein mais pour ces enfants-là, c'est différent.
- Interviewer: Je sais qu'on parle beaucoup des difficultés que les enfants dyslexiques ont en classe etc...mais quels sont les points forts des adolescents dyslexiques avec

lesquels vous travaillez ? ça dépend d'un individu à l'autre forcément, mais est-ce qu'il y a des points forts que ces élèves ont par rapport à d'autres ?

Orthophoniste: Oui, alors ça c'est très variable En dehors de leur dyslexie, ils sont avec leur personnalité, leur caractère, leurs angoisses...je pense que c'est des enfants qui peut-être mûrissent plus vite parce qu'on leur demande de faire un effort de connaissance de soi, je pense...Enfin, moi aussi c'est ce que j'essaie de leur faire passer comme message...ce que je leur dis, c'est que malgré ta dyslexie, malgré ta dysorthographe, malgré ton trouble du langage, il faut que tu deviennes autonome. Comment tu vas devenir autonome, c'est en te connaissant le mieux possible...parce que si tu te connais bien, tu vas pouvoir t'aider toi-même. Enfin, ça c'est ma devise, hein...après...C'est très personnel hein...

Interviewer: Finalement ils réfléchissent plus...

Orthophoniste: Voilà, ils sont obligés de réfléchir sur leur condition d'enfant dyslexique, dysorthographique...et parfois c'est très difficile hein....mais c'est très positif parce que ça leur apprend à mieux comprendre les mécanismes du langage, les mécanismes relationnels aussi...ils sont très ouverts et puis moi, je m'enrichis aussi beaucoup de tout leur discours autour de leur pathologie, autour de leur difficulté, autour de leur souffrance, hein....donc, c'est sûr qu'ils vivent quelque chose de privilégié aussi...disons ils sont dyslexiques mais pour certains, ce sont des enfants extraordinaires, voilà...Et ça, c'est ce que j'essaie de leur faire passer, c'est-à-dire que je leur dis toujours :effectivement, il y a des choses qui ne fonctionnent pas bien, il y a des choses que tu ne sais pas mais il y a plein de choses que tu sais. Donc on va partir de ce que tu sais.

Interviewer: Est-ce que vous pensez qu'en règle générale, ils sont conscients de leurs points forts ?

Orthophoniste: Non, alors souvent, ils ont une image d'eux-mêmes qui est très négative, pas toujours, hein mais assez souvent,

leur image est très négative...et le but de la rééducation c'est de les aider à dédramatiser cette situation et à essayer de partir justement des points forts, il y a toujours des points forts...d'ailleurs au niveau du bilan, on essaie toujours de mettre en exergue les points forts aussi, pas que les points faibles parce que on part ...moi, personnellement dans ma rééducation, je pars toujours des points forts et petit à petit, on arrive à développer...des difficultés perceptives, par exemple si l'enfant a de bonnes capacités sur le plan perceptif auditif et des difficultés sur le plan visuel, on va essayer de partir de l'auditif pour développer le visuel et vice versa. J'essaie toujours de partir des points positifs...En tout cas de montrer que oui, là il y a des difficultés mais ...il y a des choses que tu ne sais pas mais il y a des choses que tu sais et tu vas partir de ce que tu sais et petit à petit ,avec le temps aussi, tu vas déduire ce que tu peux découvrir, de ce que tu sais, tu vas le déduire...parce que tu es intelligent, parce que tu as des capacités de réflexion, parce qu'on va le faire ensemble, parce qu'on va le découvrir ensemble...et au bout du compte tu vas être content de toi parce que tu as fait cette découverte aussi.

Interviewer: Oui, donc ils font un gros travail sur eux-mêmes, en fait hein...

Orthophoniste: Oui, et puis c'est long, hein, la rééducation orthophonique, c'est long...parce qu'ils viennent en général ou une demi-heure deux fois dans la semaine ou...parce qu'on fait un travail très ciblé en fait hein...je leur explique qu'il faut qu'ils profitent le mieux possible de ce temps une demi-heure, mais c'est une demi-heure très intensive...

Interviewer: Donc une demi-heure deux fois par semaine ?

Orthophoniste: Alors soit une demi-heure deux fois par semaine soit une fois par semaine...ça dépend des troubles...Et c'est vrai que de toute façon, moi, je tiens compte de la maturité neurologique aussi...donc c'est long...forcément, les choses se mettent en place plus ou moins facilement....et c'est plus ou moins long parce qu'on est obligé de tenir compte de la maturité neurologique, le temps que les

connexions se mettent en place, que l'enfant fasse des relations avec tout ce qu'il a vu avec moi, donc on a un projet...comme ça prend du temps , on a un projet. Enfin moi quand je fais une rééducation, je fais toujours un projet. Et ce projet, il m'est donné grâce au bilan. C'est le bilan qui me permet de faire le diagnostic, éventuellement de faire un pronostic et de mettre en place un projet, un objectif.

Interviewer: Et quand vous faites un bilan, est-ce que vous utilisez des tests standardisés ?

Orthophoniste: Oui, c'est ça, des tests standardisés.(...) J'utilise le L2MA pour les enfants de CE2 à 6<sup>e</sup> à peu près, qui est un test du langage oral et du langage écrit, plus un test qui concerne l'organisation spatiotemporelle et puis pour les plus petits, j'utilise le NEEL qui un test de langage oral et un test d'aptitude à l'acquisition du langage écrit. Et puis j'ai les tests de Mme (...) qui a créé l'orthophonie, c'est des tests qui m'ont été présentés quand j'étudiais à la faculté à Lyon, et que j'ai gardé parce que, si vous voulez, ça fait trente ans que je les utilise donc pour moi, c'est un outil fabuleux.Ca me permet de faire des études comparatives et ça me permet de rééduquer au mieux .Parce que ces tests sont des points de repère très intéressants...

Interviewer: Ça va être très intéressant parce que je vais pouvoir regarder, comparer avec les tests qu'on utilise là-bas pour voir...

Et quelles sont les difficultés que les enfants évoquent en cours, comment est-ce qu'ils décrivent ces difficultés au collège...quant à la prise de notes, d'écoute, de compréhension d'instructions...etc...

Orthophoniste: Oui, ici on consulte en général pour des troubles de l'orthographe au collège...très souvent, et parfois aussi, c'est 'trouble des apprentissages'. Ce n'est qu'après, au moment du bilan qu'on découvre tout ce qu'il y a en-dessous, c'est-à-dire des troubles de la mémorisation, des difficultés attentionnelles, et effectivement des difficultés de prise de notes .Des difficultés de compréhension, globalement...des difficultés de compréhension en maths...des difficultés de



compréhension plus globales .Au collège, les plaintes sont moins spécifiques. En Primaire, on va dire : 'Mon enfant fait des confusions de sons, mon enfant inverse des lettres', alors qu'au collège on va plus parler de difficultés globales, de difficultés scolaires...Et c'est pourquoi, je trouve que c'est plus compliqué de traiter au Collège parce que la dyslexie s'est un peu généralisée, c'est-à-dire que l'enfant est en difficulté scolaire à cause de cette dyslexie donc il a des difficultés un peu dans tous les domaines .Alors qu'en Primaire, la maman est capable de dire : 'C'est en lecture que ça ne va pas' ou 'C'est en orthographe' ou 'C'est en math 'parce qu'on fait de la rééducation en math aussi dans les cas de dyscalculie ! Alors qu'au collège, la plainte est beaucoup plus globale...C'est plus,' Mon enfant a des difficultés scolaires' et puis après parfois,' Il fait beaucoup de fautes d'orthographe, cet enfant'...

Interviewer: Donc, ça c'est ce que les parents voient, ce que les professeurs voient...

Orthophoniste: Oui, et nous, quand on fait les tests, on trouve effectivement des troubles du langage, des troubles de la perception et de la mémorisation auditive, des troubles de la perception et de la mémorisation visuelle, des difficultés d'organisation spatio-temporelle qui sont très anciennes, qui n'ont pas été dépistées à temps en fait...

Interviewer: Et avez-vous déjà eu l'occasion de voir les PAI qui sont mis en place en Collège ?

Orthophoniste: Oui mais moi, je participe à ça...

Interviewer: Vous participez...j'étais pas sûre...

Orthophoniste: C'est-à-dire que notre bilan est utilisé justement pour mettre en place les PAIs.

