Institute of Education - University College London (UCL)

An exploration of the relationships between the dyslexic experiences, reading and writing attitude, and attribution beliefs of adult female dyslexic offenders

Obiamaka Jideonwo

Author's Declaration

I, Obiamaka Jideonwo, hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in thesis is entirely my own.

Signed:

Obiamaka Jideonwo

Dated:

31st October, 2023

Acknowledgements

My PhD journey forms a long and very challenging part of my life, and I am extremely grateful to those who made it possible for me to complete this journey.

Embarking on my PhD journey would not have been possible without my principle supervisor, Prof John Vorhaus, to whom I am most indebted to. You were always willing to listen and worked tirelessly to ensure that my path was as smooth as possible. You advised, supported and enabled me every step of the way, and your prompt, outstanding and expert feedback encouraged me to challenge myself while your input made my final thesis possible. I cannot thank you enough.

To my supervisor, Dr Olga Cara, I am eternally grateful for your specialist guidance while your reassurances and endless patience made this journey more enjoyable than it might have otherwise been. You were excellent in providing meaningful ways of looking at concepts, simplifying them so that they were easy to follow. You lifted my spirit and performance when it mattered most and I will never forget your efforts in helping me to complete this programme.

I am forever grateful to my supervisor, Prof Jackie Masterson, who provided high quality teaching and professional guidance. Your invaluable constructive advice and questioning were tremendous and pivotal in my journey to complete this PhD, and you encouraged me to approach my work critically. Your unfailing support helped me to create a thesis which I am very proud of and I will always remember your input in the completion of my study.

I would like to express genuine gratitude to the women who were my study participants. Your courage in sharing your stories is admirable, and I am thankful for your openness and honesty.

I would like to thank my incredible family whose love, support and patience kept me going until I crossed the finishing line - you are the best.

All in all, I thank Almighty God for making all this possible.

Abstract

This qualitative study looked at dyslexia in the lives of female dyslexic offenders: the principal aim was to gain a better understanding of how reading and writing attitude is related to or otherwise affected by the women's experiences of living with dyslexia, and the reasons which they gave for their success or failure in reading and writing. The research addressed a major gap in the literature as female dyslexic offenders' accounts of their experiences are largely absent from prison studies, while their experiences in prison which relate to dyslexic difficulties are missing from the learning disability studies literature.

In this study, systematic qualitative semi-structured interviews were carried out with twelve female dyslexic offenders. An attribution questionnaire was then developed, based on Weiner's attribution theory, and administered to the twelve offenders who had completed the interviews. The overall research design followed an exploratory approach, and three interviews were conducted with each participant on three different occasions: the first two were semi-structured interviews and the third was a structured interview for the administration of the attribution questionnaire.

The first semi-structured interview covered questions on early school experiences, learning behaviour, relationship with significant others, views about reading and writing, reading and writing practices in prison and future plans on improving reading and writing. The second semi-structured interview covered questions on perceptions and discussions which were specific to dyslexia. The third interview involved the administration of the attribution questionnaire. Analysis of data from the two semi-structured interviews followed a thematic approach, identifying patterns and themes,

while data from the attribution questionnaire were analysed numerically, providing an overall profile of the participants, specific to their attributions.

The findings from the semi-structured interviews revealed that for the participants, conceptualisations about dyslexia as a learning disability started in childhood and extended into adulthood. Their school experiences were mostly negative, resulting from a history of failure – real and perceived: this linked to their capacity to function as dyslexic adults within a prison environment. Both the semi-structured interviews and attribution questionnaire revealed that the women tended to attribute their success outcomes to external and uncontrollable factors and make less internal attribution for success. Overall, these women internalised their dyslexia, characterising themselves as dyslexic prisoners through experiences of exclusion, labelling and limitation, leading to a negative reading and writing attitude.

Impact statement

This qualitative study makes a contribution to knowledge in dyslexia research, with a focus on dyslexic women in prison; moreover, it has implications for the fields of prison research and offender learning studies.

Findings from this study provide a strong evidence base to suggest that emotions arising from reading and writing difficulties played a major role in participants' learning and behaviour. Furthermore, being in prison presented unique emotional challenges and systemic barriers which exacerbated the negative emotional consequences of being dyslexic: this evidence should now inform practice. Therefore, an important potential impact of this study is the significance for prison tutors, dyslexia support staff, offender programme leaders and other staff who work with dyslexic prisoners. These findings have confirmed the importance of pedagogical practices within teaching models which recognise the uniqueness of this group of learners: this should inform teaching methods for improving engagement when working with dyslexic offenders.

This study highlights the importance of early diagnosis and remedial support for students with dyslexia during early schooling, drawing attention to the dynamic links between learner needs, intervention and emotions. This evidence calls for strengthening communication between research and practice in order to develop knowledge and understanding, as well as adapting classroom practices to suit this group of prisoners. The findings also suggest a need to monitor how legislation is implemented in schools in order to achieve definitive and effective outcomes for individuals with dyslexia.