Interviewer: Et est-ce que vous pensez que les élèves dyslexiques trouvent le travail oral plus facile que le travail écrit ?



- Orthophoniste: Bien sûr ! Ils sont souvent beaucoup plus à l'aise mais bon, pas forcément...eux se sentent plus à l'aise mais moi, quand je fais mes dépistages...eux se sentent plus à l'aise à l'oral qu'à l'écrit mais parfois il y a des troubles de l'oral...
- Interviewer: Est-ce que vous pensez qu'ils comprennent les consignes données en classe ?
- Orthophoniste: Ils ont des troubles de la compréhension...même les explications orales, ils ont du mal à les comprendre. Parce que souvent, ils ont des troubles de la mémoire auditive, très très souvent...et parfois ils ont des troubles de la mémoire visuelle ou de la perception visuelle...ces dernières années, on s'est rendu compte que beaucoup d'enfants avaient des difficultés de balayage visuel donc ils sont pris en charge en orthopsie.
- Interviewer: 'Balayage visuel', c'est ce qu'on appellerait 'skimming' and 'scanning'...
- Orthophoniste: Ils ont des troubles de la convergence visuelle, alors ils ont du mal à utiliser leur potentiel visuel...donc ils ont du mal à déchiffrer parce qu'il y a un trouble de la convergence organique...donc on les envoie faire des rééducations 'orthoptiques'. C'est-à-dire qu'ils rééduquent la coordination des yeux...
- Interviewer: C'est intéressant car au Royaume-Uni, en ce moment, on travaille là-dessus avec les élèves tout le temps. On a pas de savoir vraiment spécifique, mais on encourage les enfants à chercher des informations...on leur demande de...
- Orthophoniste: C'est ça...On le fait en psychomotricité aussi...quand tout va bien sur le plan orthoptique, on suppose qu'il y a un trouble plus sur le plan cognitif qui explique les difficultés de recherche des informations...donc là, l'enfant va faire de la rééducation psychomotrice...Parfois il a les deux...Et donc nous on travaille les deux aspects, l'aspect auditif et l'aspect visuel, tout le temps...sur les deux versants. Alors moi, je travaille beaucoup là-dessus,

je travaille sur la coordination des deux. C'est-à-dire que j'explique que pour une bonne représentation mentale, il faut vraiment coordonner les deux perceptions. Et souvent l'enfant ne travaille que dans un domaine. Ils oublient de coordonner, enfin, il oublie...il ne prend pas le temps souvent parce qu' ils ont énormément de troubles de rythme et je trouve que souvent les enfants ne prennent pas le temps de coordonner les deux perceptions. Je pense qu'il y a un gros travail à faire sur le plan éducationnel là-dessus. Prendre le temps de faire ça parce que les enfants n'ont pas le temps en fait...

Interviewer: On s'attend à ce qu'ils sachent le faire naturellement...

Orthophoniste: Ils ont énormément de difficulté mais...je pense qu'il y a aussi en partie une demande de rapidité à l'école qui fait que...ils essaient d'aller à l'essentiel de la demande scolaire mais en fait ,la demande scolaire ne leur permet pas toujours de régler leur problématique d'apprentissage. Et le travail qu'on fait avec l'école justement, il sert à montrer qu'il faut donner du temps à ces enfants pour qu'ils aient cette possibilité de coordination des perceptions Si on ne leur laisse pas ce temps de coordination, ils ne vont pas s'améliorer et ils ne vont jamais acquérir l'autonomie qu'on voulait leur faire acquérir. Moi, je travaille beaucoup cela, je trouve que c'est essentiel. Et au bout d'un certain temps quand l'enfant a appris à faire ça, il peut aller plus vite et il peut mieux suivre les cours et il va rattraper les autres. Mais il faut que l'école participe à cette possibilité de donner à l'enfant de travailler ses connexions. Et ça, pour moi, c'est primordial. C'est ce que j'essaie de faire comprendre aux enseignants. C'est pas évident A l'école...on a un programme, on a beaucoup de choses à faire, il faut se dépêcher...c'est les informations qu'on me donne...mais disons que ce n'est pas l'essentiel...Pour moi, l'essentiel c'est de bien savoir utiliser son potentiel 'd'heureux cognitif', on va dire.

Interviewer: Au Royaume-Uni, ils font très, très peu de grammaire...donc les élèves souvent en 3<sup>e</sup>/4<sup>e</sup> ne savent pas ce qu'est un verbe...un adjectif, le sujet...par contre en France, on fait de la grammaire dès le primaire...

Orthophoniste: Oui, mais il y a un souci à ce niveau-là, on en fait moins qu'avant...

Interviewer: Pensez-vous que ça aide les élèves dyslexiques par exemple...

Orthophoniste: Oh oui...disons qu'au niveau de la dysorthographe, la difficulté essentielle, c'est la reconnaissance des catégories et la mise en relation des mots. Alors dans un premier temps, l'enfant doit apprendre à reconnaître les catégories, à les classer, à penser familles de mots, de mots grammaticaux...et ensuite il doit apprendre à les mettre en relation, c'est-à-dire à faire les accords, accord du verbe avec le sujet à la personne, accord du nom avec le déterminant, de l'adjectif avec le nom, en ce qui concerne le genre et le nombre, et ça c'est quelque chose de très difficile pour l'enfant dysorthographique. C'est ce qu'on travaille tout le temps. (...) Et de manière plus profonde, ça a un rapport avec des difficultés de classification. Parce que souvent, si on descend, enfin si on va chercher dans le langage oral, on va s'apercevoir que dans d'autres domaines, ils ont aussi des difficultés de reconnaissance et de classification ; ça ne s'applique pas qu'à l'écrit. Il y a aussi des difficultés en langage oral et en math. Donc nous, on fait un travail beaucoup plus profond. Parce que en linguistique on dit qu'il y a la structure profonde et la structure de surface, on va dire qu'à l'école on travaille en structure de surface, et en orthophonie, on travaille en structure profonde. Parce que ce qui se voit à l'école, c'est la structure de surface, mais elle a été élaborée, cette structure de surface grâce à une organisation en structure profonde et parfois cette structure profonde est en dysfonctionnement. C'est ce qui explique la dyslexie/dysorthographe en fait, et le retard de langage. Et nous, on va travailler dans cette structure profonde. Et c'est un travail très précis...

Interviewer: Donc en classe, vous pensez que les enfants n'ont pas assez de temps finalement pour...

Orthophoniste: Il faudrait leur donner plus de temps et au niveau de l'organisation de l'enseignement, je pense qu'ils ont besoin d'un enseignement spécifique avec plus de temps au niveau de l'approche des catégories si vous voulez. Ils

auraient besoin de travailler beaucoup plus longtemps la reconnaissance des catégories, la mise en relation des mots dans la phrase, ils devraient le faire beaucoup plus longtemps que les autres enfants. C'est parce que c'est ce qui leur permettrait de mieux comprendre la structure de la langue et finalement d'être plus autonome en langue, en langage tout court ! C'est plus qu'en langue, c'est en langage !

Interviewer: Et pouvez-vous me parler de la structure d'une de vos séances, enfin j'imagine qu'elles sont toutes différentes...mais en général, est-ce que vous suivez une structure particulière ?

Orthophoniste: Oui, je m'adapte, il y a un projet et ce projet est élaboré en fonction du bilan. Donc si l'enfant a des troubles sous-jacents au niveau de la perception et de la mémoire auditive, on va travailler, on va faire plein de jeux qui vont permettre de travailler et de développer sa perception et sa mémoire auditive. On va faire des différences fines entre les sons, savoir reconnaître des sons, on fait plein, plein de jeux, plein d'exercices autour de ça pour permettre à l'enfant d'avoir une meilleure perception et une meilleure mémoire auditive. S'il a des difficultés sur le plan visuel, on va faire pareil sur le plan visuel. S'il a des difficultés dans les deux domaines, bon, ben...et puis après on va rassembler les deux domaines .A la fin, on travaille la représentation mentale et...mais c'est très différent d'un enfant à l'autre...déjà le rythme est très différent parce que chaque enfant travaille à son rythme et a une compréhension propre. Donc, moi je m'adapte complètement...mon projet est toujours le même, c'est-à-dire...je m'aperçois qu'il a des troubles fonctionnels, voilà, des troubles de la perception...et de la mémoire, donc je vais organiser tout ce que je fais, tous mes exercices, tous mes jeux autour de ces difficultés mais en m'adaptant chaque fois à l'enfant. Et aussi en m'adaptant à sa demande psychologique...c'est jamais que dans la technique, c'est pas possible, hein...On est dans la communication donc ...je tiens compte aussi de sa demande. Parfois, il arrive avec des questions donc c'est la question qui prend le dessus et je réponds d'abord à sa question. Je trouve que c'est le plus important. Et je suis très contente d'ailleurs quand il arrive avec des questions ! Et parfois il arrive avec des questions

concernant le scolaire et là aussi je suis très contente parce que

Interviewer: Est-ce qu'il vous demande de l'aide ?...

Orthophoniste: Oui, oui...pas toujours mais

Interviewer: Est-ce que les parents partagent leurs impressions avec vous ?

Orthophoniste: Tout le temps...je travaille en coordination, je veux que les parents soient acteurs...De toute façon, moi, je les ai finalement très peu dans la semaine...moi, ce que je souhaite, c'est qu'ils comprennent ce qu'on peut faire pour leur enfant et...ce sont mes collaborateurs en fait...

Interviewer: Oui, oui ! Et qu'est-ce que vous pensez des directives ministérielles concernant les élèves dyslexiques à l'école, par exemple, la mise en place des PAI, PPRE, ou même l'aménagement des examens et concours pour les candidats dyslexiques ?

Orthophoniste: Oui, ça c'est très bien, c'est très bien mais dans le concret, il faut faire encore mieux. Au niveau du travail intervenants et enseignants, il y a encore beaucoup à faire ? C'est très bien on est sur la bonne voie mais je pense qu'il faut que tout le monde soit conscient de l'importance de ce travail et il faut poursuivre notre recherche et il faut poursuivre nos efforts .Faire un travail d'aide de plus en plus fin, de plus en plus précis au niveau des projets. Avec une persévérance d'action. Vous voyez ce que je veux dire. Parce que parfois il y a un abandon, on démarre avec de bonnes idées et on met tout en œuvre et dès que ça va un petit peu mieux, on abandonne, alors...il faut vraiment persévérer longtemps.

Interviewer: Est-ce que le personnel enseignant entre en contact directement avec vous s'ils voient des problèmes... ?

Orthophoniste: Pas souvent. C'est les parents qui font l'intermédiaire....Après, oui, on se rencontre mais...spontanément, non.

Interviewer: Est-ce que vous pensez que les mesures mises en place au collège pour aider les élèves dyslexiques sont adéquates ?

Orthophoniste: C'est pas suffisant...Oui, il y a une structure qui est mise en place mais, il n'y a pas assez d'engagement, c'est pas suffisant, il y a encore beaucoup, beaucoup de travail à faire ! Les enfants se plaignent, que certains plans d'action ne soient pas respectés. Ils ont souvent droit à des temps complémentaires qu'ils n'ont pas. Tout n'est pas toujours respecté, non. C'est ça le problème et c'est pour ça qu'il faut qu'on travaille davantage en collaboration. Pour bien faire comprendre l'importance du respect de ces consignes d'aide...

Interviewer: Quelle est la cause du non-respect de ces règles ?

Orthophoniste: Je pense que c'est le manque de connaissance, tout simplement. Il n'y a pas assez d'échanges, pas assez de formation, en fait...si l'enseignant est plus conscient du bien qu'il va apporter à cet enfant, par l'application de méthodes spécifiques, il va se dire, ça va être très positif pour cet enfant donc je vais jusqu'au bout de mon engagement, de ma démarche .Mais s'il ne comprend pas tous les mécanismes, s'il ne comprend pas pourquoi c'est important d'appliquer telle ou telle méthode, d'appliquer tel ou tel code, de donner plus de temps, s'il ne comprend pas pourquoi, forcément...il n'aura pas envie d'appliquer la consigne. Alors, c'est souvent vécu comme une consigne, c'est pas une consigne, c'est une demande d'aide ! bon, c'est sûr que si cette demande d'aide n'est pas complètement comprise scientifiquement, comment la respecter ? Je peux comprendre ça et c'est pour ça que je dis qu'il faut plus de travail d'échange, d'échange, d'idée, pour comprendre l'enfant...et pour amener chacun à aller jusqu'au bout de la démarche parce que cette aide est longue, il faut vraiment être persévérant pour arriver...

Interviewer: ...et il y a des rechutes aussi...

Orthophoniste: Il y a des rechutes, c'est pour ça que je dis qu'il faut beaucoup de persévérance...il ne faut pas abandonner l'aide dès que l'on voit un petit progrès...Il faut se dire que ça ce n'est qu'un début et il faut l'accompagner jusqu'au bout ! Jusqu'à ce qu'ils disent...et d'ailleurs moi, en rééducation, les collégiens je ne les laisse que quand ils sont décidés à partir. Parfois j'estime qu'ils n'ont plus besoin...

Interviewer: C'est eux qui décident... ?.

Orthophoniste: Les collégiens, oui... Parfois j'estime que je peux les laisser et ils me disent mais non, moi, j'ai encore besoin de vous, alors...Et puis d'autres fois, ils n'ont plus envie...je pense qu'ils ont encore besoin de moi, mais ils n'ont plus envie, alors je les écoute aussi...parce que, à cet âge-là, ils ont quand même la possibilité de choisir...De toute façon, s'ils ne sont pas motivés, s'ils sont contraints et forcés, ils ne vont pas faire d'efforts, ils ne seront pas attentifs, donc ce travail ne leur servira à rien.

### Interview with Sébastien's Mother.

- Interviewer: Pouvez-vous me parler de la personnalité d'Sébastien?
- Mother: C'est un enfant qui est agréable à vivre, plutôt gentil, calme, qui ne se laisse pas marcher sur les pieds donc il n'embête personne mais il ne faut pas l'embêter parce qu'il sait se faire respecter. Il a un grand frère qui lui a bien appris ce style de fonctionnement...
- Interviewer: D'accord, le grand frère est au collège aussi ?
- Mother: Le grand frère est maintenant en 2<sup>e</sup> au lycée et il est dyslexique aussi et le papa également. Et Sébastien est, je ne sais pas si c'est la dyslexie qui a fait ça mais, en tout cas, il est persévérant. Et la dyslexie a dû au moins renforcer ce trait de caractère.
- Interviewer: Donc il est persévérant dans son travail scolaire etc...
- Mother: Oui, par exemple, il a souvent changé de sport chaque année, mais même si ça ne lui plaît pas, il finit la période de l'année sans sourciller. Concernant l'intégration scolaire, oui, ça doit pas être très amusant d'avoir des notes très moyennes pendant toute sa scolarité et pourtant, il a persévéré. Ce n'est pas non plus un gamin qui fera des heures et des heures de travail, c'est un enfant normal, donc si il peut s'en passer il le fera, mais hormis cette année peut-être aussi parce qu'il a grandi dans sa tête, jusqu'à l'année dernière il a tenu le cap et il a rien lâché. Cette année, c'est un peu plus difficile mais il est reparti sur ...
- Interviewer: Il est en 5<sup>e</sup> cette année ?
- Mother: C'est ça.
- Interviewer: Et au collège, qu'est-ce que vous en pensez en général, si vous pouviez décrire le collège ?



Mother: C'est un collège agréable, où il ne se passe rien de très grave, où les enfants y viennent avec plaisir, je dirais que c'est un collège à taille humaine, il y a 400 élèves à peu près, c'est petit.

Interviewer: C'est petit, oui,

Mother: Je pense que les équipes éducatives sont quand même à l'écoute d'une manière globale sur les situations particulières, c'est plutôt un collège agréable. On est dans une commune aussi qui n'a pas particulièrement de gros soucis. Ils font avec l'existant qui est plutôt sympathique.

Interviewer: Puis le cadre aussi...

Mother: Le cadre est effectivement très agréable. Dans la verdure, c'est plutôt bien...

Mother: Par rapport à là où je travaille, c'est très différent...

Interviewer: Ah bon... (....). Et alors pour vous, que signifie l'expression « être dyslexique » ?