This research found that all the participants had poor educational experiences, leading to disengagement from learning activities, as well as disruptive and antisocial behaviour. For most of them, their learning needs were not adequately met in early schooling. Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OFSTED) should therefore require prisons to reshape their services to reflect the diverse needs and experiences of this group of offenders, incorporating specific provisions, and taking into account their negative learning experiences.

The findings revealed how participants negotiated the demands for skills in reading and writing in prison, particularly with regard to how they made decisions about disclosing or concealing their dyslexia, and the impact of their difficulties on their relationships with other prisoners. This evidence has potential impact for prison governors, indicating the need for better and clearer guidance on the issue of dyslexia for prison staff. There should be systematic adaptation of overall procedures and routines within prisons to remove barriers which would limit participation by prisoners with dyslexia, including the creation of safe spaces where inmates can disclose their learning difficulties. Also, prison estates should develop policies and practices in line with dyslexia-friendly standards.

National Offender Management Services (NOMS) could be impacted by the findings in this study. The results revealed that inadequate forms of support for reading and writing made these women vulnerable and forced them into unequal power relations with other prison inmates. Therefore, this evidence would assist NOMS, at a general level, in meeting its obligation through the development of policies which can both enhance and support inclusivity in reading and writing practices in prisons for individuals with dyslexia. NOMS should consider making advances regarding the

development and application of interventions which facilitate dyslexic offenders' inclusion and participation in everyday prison life.

Overall, this research is particularly relevant for policy directives, practice and research in view of the movement which is focused on providing a joined-up offender management system, with reintegration strategies beginning in prison and continuing in partnership with other agencies within the criminal justice system (MOJ, 2022). This study becomes even more relevant in view of the recent joint research by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) and OFSTED which emphasised the systemic barriers in helping prisoners to improve their reading skills or learn to read (HMIP & OFSTED, 2022). Furthermore, there is already some agreement that consideration for 'what works' best for female offenders should be aimed at the provision of support to achieve improved outcomes for them, at all stages within the criminal justice system (Annison & Brayford, 2015). Hence, findings in this study can facilitate the re-evaluation of what is most effective for female dyslexic offenders as well as provide information which will help the planning and allocation of the prison education budget.

CONTENTS

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Position statement

This thesis is written from the perspective of a prison educator: at the time of the research, I was working as a literacy lecturer in the female prison establishment where this study was conducted. The experience of working there and in other sectors within offender learning, for over 19 years, bears strongly on the direction of the thesis, becoming an important factor in its writing.

At the start of my teaching in prison, I found that a high number of the women in their initial assessment for learning recorded the presence of a range of learning difficulties, with dyslexia being among the most cited. This awakened my curiosity, deepening an interest in understanding how learning difficulties affected these women's learning. I was particularly interested in understanding how those with dyslexia related to reading and writing, developing a professional interest in the field of dyslexia in this group of prisoners. Seeking to understand how these women related to reading and writing has been embedded in my interest in how we think about the nature and identification of dyslexia.

Teaching in prison is different to teaching in other learning contexts, and the first apparent difference is the physical environment. Prisons by their very nature are imposing buildings with barbed wire, locked doors and iron gates, with prison guards parading the long corridors and prison grounds: the high walls are painted with dull colours. The prison environment presents as unwelcoming, oppressive and intimidating, being often controlling as well as controlled; for example, staff and visitors are often subjected to full body searches involving sniffer dogs and sitting on

full body scanning chairs. The education department where I worked was a unique caceral learning space, which was encased within a self-contained part of the prison, with locked doors, high windows and iron gates. Hence, examining the prison environment, how this group of women coped with life inside the prison, and having an understanding of the development of the offender learning journey, formed an essential context for developing my interest.

The learners in prison were different to learners in other learning environments outside of prison. A high number of inmates were resistant to education and attended classes for reasons which were profoundly different to students in schools and colleges. Most of the women who came to education had experienced high levels of trauma, encompassing a range of difficult life experiences and complex needs: I found working with them quite challenging but equally rewarding. Many of them were always grateful and referred to the education department as a calm and safe place where they were treated with respect instead of as criminals, and where they could assume identities as learners, expressing their emotions without fear of being judged.

I found that working in prison encompasses other complexities and practicalities; for example, there is often the need to 'think on your feet' as well as react very quickly to situations by adapting to changes which occur without prior warning. Some of these situations included dealing with very challenging, violent and volatile behaviours of some inmates. Moreover, prison educators have to adjust to the constraints of the environment, ensuring that they abide by the stringent prison rules, as any errors can lead to being 'marched off' the prison premises as ultimately, security takes precedence in almost every area of prison operations. Overall, I considered it

important to provide this outline of the context of the study since these very specific physical and cultural/systemic factors are likely to critically affect the findings.

1.2 Research focus

This research focuses on female dyslexic adult offenders, looking at their educational experiences of reading and writing as individuals with dyslexia and how they attribute causes to their success or failure in reading and writing. There are studies which have highlighted the need to address the intricacies around discussions on female offenders. There are also articles which have addressed concerns for women's experiences of the criminal justice system, length of sentence and overall treatment as prisoners, emphasising a shift towards a tailored approach to understanding experiences of female offenders (e.g. Covington & Bloom, 2006; Worrall & Gelshtorpe, 2009). The rationale for these concerns is that women have unique pathways into criminality which are marked with experiences of domestic violence (Prison Reform, 2017a), trauma, and physical or emotional abuse (Covington & Bloom, 2006), suggesting a difference in pathways from those of male prisoners (Brown, 2006). Furthermore, following the death of six women at HMP Styal over a 13-month period, the Home Office commissioned Baroness Corston to conduct a study of women in prison, focusing on improving conditions for women with particular vulnerabilities in the criminal justice system (Corston, 2007:15). The Corston Report (2007) *A Review of Women with Particular Vulnerabilities in the Criminal Justice System*, called for a greater recognition of how wider social issues can impact women's offending behaviour, and highlighted the complexity of these women's needs. The report identified three key areas of vulnerability for female offenders: domestic, personal and socio-economic, emphasising the need to address

the negative experiences of women in the criminal justice system by helping them to build life skills, resilience and self-reliance (Corston, 2007:2).

The presence of dyslexia can cause vulnerability for women in prison, necessitating the need to recognise how reading and writing difficulties interact with prison systems to impact the well-being of this group of prisoners. Hence, a focus on 'women with particular vulnerabilities' could encompass understanding how issues associated with poor literacy are linked to female dyslexic offenders' self-esteem, learning identity and social relationships, as well as how they build resilience.

There are other organisations which have similarly called for a robust and holistic approach to service delivery for women within the criminal justice system, see, for example, the reports of the Prison Reform Trust (2000) and the Fawcett Society (2004). Hence, in developing the current study, literacy difficulties were considered. This thesis proposes that skills in reading and writing are essential for a successful life in modern society, being necessary for participation in the fields of work, leisure, and for functioning productively within communities. However, there are individuals who experience persistent difficulties with reading and writing, and this goes on to affect achievement in other areas of learning.

Dyslexia is considered as the most common learning disability (Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2005), and according to the British Dyslexia Association, it affects approximately 10% of the population in the United Kingdom, with 4% of these persons being severely affected. The condition is associated with numerous symptoms, such as poor spelling, reading difficulties, and sometimes, difficulties in self-expression (Lyon et al., 2003). There are suggestions in many studies that the cognitive impairments associated with dyslexia continue from childhood into adulthood (Riddick et al.,

1999), whereby reading and writing difficulties linked to dyslexia extend beyond academic achievement into career development (Smith et al., 2004). My study acknowledges the debate regarding the definition of dyslexia. This is discussed in the literature review section, together with the perspective adopted in the current study.

Although dyslexia is frequently referred to as a literacy-based learning difficulty, it is commonly thought to affect more than literacy development. For example, Riddick et al. (1999) explored the affective dimension of dyslexia and gave evidence of a relationship between dyslexia and crime - thought to be the consequence of low levels of self-esteem experienced by dyslexic individuals, which stem from negative experiences at school, along with a lack of diagnosis and support. Also, Humphrey and Mullins (2002b) assert that dyslexia has a negative impact on the self-concept and self-esteem of students. Dyslexia, therefore, is thought to be associated with a range of negative educational and social experiences as well as unfavourable outcomes which can be linked to reading and writing attitude.

1.3 Background and rationale for the study

The present study looked at dyslexia in the lives of female dyslexic adult offenders, exploring their experiences and accounts of dyslexia both within the prison and at other times in their educational lives. There is a substantial body of research evidence on dyslexia; however, these studies tend to concentrate on identifying the deficits or difficulties in cognitive function attributable to the condition. While these studies have contributed extensively to knowledge in the field, the emphasis is largely on exploring the difficulties from a medical perspective (Riddick, 2010). I

chose to examine the effects of dyslexia in the daily, social and educational lives of female dyslexic offenders.

Modern society is immersed in print media; hence, texts become a narrow and confining space for a person who has reading and writing difficulties. While there are studies which have reported that individuals with reading and writing difficulties are over-represented in prisons (e.g., Kirk & Reid, 2001; Snowling, 2000), prisons can be a highly demanding environment for reading and writing abilities. For example, prisons generally operate a paper-based request form system. Request forms are completed for arrangement of visits, educational/vocational courses, medical appointments, ordering medication, making a complaint, and managing finances through approved purchases from the prison ‘canteen’. Other prison activities which require skills in reading and writing include writing letters to family and friends, corresponding with solicitors and probation service, participating in the ‘email a prisoner’ prison scheme, as well as completing mandatory offender rehabilitation programmes. Additionally, reading and writing skills are necessary when making representations for parole. These, therefore, impose demands on competence in reading and writing skills within the prison system.