Mother: Maintenant je dirais que ça signifie deux choses : des difficultés et... comment dire, quelque chose de positif..., il y a un livre qui s'appelle « Le don de dyslexie » je l'ai lu et ceci dit avant de le lire j'avais déjà cette notion-là, parce que voilà, oui, c'est un don. Mais en tant que parent et en tant que Maman, on se raccroche à cette idée quoi... parce que tant que ces enfants et ces ados ne sont pas devenus adultes et n'ont pas réussi à en faire quelque chose de positif, c'est quand même le parcours du combattant.

Interviewer: Oui.

Mother: Donc à ce stade, je dirais que toute l'enfance, c'est pénible, tant pour les enfants que pour les parents, avant tout pour les enfants, c'est pénible et on essaie de voir que c'est aussi un don mais on essaie de le positiver et je suis persuadée qu'il en fera

quelque chose de formidable. Mais, pour le coup, c'est pas forcément la scolarité et l'éducation nationale qui l'y aide quoi...

Interviewer: Tout est basé sur l'écrit...

Mother: Oui, tout est basé sur l'écrit et puis... alors on a cette chance d'être ici et maintenant où un enfant un peu différent n'est pas complètement rejeté au fond de la classe près du poêle, il y a deux générations, voire la génération dernière, c'était pire, mais enfin on en est encore pas à individualiser le parcours, à se rendre compte que la particularité d'un enfant, ça peut être plein de choses positives. Je trouve que les professeurs et instituteurs, si gentils et attentionnés soient-ils, et professionnels d'ailleurs, moi, j'ai rencontré plein de professeurs qui ne savent pas ce que c'est que la dyslexie... bon, il y a 50 ans de ça, je veux bien mais aujourd'hui...

Interviewer: Je crois que le Principal a organisé 4 demi-journées de stages pour les professeurs...

Mother: Mais j'en suis ravie. Parce que j'ai quand même deux enfants dyslexiques et on a toujours vécu sur la commune depuis qu'ils sont nés... Ils ont évidemment rencontré des orthophonistes l'un et l'autre, pas les mêmes, et en l'occurrence la dernière avec qui nous avons travaillé quatre, cinq ans nous disait qu'elle faisait un gros travail de communication auprès des écoles et du collège de la commune, et que c'est pas gagné quoi... parce que... enfin, elle, elle le percevait comme ça (.....) je me fais là que le porte-parole... j'étais pas dans les entretiens mais... elle disait d'une manière générale que les instituteurs ou les professeurs ont l'impression que les orthophonistes viennent leur apprendre leur métier... ou leur expliquer comment il faut faire... et elle, elle voulait juste travailler en partenariat, quoi ! Donc il faut que l'école s'ouvre un peu sur... je sais qu'ils sont... ils ont énormément de travail, énormément d'enfants particuliers... de moins en moins de moyens et je suis persuadée qu'ils font le maximum de ce qu'ils peuvent.... Bon, ceci dit, un professeur qui a 40 et quelques années et qui a donc 20 ans d'expérience, et qui aujourd'hui en 2012 ne sait pas ce que c'est que la dyslexie... moi en tant que mère d'un enfant et voire de deux... ça me met en colère. Voilà !

Interviewer: Je vous comprends tout-à-fait. Et quel âge avait Sébastien quand vous vous êtes aperçus qu'ils avaient des difficultés ?

Mother: Sébastien, c'était en dernière année de Maternelle... et comme son frère l'était déjà, on s'y est pris plus tôt en fait Et on s'est dit qu'il y avait un souci parce qu'en dernière année de Maternelle, il disait encore le 'cracteur' ou 'ze vais zouer' donc déjà la première année d'orthophonie lui a permis de prononcer correctement mais c'était en cours d'année donc il a fini ce travail-là en CP en fait. Voilà, ce qui est un peu tard. Il a poursuivi l'orthophonie non-stop jusqu'à l'année dernière dont les quatre dernières années à deux séances par semaine C'était des séances d'une demi-heure. Donc la première année, il a pu s'exprimer correctement. On peut dire que c'est positif. Et les trois années qui ont suivi, ça n'a pas été positif. Ceci dit, je n'avais ni la compétence pour le savoir ni non plus... je n'ai pas réussi à m'affirmer en tant que mère quand mon fils m'a dit la dernière année, Maman, je n'en peux plus, je ne veux plus y aller parce qu'on fait que jouer à l'ordinateur et je comprends rien... j'ai quand même attendu la fin de l'année pour dire à la dame, on ne renouvèlera pas avec vous. Et quand on a commencé avec l'orthophoniste suivante avec qui il a fait quand même deux séances pendant quatre ans, elle m'a dit, il a perdu trois ans. Voilà .Donc il a mal travaillé pendant ces trois années. Parce que je ne sais pas... comment il a travaillé... Sébastien m'expliquait qu'il était devant son... alors il se trouve que c'était la même que son frère, du coup j'ai pu avoir les deux sons de cloche et en l'occurrence, elle les faisait travailler devant un ordinateur, pour essayer de repérer des lettres, des sons, enfin... mais le souci, c'était pas l'outil ordinateur ou pas, c'était que elle lançait l'exercice et qu'elle était pas forcément avec lui... Sébastien a aussi tendance à avoir une attention limitée, alors, si on l'oblige pas à être attentif, ...

Interviewer: Et quelle fut la première personne à émettre l'hypothèse qu'Sébastien était dyslexique ?

Mother: Ses parents. Et on a peu fait confiance au corps enseignant sur cette question-là parce que... l'aîné, quand on a dit, il nous semble qu'il y a un petit quelque chose en dernière année de Maternelle également, l'institutrice a dit que ça pourrait aller en grandissant. Et puis finalement, il a fallu mettre les bouchées doubles, et c'est arrivé d'ailleurs, pour le grand on a attendu le CE2 donc c'est un peu tard. Et pour Sébastien, on en a parlé

avec l'institut de dernière année de Maternelle et elle a dit : « Non, mais de toute manière Sébastien est très intelligent Ne vous inquiétez pas, ça passera tout seul. » Donc on ne l'a pas écoutée et on est allé voir un orthophoniste qui nous a dit, effectivement il y a un problème.

Interviewer: Oui, l'intelligence n'a rien à voir en plus...

Mother: Rien à voir... j'en doute pas, ils sont très intelligents tous les deux mais aussi très, très dyslexiques.

Interviewer: Et qui a donné 'le' diagnostic ?

Mother: C'était l'orthophoniste.

Interviewer: Donc c'est l'orthophoniste qui donne le diagnostic. Elle fait passer des tests j'imagine... Et est-ce qu'ils ont fait passer un Q.I. aussi ?

Mother: Non. Par contre Sébastien, lorsqu'il a changé d'orthophoniste ; il devait être en CE2, elle nous a invité à aller voir un orthoptiste. Sébastien a un œil directeur/directif ? de gaucher. Donc quand il vise, en fait, il ferme le mauvais œil. Et en fait on imagine que Sébastien est gaucher au départ. Et évidemment quand on l'a su, j'ai fait le lien avec un épisode qui m'avait marquée... il se trouve que dans ma famille, ma grand-mère et mon oncle étaient des gauchers contrariés, il se trouve que je suis une gauchère non contrariée, donc qui l'a très bien vécu... et quand Sébastien est rentré en 1<sup>ère</sup> année de Maternelle, il y avait l'institutrice qui était la directrice nouvellement arrivée qui nous a suggéré de faire en sorte que nos enfants deviennent droitier. Donc malgré mon jeune âge à l'époque, je lui ai quand même dit qu'on était pas complètement d'accord. Et, elle s'est reprise un peu en disant 'non, il ne s'agit pas de les contrarier mais si on sent qu'ils hésitent, autant mettre le stylo dans la main droite ! Donc je lui ai dit que je laisserai bien faire mon fils comme il le souhaitait. Sauf que cinq ou six ans plus tard, je me rends compte que Sébastien est ambidextre, (...) il joue au ballon en tant que gaucher que droitier, avec les deux pieds mais il a un œil directeur de gaucher et peut-être il partait pour être gaucher mais on lui a signifié que ça le faisait pas,...

- Interviewer: Est-ce que l'orthophoniste pense que ça pourrait avoir une influence sur sa dyslexie ?
- Mother: Non, par contre, ça n'arrange rien. (...) Moi, je ne me dis pas que Sébastien est un gaucher contrarié qui est donc devenu dyslexique, je pense qu'Sébastien est dyslexique et que par ailleurs, je ne sais pas si on l'a contrarié mais on a pas laissé les choses se faire toutes seules concernant le fait qu'il soit gaucher ou pas.
- Interviewer: Mais aussi vous savez qu'on vit dans un monde de droitier et tout est fait pour les droitiers.
- Mother: Et peut-être qu'il a voulu s'adapter sans qu'on le force... c'est fort possible.
- Interviewer: Rien que pour utiliser des ciseaux... il y a eu des études là-dessus, j'ai lu quelque chose...(..) Donc pour vous la première étape a été de voir un orthophoniste et ensuite, par rapport à l'école...
- Mother: J'ai informé l'école qu'Sébastien suivrait des séances d'orthophonie pendant la première période, il y allait le soir donc ça ne gênait en rien et ensuite il y est allé également pendant l'école, enfin... en tout début de journée donc il arrivait un peu plus tard et donc c'était d'informer les instituteurs que ça allait fonctionner comme ça. Ca a été la 1<sup>ère</sup> démarche et la 2<sup>e</sup> qui se fait en général chaque année et dans le même temps c'est d'expliquer où on en est, ce que l'orthophoniste a dit, qu'on y travaille, qu'on est à ses côtés, et en gros faire en sorte que les instits ou les professeurs aient confiance en lui. Et qu'ils entendent bien que nous aussi on a confiance en eux et qu'on travaille ensemble. C'est un réel travail de communication, voilà Moi, j'ai conscience que chaque année, dans les deux premiers mois, j'œuvre pour mon fils. Et qu'il ne faut pas rater la réunion parents-professeurs en milieu d'année ou avec les instits, c'était aller les voir en janvier pour réexpliquer qu'on avait fait ceci-cela et que qu'on comprenait que c'était dur etc... parce que ils sont à l'écoute mais ils ne viennent pas vers nous forcément. En tant que parent, il y a vraiment ce travail-là à faire pour... très souvent, je dis à Sébastien, surtout ne te plante pas en terme de comportement parce que moi, je travaille pour toi...

Interviewer: Est-ce qu'il a un PAI ?

Mother: Oui, il a un PAI cette année (...). En CM2, il était suivi, l'institut qui était directrice d'ailleurs le savait etc. Donc elle a fait des démarches auprès du collège pour faire en sorte que, comme pour tous les élèves, ils soient dans des classes selon leur niveau, leur personnalité, et Sébastien a donc déjà était positionné sur une 6<sup>e</sup> PPRE, puisque dans ce collège, il y a la possibilité d'avoir cette 6<sup>e</sup>-là. Donc, que PPRE français, donc il allait hors de la classe classique, avec un autre professeur de français, avec 8 ou 10 enfants, dyslexiques ou... par ailleurs on avait demandé en 6<sup>e</sup> la mise en place d'un PAI également pour que les autres... en fait parce que on s'est rendu compte... on savait qu'il fallait mettre en place un PAI mais dans la mesure où il était dans cette classe-là les choses étaient lancées, tout le monde le savait. En fait on s'est rendu compte en milieu d'année, ça devait être en janvier/février, que son professeur principal ne savait pas qu'il était dyslexique et que le fait qu'il soit en classe de français PPRE ne le lui avait pas paru... il n'y avait pas le lien entre...il a un souci en français et ... il est dyslexique... mais quand on lui a dit mais enfin il a une classe particulière en français donc même si vous ne savait pas qu'il est dyslexique, vous vous doutez bien qu'il a un souci... et le professeur nous avait répondu 'je ne peux pas être au courant de tout ce qui se passe avec les élèves... à partir du moment où il est suivi en français parce qu'il a une particularité, après (ça ne me regarde plus... enfin... je n'ai pas d'autre information). Donc on lui avait dit que, en tant que professeur d'histoire et surtout en tant que professeur principal, il eût été judicieux d'informer les autres enseignants surtout que... on sait que pour un dyslexique français, l'anglais il n'y a rien de pire, c'est un professeur qui me l'a dit, bon. Et donc, il nous a dit, maintenant que je le sais , je vais transmettre l'information etc... Donc, le 'PAI', on l'a mis en place deux mois avant la fin de l'année scolaire de 6<sup>e</sup>, dans le sens où les professeurs ont été informés et où les professeurs ont adapté leurs cours, soit leurs exigences sur les devoirs rendus etc... par contre, dès la rentrée de 5<sup>e</sup>, on a poursuivi ce travail-là, et en fait le collège avait déjà enclenché lui-même. Je n'ai pas eu de démarche particulière, hormis que régulièrement, là, cette année, on a écrit un mot sur le carnet de correspondance en disant, » je vous précise qu'Sébastien étant dyslexique et n'ayant plus de PPRE puisqu'il est en 5<sup>e</sup>... »

Interviewer: Est-ce qu'Sébastien vous parle de ses difficultés, vous explique ce qu'il trouve difficile quand il est en classe ?

Mother: Non, pas du tout. Sébastien ne parle de sa dyslexie que quand il a l'impression d'avoir fourni beaucoup de travail pour un résultat minable, comme il dit... et dans ces cas-là, il pleure parce qu'il trouve que la vie est trop injuste, c'est trop dur. Sinon... jusqu'en fin de 6<sup>e</sup>, on le suivait beaucoup, alors tous ses devoirs se faisaient avec son père ou avec moi... rien ne se faisait sans nous. Quand il est rentré en 5<sup>e</sup>, en fait, il a voulu grandir, ce qui est plutôt une bonne nouvelle pour un enfant qui va sur ses 13 ans maintenant et donc il nous a demandé de faire ses devoirs tout seul. Donc on l'a laissé 2/3 mois... en lui demandant si il les avait faits... si il avait besoin d'aide, en regardant un peu l'état des cahiers et hormis en anglais peut-être, on faisait plus de devoirs avec lui. Evidemment les notes s'en sont ressenties, et puis surtout, il a grandi, trouvé des copains, des copines, il a été plus autonome sur plein d'autres choses, et la scolarité est devenue moins prioritaire. Et je pense que en plus, du coup, il a été moins attentif, quoi. Donc moins de présence à la maison pour les devoirs, moins d'attention en cours, et puis les copines et les copains qui prennent plus de place ça fait effectivement... beaucoup, et on a bien chuté donc depuis décembre, janvier, on est à nouveau avec lui, ceci dit il garde quand même le bénéfice de cet apprentissage de l'autonomie. Même si Sébastien est incapable d'apprendre par cœur sans comprendre, sans imaginer, sans dessiner... enfin bon, une leçon ça prend 4 formes différentes à la maison, avant qu'il intègre ce dont il parle, maintenant il arrive à apprendre les mots...

Interviewer: D'accord, alors il a développé une stratégie....

Mother: Alors maintenant c'est quand même plus facile d'apprendre les leçons.

Interviewer: Et il a une idée de ce qu'il veut faire plus tard...

Mother: Oui, très précise. Il y a trois ans, il voulait être ébéniste, et il a fait le lien avec le fait qu'il aimerait bien vivre à l'étranger et surtout en Martinique, parce qu'il y est déjà allé, et il adore là-bas et du coup, il voudrait être charpentier de marine. Et il n'en décroche pas depuis 2/3 ans. Voilà !