Thus, limited skills in these areas have the potential to put female dyslexic offenders at a disadvantage, preventing them from partaking fully in activities both in prison and in their communities upon release from prison. The possibility of marginalisation (Estrada & Nilsson, 2012) and alienation from their communities (Sharpe, 2015) for this group of prisoners has potential to present a range of psychological and emotional issues, for example the desire to be affirmed as persons of worth.

Studies on dyslexia among offenders have made use of quantitative research methods to assess the prevalence of dyslexia amongst this population (e.g. Kirk & Reid, 2001; Moody et al., 2000). However, these studies provide limited information on individual life experiences related to dyslexia. Macdonald (2009) emphasised the significance of gaining in-depth understanding of the impact of dyslexia, as well as exploring dyslexic experiences, because these are fundamental to discussions on labelling and inclusivity within and outside education.

A large body of research has focused on dyslexic students' literacy difficulties in learning environments such as schools and adult learning centres, but there is a scarcity of literature on literacy and dyslexic offenders, while studies on female dyslexic offenders are non-existent. Prior to seeking permission to conduct the present study, my initial enquiries at the National Offender Management Service Headquarters revealed that there had not been requests for research in the area of reading and writing attitude of dyslexic offenders. I therefore argue that information regarding female dyslexic offenders' reading and writing attitude is a valuable resource in the evaluation of 'what works?' for this group. Data from this study may impact research, policy and practice, as detailed in the *Implications of the Findings* section (please see Chapter Five), as well as make a major contribution to psychosocial literature and prison education literature.

The rationale for this present study becomes more apparent in consideration of the recent review by HMI Prisons and Ofsted which was published in March 2022. According to this review, Reading education is not prioritised in prisons and reading is not a well-defined component of the main education provision. The report noted that the education delivery was not suitable in supporting prisoners to enhance

reading skills, stating that low reading levels reduces an inmate's ability to participate in meaningful activity as well as access vital written information. According to Charlie Taylor, Chief Inspector of Prisons, who was a member of the review panel: "It is a serious indictment of the prison system that so many prisoners are no better at reading when they leave prison than when they arrived." The panel recommended that urgent action should be taken to deal with the several concerns which were outlined in the report (HMI Prisons, 2022).

1.4 Situating this thesis

This study contributes to knowledge in dyslexia research, prison studies and offender learning literature. It draws on perspectives within the fields of social psychology and education in developing understanding of dyslexic experiences, attitudes, learning identity and relationships within educational institutions as well as practices, processes and outcomes in early schooling and in prison.

As a first element, social psychology concepts are applied by integrating Weiner's attribution theory with the concept of attitude in order to develop a comprehensive framework for understanding how the participants explain events that they experience. This study developed a broader understanding of the impact of judgements and responses of other people on the sense of self, learning identity and emotional wellbeing of this group of participants. According to Allport (1984), social psychology is concerned with how the real, assumed or inferred association with others shapes a person's thoughts, experiences and behaviours. Therefore, social psychology considers the mental and emotional conditions within which social behaviours and feelings take place (Brown, 2006).

Attribution theory - is employed as the framework to explore how participants in this study explain reading and writing outcomes, and how this links to their beliefs and behaviour (Weiner, 1985, 1990). This theory is used to examine experiences and interpretations which these women give to events, i.e. success or failure, as well as interactions in social and academic situations. The processes of explaining events and beliefs to oneself as well as the behavioural and emotional consequences of these explanations are central in the field of social psychology (Swanson & Kelley, 2001)

Also, this study is interested in understanding the components of attitude - a central concern of social psychology (Allport, 1935; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993) - and how attitudes develop. Attitude is explored in order to gain understanding of events and processes which inform participants' thoughts, feelings and behaviours in their social contexts. This concept is used to seek explanations for how female dyslexic offenders develop attitude towards reading and writing through early schooling and within the prison system. Additionally, the role of attitude is used to examine the social factors which present within the prison. This would include interactions which the participants have within the system which controls and manages their lives, and how the impact of these interactions relates to their approaches to reading and writing in the context of their dyslexic experiences.

As a second element, this study draws on the discipline of education and extends discussion on female dyslexic offenders' experiences at school and in prison, considering the wider influences which shape their lives, attitudes and beliefs. Engaging in educational discourse extends discussions on the issues around dyslexia diagnosis and support, offering understanding of how interactions and

activities of key players at school shape their experiences and affect self-evaluations which these women make both at school and later in adulthood.

Locating this study in the field of education involves the examination of relationships with teachers, learning processes and interactions based on students' individual differences and preferences. This study seeks to explain participants' learning identity, and how dyslexia affects self-evaluations which they make as learners in formal contexts of education. Peer relationships and other social relationships which relate to student learning are investigated to facilitate an understanding of the process of perception, learning, achievement, abilities and behaviours in educational situations. There is a debate on whether education is a discipline or a field (Sundberg, 2007; Furlong, 2013); however, for the purposes of this present study, education can be viewed as either a discipline or a field.

Overall, engaging with concepts and ideas across the fields of social psychology and education has allowed for new knowledge and a deeper understanding of the phenomena of study.

1.5 Research questions

The following research questions were developed based on the aims of this study:

1. How do female dyslexic offenders understand and make sense of their educational experiences of reading and writing?
2. What are the relationships between their experiences of being dyslexic and their learning attribution beliefs?
3. How do these relationships relate to their reading and writing attitude from early schooling to their time in prison?

1.6 Outline of the thesis

Chapter One: Introduction. This chapter provides an overview of my study, encompassing its focus, background and rationale. The disciplinary profile of the thesis is explained, and the research questions are presented.

Chapter Two: Literature review. This chapter presents definitions, identification and labelling issues surrounding dyslexia, discussing some of the main assumptions and beliefs about dyslexia. The major theories and concepts within this thesis are examined. Literature on the prison context is presented, examining prison educational practice, culture and adaptation to prison life. There is also a description of a generalised profile of women in order to offer contextual information for understanding dyslexic women in prison.

Chapter Three: Methodology. This chapter provides an overview of the research design, describing the choice of research methods, the relevance of using semi-structured interviews and the administration of attribution questionnaire approach. The procedures for data collection and analysis are explained; also, insight into the research site is provided and ethical considerations are presented.

Chapter Four: Data analysis and discussion. This chapter presents analysis and discussion of the data. Individual themes are presented and analysed, with excerpts from participants' interviews, to illustrate each of the themes, together with categories and subcategories. Tables are used to illustrate participants' profiles and responses to the attribution questionnaire.

Chapter Five: Conclusion. This chapter draws the research together, addressing each research question and discussing the main findings from the data analysis in

the wider context of existing literature. The limitations of the research are evaluated and implications of the study are presented.

Summary – Chapter One

In this chapter, an explanation of my study is presented, introducing my topic and outlining the research focus, nature of the study, background and rationale. The disciplinary profile is described and the research questions are introduced.

Chapter Two: Literature review

2.1 An overview of the literature on dyslexia

In this section, I review some of the literature on dyslexia. I do not attempt a comprehensive review, which is beyond the scope of this study; rather, I discuss dyslexia as it relates both to the development of reading and writing attitude and to individuals' experiences of living with this label. This will encompass an examination of some of the issues around dyslexia as well as the development of ideas about the nature of dyslexia, including its definition, diagnosis, descriptive terms and labelling. Additionally, the review will be focused on the affective factors related to difficulties in reading and writing.

I focus on reading and writing because a basic assumption underlying this thesis is that individuals with dyslexia encounter difficulties during reading and writing (Lyon et al., 2003; Hoein & Lundberg, 2000). Moreover, it is well documented that the biggest challenge that dyslexia presents in education and employment involves problems with the development of skills in reading and writing: many individuals with dyslexia experience difficulties in filling forms, reading informative texts, etc. I argue that the written word is a primary medium through which information is communicated in modern society, and which is reflected in academic systems. There is an increasing demand in the world of work for most people to have good literacy skills. Also, in everyday lives, people are surrounded by print: signs, instructional manuals, leisure materials such as magazines and novels. Literacy demands have continued to grow (Anstey & Bull, 2018; Wolff & Lundberg, 2003), particularly with the advent of social media for example: texting, Facebook and Twitter. This means

that being able to read and write is important in order to be a functional and productive member of society. It has been reported that poor literacy skills can lead to adverse consequences, including mental health issues and possibly criminal behaviour, for example, it has been suggested that individuals with dyslexia are over-represented within the prison population (Kirk & Reid, 2001).

Overall, I consider that it is necessary to examine literature relating to the concept of dyslexia because of its potential to provide insight into how individuals self-identify and explain their dyslexic experiences. Also, the examination will cover literature on school experiences, attitudes, motivation, attribution theory, locus of control, learned helplessness and resilience. Dyslexia is discussed in the next section.

2.1.1 What is dyslexia?

Initial definitions of dyslexia focused on intelligence quotient (IQ) and reading ability (Snowling, 2013). For example, Pringle Morgan (1896) reported the case of a 14-year-old boy, who despite being of adequate intelligence and having years of training in literacy, continued to encounter reading and spelling difficulties. He was unable to read an easy children's book and his spelling was poor. Hence, individuals who had both a lower-than-average reading ability and an above average IQ were thought of as dyslexic (Nicholson & Fawcett, 2007); people with dyslexia were typically thought of as having above-average levels of intelligence (Elliott, 2005; Macdonald, 2009). This suggests that no one with below average intelligence could be dyslexic, instead, they would be thought of as having a general learning difficulty (Crombie, 2002) rather than dyslexia. However, this approach has been criticised and it is argued that any analysis of dyslexia should take account of more than the relation of IQ to

reading ability, since there are many factors which explain abilities in processing information (e.g., Stanovich, 1996).