- Interviewer: C'est un métier rare ?
- Mother: C'est un métier rare, où les places sont chères, je pense, de fait je ne pense pas qu'il fera de longues études. D'abord ça ne l'intéresse pas, et puis ça va être très pénible pour lui, je pense qu'il fera des études qui le mèneront vers un métier « manuel », mais comme on lui a dit, si tu ne donnes pas les moyens d'avoir un bon dossier, tu vas faire de la « mécanique » comme tout le monde et comme tu ne l'as pas choisi, ça va donc moyennement te plaire. Si tu veux vraiment faire charpentier de marine, il va falloir que tu te donnes les moyens de le faire. Donc il a regardé avec son père où est-ce que ça se fait...
- Interviewer: Il faudrait qu'il fasse un compagnonnage ?
- Mother: Alors c'est soit un compagnonnage ou bien un lycée professionnel ou technique, je crois que c'est un lycée technique sur Marseille, (...) alors, les mieux sont plutôt en Bretagne, mais on va déjà essayer de financer à Marseille, ça va suffire.
- Interviewer: C'est bien qu'il ait un rêve.
- Mother: Oui...
- Interviewer: Est-ce que les profs lui donnent plus de temps quand il fait des contrôles ?
- Mother: Non, par contre, ils ont adapté le contenu, la forme... en histoire, par exemple, il y a toujours une partie des devoirs qui prend la forme de rédaction sur une question et les enfants ont quelques lignes à écrire. Ils doivent « recracher » la leçon. Alors pour Sébastien, c'est super compliqué parce qu'Sébastien a appris la leçon avec ses mots et pas comme le professeur le lui a dicté, ensuite, faire des phrases pour Sébastien, c'est pas très simple. On l'a apprise en général sous forme de schéma, le professeur l'a autorisé à refaire le schéma à partir du moment où il y a les mots, la définition des mots et où il comprend dans la forme que prennent ces mots sur le papier, les dessins, il comprend qu'Sébastien situe et a compris la leçon... voilà. Il considère que ça peut suffire. Il y a la première partie, réponse



aux questions qui est assez courte où il répond comme tout le monde et puis cette partie-là, c'est la même question que tout le monde mais lui peut y répondre différemment. Puis... en math il a pas de difficulté donc il n'y a pas d'adaptation. En français, elle travaille beaucoup sur du théâtre, donc cette année, elle présente les choses un peu différemment pour tout le monde. Par contre, il y a eu un bug lorsqu'on l'a rencontrée lors de la journée parents-profs, elle expliquait qu'Sébastien était très intéressé, qu'il avait de bonnes notes, compte tenu de sa manière de faire à elle, il avait de bonnes notes, ceci dit elle avait donné du travail à faire à la maison sauf que nous, on a pas compris que c'était du travail à faire à la maison, en tout cas le papier s'est perdu, et ce trimestre, elle a fait des dictées et là évidemment, c'est zéro pointé...et on vient de recevoir le bulletin et il semblerait et c'est écrit sur le bulletin, elle s'attendait à ce qu'Sébastien puisse faire le travail à la maison en compensation, pour compenser un peu les mauvaises notes de dictée, sauf que nous on savait pas, on avait pas eu le papier, donc cette année, c'est un peu catastrophique... mais elle a effectivement, en tout cas dans sa tête même si le message est pas passé, ou parce qu'on a pas compris, mais en tout cas, elle avait adapté quelque chose. Et en anglais elle a tenté un petit quelque chose, entre autre de donner un peu plus d'importance à l'oral qu'à l'écrit. Donc elle a demandé à Sébastien de s'impliquer plus à l'oral.

Interviewer: D'accord. Mais l'idée du prof d'histoire géo est pas mal...

Mother: Oui, on travaille bien avec lui.

Interviewer: Et l'anglais, est-ce qu'il aime ça ?

Mother: Non, il ne déteste pas, en même temps... mais c'est super difficile. Comme on disait au professeur, elle a gardé la phrase en tête parce que ...on lui disait par exemple qu'on a mis à peu près 6 ans pour qu'il comprenne que /u/ s'écrivait 'o' et 'u', bon, et en anglais ça s'écrit pas forcément pareil. Ah oui, d'ailleurs, c'était pas le /u/, c'était le /ai/, on a mis vraiment jusqu'en fin de CM2 pour qu'Sébastien comprenne que /ai/, c'était 'a-i-l' et puis là en 6<sup>e</sup> on lui dit que /ai/, c'est un 'i' et là, ça va pas, quoi ! C'est pas qu'il ne comprend pas, il comprend sur le moment mais ça ne revient pas. Quand on sait que la dyslexie, c'est où est-ce que j'ai mis l'information, dans quelle case, on a travaillé

6 ans pour qu'il repère dans quel tiroir il avait rangé l'information, si en plus on lui dit maintenant l'information tu la changes... il est perdu !

Interviewer: Ca fait trop !... et point de vue organisation, est-ce qu'il a un agenda ? Est-ce qu'il écrit ses devoirs ?

Mother: Oui.

Interviewer: Il arrive à suivre son emploi du temps... ?

Mother: Oui. L'organisation dans l'espace- temps, en CM1, c'était à peu près réglé... jusqu'au CM1, il me demandait quel jour on est demain et... est-ce qu'on a école. Aujourd'hui, il a douze ans et demi, là, c'est bon, il n'a pas de problème dans l'organisation au quotidien par contre il y a trois mois quand il m'a demandé... il n'arrivait pas à positionner le mois dans lequel on était... sur la période scolaire.et là, cette semaine, je lui disais qu'on allait organiser les vacances sauf que j'ai pas fait attention et je lui ai parlé non seulement des vacances de Pâques qui arrivent mais également des vacances d'été. Et donc, cette semaine a été un peu compliquée pour Sébastien, il a été un peu fatigué, moi aussi, enfin bref, il m'a dit: 'Maman, tu m'as embrouillé avec tes histoires de vacances'. Parce que 'Avril', 'Pâques' et l' 'été', en fait les vacances de Pâques et d'Avril, il a pas percuté que c'était les mêmes, parce que les connections entre les mots... voilà... à partir du moment où on dit vacances... de là à repérer sur le calendrier, c'est déjà compliqué alors si on change le mois en fête religieuse, là, de quoi on parle et si en plus, on rajoute une autre information, à savoir dans quatre mois, qu'est-ce qu'on fait ?,... c'est bon... il est perdu, mais par contre, il ne le dit pas pour reprendre votre première question...

Interviewer: Oui, est-ce qu'il vous en parle ?...

Mother: Pas du tout. C'est qu'à un moment donné je lui dis: 'Tu te rends compte que ça fait trois fois que je te pose la question'. Et là, il me dit : « Mais Maman, de quoi tu parles ? » Donc je me rends compte à ce moment-là qu'il n'a pas compris ce que je lui disais ! Les mots ne prennent pas sens donc... Il attend que ça passe. Pendant longtemps Sébastien ne cherchait pas la

réponse, il posait la question... Et du coup il ne se souvenait jamais de la réponse... il ne la stockait jamais.

Interviewer: Et la transition école primaire-collège, ça s'est passé comment pour lui ?

Mother: Au niveau social, très bien, au niveau de l'organisation (c'est-à-dire qu'on l'a pas trop lâché)

Interviewer: Mais d'une instit à des salles de classes différentes ?

Mother: Non, mais en même temps, il a... quand je disais que la dyslexie est un don, il a développé une capacité à se faire confiance et à faire confiance aux autres. Donc moi, au départ, je lui disais, « tu sais, il y a deux étages etc... » alors il y a une chose qui le perturbait pendant l'été, qui a précédé sa rentrée en 6<sup>e</sup>, c'était comment repérer les salles ? Et ça revenait... son frère qui y était passé avant, lui disait: « tu verras, il y a la technique d'un côté, les salles de langues sont plutôt de l'autre... » mais son frère lui présentait le collège en droite/gauche, en repérage 'au fond à droite', 'au bout à gauche', 'la cour au milieu' enfin voilà... Ce repérage-là et en fait Sébastien, son souci, c'était les étages et, je crois, c'était en août, il nous a dit « Ah mais donc 202, c'est 2<sup>e</sup> étage, salle N° 2 ». J'ai dit, « Effectivement, le 2 ou le 1 de cent précise l'étage... » « Ah, ben alors, ça va ! » il était rassuré. Un moment donné, il y a eu une image, ça a été très clair, on lui avait dit avant, mais... après, non de toute manière, il suivait les copains quand il savait pas... d'ailleurs il a un repérage super visuel, une fois qu'il y est allé une fois, il s'en souvient...

Interviewer: Dans le collège où je suis, on colorie tous les cours d'histoire en rouge sur leur emploi du temps... donc ils se repèrent par rapport aux couleurs, on met des gommettes sur les portes pour qu'ils se repèrent dans le collège, mais je trouve qu'ici le collège est assez logique. La disposition des salles, chez nous c'est pas aussi bien (...). On a tendance à beaucoup parler des difficultés des dyslexiques, mais Sébastien a des points forts. Quels sont-ils ?