Dyslexia has been conceptualised by writers from different fields including neurobiology, psychology, education and social domains, influencing methods of support given to individuals with dyslexia (Pollack, 2005; Riddick, 2001). These conceptualisations serve different purposes and are based on their utility in specific domains (Miles, 1995). For example, definitions emanating from the fields of neurology and psychology will differ from those directed at pedagogical needs, as well as those aimed at preserving the entitlement of students with dyslexia within academic institutions and in law. Miles (2006) has argued that descriptions within diverse disciplines (as noted above) have contributed to the disagreement about indicators of dyslexia because its conceptualisation, initially as a medical condition, has been instrumental in creating reservations on recognising it as a learning disability. Consequently, it will be challenging to arrive at a single definition of dyslexia which would be appropriate for the diverse domains.

Elliott and Gibbs (2008) have questioned the description of dyslexia as an identifiable and distinct category. Their viewpoint derives from the argument that learning support or intervention should be provided for all students with reading problems, because adopting the dyslexia label has possible discriminatory elements. Likewise, Elliott and Grigorenko (2014) have argued against the value of the term ‘dyslexia’ from a scientific viewpoint, positing that it is a difficulty in reading which does not necessitate formal recognition as a disability in order to require specific educational intervention and support.

However, Ramus (2014) has argued against the claims made by Elliott and Grigorenko (2014), suggesting that there is a consensus amongst specialists in the field on the constituents of dyslexia as a cognitive difference. Ramus (2014) further contended that claims by Elliott and Grigorenko (2014) arise from reviews of the literature which have already been published as opposed to emanating from primary research, and that Elliott and Grigorenko (2014) draw conclusions from mainly quantitative data and not much qualitative data. Echoing the point on qualitative data, Macdonald (2009) asserted that it is important to obtain a detailed understanding of the importance of the term dyslexia from individuals ascribed with the label, as well as to examine their associated experiences: this is because these constitute vital components in discourses on labelling and inclusivity within and outside education. Also, Lauchlan and Boyle (2014) pointed out that rejecting the label would lead to neglect of the needs of dyslexic individuals.

Wadlington and Wadlington (2005) noted that contentions around dyslexia are a consequence of differing terminologies used to describe, understand, define, and identify it. For example, in their review of research assessing aetiology of dyslexia, Vellutino et al. (2004) adopted the term 'specific reading disability (dyslexia)' (p.1.), and posited that the terms 'specific reading disability' and 'dyslexia' are used synonymously. In the UK, the term 'dyslexia' has been commonly used (e.g. Department of Education, 1994; Rose Report, 2009) although, for a period in the 1990s, specific learning difficulties (SpLD) was commonly used as a synonym (e.g. Pumfrey & Reason, 1991; Lyon et al., 2003). Also, Riddick (1996) noted that in the USA the term 'learning disabled' (LD) was used in a range of studies where the selection criteria were similar to those used in describing dyslexia. The term 'reading disabled' has also been used for the same group (e.g. Kos, 1991). In the current

thesis the term ‘dyslexia’ is adopted except when discussing American studies, where I use terms employed by the writers.

The International Dyslexia Association put forward a definition of dyslexia within the bio-medical remit as follows:

“Dyslexia is a specific learning disability which is neurobiological in origin. It is characterised by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.” (International Dyslexia Association, 2016, p.1).

This definition, which used explanatory factors to facilitate an understanding of dyslexia (Elliott & Place, 2004), recognises that dyslexia is a neurobiological condition and although its focus may be regarded as narrow (Gaddes & Edgell, 2001), it classifies dyslexia as a specific learning disability – incorporating spelling and reading difficulties as well as emphasising the role of phonological processing in language acquisition and word decoding.

Although dyslexia was originally linked to deficiencies in literacy acquisition, additional difficulties have sometimes been added to the symptoms used to classify it. For example, disruptive behaviour has been associated with dyslexia (Heiervang et al., 2001), and so has motor skill co-ordination (Lyon et al., 2003; Mortimore, 2003), as well as problems with automatisation of balance (Nicholson & Fawcett, 1990). Other features associated with dyslexia can be deficits in organisation and

time management (Lyon et al., 2003; Mortimore, 2003; Farmer et al., 2002). Additionally, individuals with dyslexia have been reported to have lower self-esteem in comparison to their peers without dyslexia (Riddick et al., 1999).

Despite criticisms, the term 'dyslexia' has been generally accepted, and is used in a wide range of disciplines. For example, in the bibliometric database assembled by Bishop (2010), 93% of research reports on children's reading difficulties between 1985 and 1989 focused on dyslexia, and this rose to 99% after 2000. Kamhi (2004) noted that although the definition of dyslexia is contested, individuals with reading difficulties readily claim this label and according to Bishop (2014), identifying oneself as dyslexic may be due to the positive outcomes which come with a diagnosis.

The British Dyslexia Association proffered a definition of dyslexia which not only acknowledges that dyslexia mainly impacts competencies in reading and writing, but also adopts an inclusive approach, eschewing any reference to deficits, instead asserting the presence of other cognitive abilities in individuals with dyslexia:

> *"Dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty which mainly affects the development of literacy and language-related skills. It is likely to be present at birth and to be life-long in its effects. It is characterised by difficulties with phonological processing, rapid naming, working memory, processing speed, and the automatic development of skills that may not match up to an individual's other cognitive abilities. It tends to be resistant to conventional teaching methods, but its effect can be mitigated by appropriately specific intervention, including the application of information technology and supportive counselling."* (British Dyslexia Association, 2009).

This definition takes into account the role of ‘appropriately specific intervention’, the individuality of those affected, and the need for counselling - thereby suggesting affective consequences. The definition has been revised in the updated British Dyslexia Association (2018) version to include recommendations made in the Rose Report (2009). This report was a directive by the U.K. government’s Department for Children, Schools and Families relating to assessment and teaching of individuals with dyslexia. The updated definition incorporates the pedagogical needs and entitlements of students with dyslexia within academic environments. Also, a significant inclusion is the extension of features of dyslexia, additional restrictions on learning, reconstructing some of the initial characteristics of the condition and formulating a broad operational definition:

> *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 a well-founded intervention”* (BDA, 2018).

For the purposes of this study, the above definition will be adopted because it portrays the complex nature of dyslexia. It provides a wide-ranging perspective of

dyslexia, acknowledging the impact of the condition on a range of literacy, cognitive and organisation abilities: it indicates variations in intensity of this impact on a dyslexic person, leaving them at a disadvantage in learning settings which adopt conventional literacy-based teaching methods. Also, this definition sets out potential difficulties which are considered during the assessment process across all age groups. Furthermore, the BDA postulates that dyslexia presents on a continuum and eschews a discrepancy element. It does not refer to dyslexia as a neurobiological condition, but acknowledges difficulties across a 'range of intellectual abilities', stating that severity can be determined by how well an individual responds to intervention. In this way, the BDA recognises the nuanced and individual nature of the experience of dyslexia and provides intervention utility by referring to the broad nature of difficulties. This is noted in the literature, which emphasises that individuals with dyslexia have different learning approaches (Morgan & Klein, 2002), and achieve improved learning outcomes when they are taught in specific ways using their preferred learning styles (Exley, 2003). The descriptive elements of this definition provide information about the different characteristics and manifestations of dyslexia, enabling a better understanding of what dyslexia is. Consequently, this definition may provide practitioners with valuable insights which could inform practice for individuals with dyslexia. This definition may be considered by some to be vague; nonetheless, it outlines learning patterns as opposed to possible underlying causes.

In this section, I have discussed definitions and descriptions of dyslexia, showing that, although the concept was first developed in the field of medicine, it is relevant to the socio-cultural perception of literacy (reading and writing) development. Descriptions of dyslexia have involved diverse viewpoints and perceptions: in spite of these, there is a group of individuals who experience unique difficulties with reading

and writing, and who accept their identification as ‘dyslexic’. Overall, this thesis adopts the position that notwithstanding the debate surrounding the existence, characteristics, causes and treatment of dyslexia, the condition remains a fact for some individuals (Burden, 2005). Furthermore, dyslexia is considered as a disability under the Equality Act 2010 in UK Law, thereby necessitating an enquiry into the experiences of individuals with the condition as they understand it. Accordingly, I explore the identification process next and move on to possible adverse consequences associated with dyslexia.

2.1.2 Dyslexia Diagnosis

There are different steps which can be taken in the identification of dyslexia. The first stage in a dyslexia diagnosis is often the administration of a screening test to determine whether an individual is dyslexic or is at risk of the condition (Singleton, et al., 2009). Screening tests indicate other areas of difficulty which can prompt a formal diagnostic process. For the purpose of saving time, questionnaires and rating scales are sometimes used to determine indications of dyslexia (Snowling et al., 2012). Most dyslexia screening questionnaires have questions on literacy skills as well as categories which relate to attention, organisational and word finding difficulties (e.g. Cooper & Miles, 2011; Smythe & Everatt, 2001). These questionnaires provide supplementary material, evaluating the risk of dyslexia (Snowling et al., 2012; Stampoltzis et al., 2017). A definitive diagnosis of dyslexia is obtained with a diagnostic assessment which is administered by a trained professional, who can be an educational psychologist or specialist teacher. The assessment will examine a range of skills and cognitive processing proficiencies.

Thereafter, a report is compiled, providing an outline of the difficulties identified and offering recommendations on provision of intervention and/or other forms of support.

Mortimore (2003) and Miles (2006) posited that there are significant problems with at least one widely used method for assessing dyslexia - the ACID profile (Arithmetic, Coding, Information and Digit Span), which was mainly employed for assessments during the 1980s. They observed that this required skills which would ordinarily present difficulties for anyone with dyslexia. For example, the Arithmetic test presupposes the ability to make use of multiplication tables, a skill which may present challenges for individuals with dyslexia, regardless of their intelligence levels (Miles, 2006).