Mother:

Alors, Sébastien m'en voudrait si je ne le disais pas. (...) Son père est dyslexique mais en fait, il s'est rendu compte qu'il était dyslexique quand il a eu des enfants dyslexiques, mais il n'a jamais été soigné ni repéré comme tel... la seule chose, il disait: 'je ne lis pas'. Il est professeur de dessin industriel donc finalement on arrive à tout mais il passe par le schéma etc.. donc lui-même il avait pas repéré qu'il avait développé des compétences en lien avec cette dyslexie, il savait qu'il avait des compétences mais il savait pas que c'est de ça que ça venait. Il ne savait pas qu'il y avait un lien entre les deux, donc , nous, quand on a eu des enfants dyslexiques, on est allé chercher ce que c'était, on a essayé de positiver les choses etc donc on a cherché tout ce qui était formidable donc évidemment que Léonard de Vinci est devenu notre Dieu à nous de même que tous les génies de la création qui étaient dyslexiques.et puis, il y a quand même quelques années déjà, en essayant de positiver les choses parce que c'était pénible pour Sébastien, je lui ai dit: « Tu ne te rends pas compte, les dyslexiques, vous voyez les choses en trois dimensions tout de suite »,... et il me dit « mais ça veut dire quoi ? », « mais je sais pas , d'après ce qu'on m'a dit ,parce que ça n'est pas mon cas, mais quand je te présente quelque chose là sur ma main, toi il paraît que tu arrives à voir derrière comme si tu imaginais ce qu'il y avait derrière »...il me dit « pourquoi, tu le fais pas toi ? » Et pour lui ça a été une évidence, je le lui ai présenté comme si ça pouvait être possible et lui, il m'a répondu mais bien sûr, évidemment. Je me suis arrêtée, là... j'ai fait le test... j'ai pris un verre, un truc, on voyait pas de l'autre côté, et j'ai dit mais là comment tu fais pour le voir ? tu vois la face qui est en face de toi ! Il m'a dit « oui ». « Donc tu ne peux qu'imaginer ce qu'il y a derrière ! » « Je l'imagine mais je sais comment elle est » et « ça veut dire quoi ? » « eh bien par exemple, je peux te la dessiner ». Effectivement, il l'a dessinée en perspective très vite...il a cette capacité, alors je ne sais pas si c'est physiquement que... je ne sais pas ..., je ne suis pas dyslexique, et je ne suis pas du tout manuelle etc... Mais il y a eu des fois où quand il se levait le matin, que je le retrouvais en train de dessiner quelque chose. « Qu'est-ce que tu essaies de dessiner ? » « Pétard, Maman, je le vois dans ma tête, mais j'arrive pas à le faire sur le papier »... parce qu'il avait pas la technique mais maintenant, il y arrive. Il avait pas la technique des perspectives et ce qu'il voyait dans sa tête alors, il disait « tu vois cette voiture qui pourrait circuler sur un circuit aérien, moi, je fais comme si je circulais autour pour pouvoir la voir sous tous les angles possibles et j'aimerais bien la dessiner sur le papier mais j'arrive pas à le faire. J'ai pas la technique pour que sur le papier ça se

voit », alors il s'énervait... parce qu'il arrivait pas à le faire. Donc, évidemment c'est une grande joie pour lui que de pouvoir... donc dernier exemple sur le même... don ou côté positif... il nous est arrivé déjà d'aller voir une ou deux fois le musée Vasarely... à Aix-en-Provence... il y est allé une fois avec son école en CM2 et il est revenu tellement enchanté qu'il nous a demandé d'y retourner, donc on y est retourné et il s'est fait une joie de nous expliquer ce que lui il voyait et nous il nous fallait un bon quart d'heure avant de comprendre ce qu'il fallait regarder pour voir l'image se modifier.

Interviewer: Lui, il y arrivait sans...

Mother: Lui il rentre dans la salle et il voit un coup c'est là et un coup c'est ça !

Interviewer: (...)

Mother: Alors il ne peut pas me dire où il faut regarder, il voit la perspective, le cône qui part vers...le plus petit ou qui vient vers lui, par exemple. Donc il m'explique que le petit rond est plutôt derrière le grand et que si il le souhaite il se déplace et il vient devant le grand, par exemple. Mais il ne me dit pas qu'il faut que je regarde à tel endroit pour pouvoir voir cette différence. Lui, il voit tout de suite .Il regarde tout simplement. Donc c'est devenu quelque chose... on positive la dyslexie pour ...

Interviewer: Donc en techno, fait-il du dessin industriel ?

Mother: Non, en techno, il ne s'éclate pas... parce qu'ils sont sur l'informatique pour l'instant, ça le soûle quoi...

Interviewer: Arts plastiques ?

Mother: En dessin, il est plutôt bon, ça lui plaît. Il a une très bonne note. Il ne va pas non plus passer des heures et des heures à dessiner.

Interviewer: Mais il se rend compte qu'il arrive à faire...

- Mother: Complètement.
- Interviewer: C'est bien ça.
- Mother: Donc voilà... d'autres points positifs... il a confiance en lui ! Moi, il me scotche ! En même temps des fois ça l'enrage (....)
- Interviewer: Il est gentil aussi comme garçon, j'en ai entendu beaucoup de bien....
- Mother: Oui, il est gentil...
- Interviewer: J'ai hâte de le rencontrer... Et donc à l'école, pensez-vous qu'il progresse ?
- Mother: Oui...cette année, c'est vraiment difficile et on est reparti... mieux mais on finira pas l'année... alors je dis 'on' et je m'en rends compte et je suis navrée de le dire comme ça car je devrais dire 'Sébastien' mais j'ai tellement l'impression que c'est un travail d'équipe que... c'est pas 'moi', c'est son père, c'est moi, c'est les enseignants, c'est... Sébastien en tout premier lieu, c'est le soutien de ses copains et à l'occasion (...) c'est son frère également. Son frère a eu l'occasion de lui apprendre l'histoire par exemple, parce qu'il savait le lui apprendre. Il jouait l'histoire en fait, il faisait une pièce de théâtre et ils sont assez rigolos tous les deux, sur le mode (...) donc, ils se font des jeux de mots, pour comprendre un mot, on passe souvent par le jeu de mots... pour le retenir... donc il apprenait rapidement la leçon d'histoire parce que son frère lui avait dit que (...).Donc Sébastien a été également soutenu par son frère et c'est pour ça que je dis 'on', nous tous.
- Interviewer: C'est important pour lui ce soutien... un petit garçon qui est dyslexique et isolé... c'est pas la même chose... là il a de l'aide, un frère qui le comprend et qui l'aide à développer des stratégies, ça doit quand même jouer...
- Mother: Oui, et son frère a un deuxième point fort qui d'ailleurs au quotidien parfois l'agace... parce qu'ils passent beaucoup de

temps à se chamailler... mais il est très exigeant... il se trouve que nous avons été très exigeants avec le frère aîné et beaucoup moins avec Sébastien... on était plus dans le soutien d'Sébastien, ceci dit Martial, le frère aîné, est dyslexique mais moins lourd quand même. Et il est passé en force... il avait pas le choix de toute manière, on admettait pas que ce soit autrement. Donc son frère aussi a subi ça et il a développé aussi ses stratégies et il supporte pas bien quand Sébastien se laisse un peu vivre, pose une question sans avoir réfléchi préalablement à la réponse, apprendre une leçon sans y faire attention, et donc de fait ne la retient pas donc son frère lui dit régulièrement... « tu as un cerveau, je te rappelle ». Voilà, c'est un peu la phrase à la maison, tu as un cerveau, tu es intelligent donc utilise-le.

Interviewer: Donc pensez-vous qu'Sébastien est préoccupé par sa dyslexie ?

Mother: Alors, ça lui pèse,... je serais assez curieuse de connaître sa réponse à cette question-là parce qu'il me semble que ça ne le préoccupe pas. J'ai l'impression qu'il est sûr qu'il arrivera à faire ce qu'il souhaite. Et dans les moments (...) j'allais pas dire optimistes mais... habituels (hormis quand je suis en phase de grand pessimisme), j'ai tendance à penser pareil que lui. Je me dis que... je ne sais pas ce qu'il fera mais il sera heureux dans sa vie... Il ne sera pas chirurgien mais au fond on s'en fout...

Interviewer: C'est quand même un beau métier-là...

Mother: Je ne sais pas si... Je le vois bien faire vendeur de noix de coco et surfer sur sa plage... aussi, mais il sera heureux pareil... mais bon, si il peut avoir un métier dans les mains, c'est mieux... quand même... surtout si il est loin de moi !

Interviewer: Donc je crois que vous avez répondu à toutes mes questions...

Mother: Alors pour l'aider, je voudrais juste rajouter quelque chose... parce que je n'ai jamais trouvé quelqu'un qui soit en capacité de me dire 'vous faites bien ou pas'. On continue comme ça mais on ne sait pas. En l'occurrence, Sébastien a des soucis pour



retenir les choses et parfois pour les comprendre. Donc comprendre le sens du mot et retenir le mot.... Donc tout petit on faisait du théâtre, sur la leçon, on jouait la leçon. (...) Sébastien avait une place dans le jeu donc on passait par le corps. Ensuite, la même leçon, on la dessinait, on la schématisait donc là on écrivait les mots... ensuite il nous racontait l'histoire même si il n'y avait pas les bons mots dedans, juste pour comprendre de quoi il s'agissait. Ensuite on lui demandait de mettre les bons mots dedans parce que l'école c'est quand même de recracher les mêmes, puis on lui faisait écrire les quelques mots qu'il fallait absolument qu'on retrouve dans la leçon. Le mot écrit correctement. Et entre tout ça, on passait par le jeu de mots, essayer de comprendre d'où vient le mot également (j'ai réinventé parfois des racines de mot !) Alors, nous, ses parents on a beaucoup appris. On est allé chercher dans le dictionnaire, sur internet, pourquoi on utilise ce mot, d'où il vient, quel est sa racine, comment ça se dit dans une autre langue... et pour finir... je lui propose une manière de s'en souvenir. Et puis il y a des moments où je vois bien que ça ne marche pas... et je fais comme son papa, je lui demande : 'Quelle est 'ta' manière de t'en souvenir ? Et il trouve quelque chose, parfois complètement alambiqué...

Interviewer: Et ça marche... C'est ce qu'on fait nous aussi, on passe par tous les sens pour les aider à mémoriser(...) on fait exactement ce que vous faites....

Mother: Voilà, donc... D'une manière générale, on ne s'est pas non plus senti... j'ai parfois eu l'impression que les orthophonistes nous demandaient de faire le lien avec l'école, nous demandaient de faire travailler Sébastien, les professeurs nous ont demandé de faire travailler Sébastien. Mais je n'ai pas l'impression que ces professionnels-là nous aient considérés comme des partenaires. Nous, on a bien intégré que ces professionnels étaient des partenaires mais eux, non, donc on m'a rarement donné des conseils, on m'a dit : 'pensez à faire lire votre enfant tous les soirs'... on m'a dit en tant qu'orthophoniste, ça serait peut-être bien, par exemple à l'époque de 'cracteur' de penser à lui faire dire régulièrement tel et tel mot, mais c'est tout ; on ne m'a pas dit : « voilà comment vous pourriez travailler à la maison ». Il a fallu que je pose les questions, que parfois, je comprenne les réponses ! C'est un peu dommage parce que quand on voit le temps, l'énergie, le travail... et puis surtout les parents ont besoin de sentir qu'il y a une perspective positive...



## Pupil observation grid.

### Purpose of the observation:

- To observe and then analyse any strategies learners might have developed o facilitate their own learning.
- To enable observation of how learners interact with their peers.
- To observe the type of support provided in lessons.

### Codes used:

**X** : pupil being observed.

**OP** : other pupil

**C** : class

**T** : teacher

**<** : talking to

**>** : being spoken to

**OT** : on task

**OfT** : off task

**Q** : question

**A** : answer

**HW** : homework.

Pupil	Date	Time	Subject	Group size
Daniel	26/06/13	10.50 (lesson 2)	English	12

**Setting:** Low ability group (set 6). Pupils are sat around tables in groups. X is sat next to another pupil with learning differences. One Learning Support Assistant is working with the group. Pupils are working on producing a feature article. They have done research. They have planned the article using a planning sheet. They now need to produce a first draft on computer using a template (boxes to fill in).

## Appendix XXIX

COLEG ADDYSG Y CELFYDDYDAU A'R DYNIAETHAU  
 COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ARTS & HUMANITIES  
 YSGOL ADDYSG A DYSGU GYDOL OES  
 SCHOOL OF EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING



Time	Activity	Teacher T	Pupil X	Class C
11.00	Starter activity. Write 3 sentences about your star.	Gives instructions and walks around the class to check pupils understand what they are expected to do.	Tries to copy his neighbour's work. X eventually completes 3 sentences.	OT.
11.10	End of starter activity.	T emphasizes the importance of accurate use of punctuation and of not rushing.		
11.15	Aims of lesson are shared + feature article checklist discussed.	T goes through the checklist with the C (checklist highlights what they need to include in their article).	X listens quietly.	All attentive.
11.20	Pupils are told to work on their draft on computers.	T goes around to help pupils.	X is writing his article about Lewis Hamilton. He is looking at pictures of him on the internet. Avoiding having to write?	
11.30			Oft: spends a lot of time on the internet. In his article, he has spelt the name of his star in 3 different ways..X struggles using search engine, as he can't identify key words. The spelling of words he enters into Google is so different to their correct spelling that the search engine cannot make any suggestions (it does not recognise the words).	Most pupils are OT.
11.45			X makes many mistakes when writing. The computer spell check cannot make any suggestions to help him as it does not recognise the words he is trying to use.	
11.48			X tries to read what he has written but cannot decode.	
11.50	Plenary + prep for next lesson: Discussion about a play + skills needed to read out loud.	Discusses success criteria with pupils.	X is listening.	C take part in discussion and come up with answers. Pupils even volunteer to read out loud.
11.55	Group work: acting.	T disciplines C as they become a bit lively.	X and his neighbour argue over which character to be	C are excited about acting.
12.00		T asks pupils to pack away.		

## Pupil observation grid.

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**OfT** : off task

**Q** : question

**A** : answer

**HW** : homework.

Pupil	Date	Time	Subject	Group size
Sébastien	10/05/12	9.20 (lesson 1)	French	26

**Setting:** French lesson, year 8, mixed ability group. Morning lesson: school will be closed this afternoon so pupils are quite unsettled (training for teachers). Pupils' work on the wall.

## Appendix XXX

COLEG ADDYSG Y CELFYDDYDAU A'R DYNIAETHAU  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ARTS & HUMANITIES  
YSGOL ADDYSG A DYSGU GYDOL OES  
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING



Time	Activity	Teacher T	Pupil X	Class C
9.25	HW feedback- portfolio. Qs & As.	She gives hw back. Warns pupils about not copying and pasting. Asks for 1 page to be written by hand. Work to be delivered to class orally as a presentation. Mark /20: /10 oral + /10 writing.	Has had his work back. Calm.	Noisy. Trying to ask Qs but Qs not answered by teacher as pupils shouting out.
9.35	Writing hw down: oral pres. Oral/Written half and half.	Writes hw instructions on board	OT. Writes instructions down in his hw diary.	Unsettled. Writing hw down.
9.40	Grammar textbook. P79 Les fonctions COD-COI-COS.	T reads text. Seems stressed. T asks Qs abt vocab. T continuously tells pupils to be quiet.	X writes the date down on a sheet of lined paper. Reads text as T reads aloud. X tries to answer a Q abt vocab but T didn't hear him. X starts playing with his pen. X tries to answer the same Q again. X writes some new vocab down.	Settling but all trying to answer Qs at the same time.
9.50	Still going over same vocab. point: "fifre et tambourin".	Asks Qs.	X is listening. X is very quiet.	All answering Qs at the same time. Making funny comments.
9.59	T tries to explain a point of grammar abt complements. Asks pupils Qs then sets task. Book work/exercises.	T writes an example on the board then asks pupils to get on with the work by themselves.	X puts his hand up to ask a Q abt the exercise. T answers.	Still lively. Pupils don't understand task set.
10.05	Still working on same piece of text + exercise.	T reads text aloud for the second time. Explains task again.	X is confused abt task because X does not understand instructions but has completed the task before the rest of the class. No cap. letters used/no punctuation; but has answered all Qs.	Calmed down for a while but still noisy.
10.10	Feedback.	T asks X to answer the 1 <sup>st</sup> Q but tells someone off while X is speaking. T didn't listen to X's answer.	X copies what T writes on board (answer). His A. was corre	Still lively.
10.15	Feedback.		X tries to answer another Q. but T. tells another pupil off.	
10.20		T asks a pupil to write A to a Q on the board.	X<his classmates. Uses a different coloured pen to correct his As.	
End of lesson	T. tries to finish last Q.		Packs	Packs.