There are studies which have looked at the effect of the age of diagnosis for dyslexia, reporting that early identification is a psychological protective factor (Riddick et al., 1997). Battistutta et al. (2018) examined the possible impact of the time of diagnosis on dyslexic adolescents' views about their ability: these individuals had their assessments for dyslexia in either primary or secondary school. The researchers found that early-identified adolescents had more positive self-perceptions in relation to their academic and general ability. Additionally, they had better understanding and acceptance of their learning difficulties, compared to those who had a late diagnosis. Consequently, timely diagnosis may ameliorate some negative academic experiences (Dale & Taylor, 2001) and facilitate academic interventions (Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005), as well as promote a positive self-perception and increased self-esteem (Burden & Burdett, 2007). In relation to a child's academic developmental journey, the age of diagnosis may be vital and relevant to the child's or adolescent's perception of their ability. Also, it can provide clarification on their learning problems as well as competencies; this is helpful mainly

because pupils with dyslexia have been shown to link reading aptitude with intelligence (Humphrey & Mullins, 2002b).

There are studies which have associated self-esteem with the timing of the assessment for dyslexia, since a lack of diagnosis may lead individuals to question their lack of competency arising from inexplicable learning problems (e.g. Burden, 2008; McNulty, 2003). Ingesson (2007) conducted a study on 75 Swedish teenagers and young adults who had been diagnosed with dyslexia as children and reported that early diagnosis, including a thorough explanation of the condition, facilitated adjustment for these participants in adult life.

Rowan (2014) carried out a study with four university students in New Zealand. Two of the participants were assessed at the age of seven and this led to the implementation of support and intervention as well as parental support. The other two participants were diagnosed as teenagers. The students who were diagnosed at an early age were more self-confident at university. Similarly, Glazzard (2010), who explored the psychological impact of dyslexia, reported that children experienced higher levels of self-esteem after their dyslexia diagnosis, noting that early diagnosis was vital in circumventing the negative emotions brought on by lack of scholarly progress.

Using case studies, Morgan and Klein (2000) identified some of the external factors which influence how individuals perceive the effects of dyslexia on their lives. They reported that the stage at which dyslexia was identified and the type of support given, were significant factors in determining how the effects of dyslexia were perceived. Adults who were not assessed in childhood, and who did not receive support with their learning were likely to experience a sense of incompetence and

disappointment, as well as antagonism towards their education. They may also come to accept being labelled as ‘indolent’ or ‘unintelligent’. This study concluded that an individual’s prior experiences in an academic setting together with self-beliefs about competence and conduct will have an influence on future academic endeavours.

In order to gain understanding of the possible consequences of a diagnosis of dyslexia, the interpretations which individuals ascribe to the label will be explored in the next section. Also, this examination may provide insight into how these may be related to the development of a sense of self as well as dyslexic experiences.

2.1.3 Dyslexia Label

According to Macdonald (2010) the dyslexia label is beneficial when it leads to requisite support, enabling a growth in self-confidence and a shift from the negative self-perception of low intelligence, to the development of an identity based on difference. Echoing this claim, Reid and Kirk (2001) noted that the dyslexia label may help to explain the reasons for failures associated with the condition. However, it has been asserted that a dyslexia label may lead to stigmatisation (Polychroni et al., 2006), suggesting an unfavourable view of the identification (Riddick, 2000) arising from negative notions about learning disabilities.

Taylor et al. (2010) examined the impact of the dyslexia label on self-esteem, and found that children who had a specific diagnosis of dyslexia had comparable levels of self-esteem to a control group of children without learning difficulties. However, children who had a general label of special educational needs had lower self-esteem scores. These findings support Glazzard (2010), who posited that dyslexic pupils’

understanding of the nature of their learning difficulty, as well as ownership of the label, facilitate successful psycho-social functioning.

Gibson and Kendall (2000) interviewed college-age students who received their dyslexia diagnosis when they entered higher education. The participants expressed relief on gaining an explanation for their academic struggles, particularly as they had developed perceptions of being failures. Their challenges were as a result of a learning disability which was not identified or attended to; hence, the dyslexia diagnosis enabled acceptance, creating awareness of the reason for their difficulties.

Likewise, a study by Riddick (2000) reported that most of the participants indicated that the dyslexia label was beneficial, emphasising its significance and demonstrating a relationship between this identification and self-esteem. However, it was also reported in this study that although a dyslexia label can generally avert the unfavourable perceptions about being dyslexic, there are some individuals with dyslexia who do not want to accept this label because it may make them susceptible to ridicule, and not being accepted.

Many participants in a study by Armstrong and Humphrey (2009) stated that their dyslexia diagnosis did not impact their views about school. According to this study, the students did not accept their dyslexia diagnosis, and the authors called it ‘defensive self-esteem’ (p.6.). Also, labelling may cause dyslexic individuals to understand their problems as shortcomings which portray them as being abnormal in comparison with their non-dyslexic peers, appraising their difficulty by the learning activities which they are unable to complete (Singh & Ghai, 2009).

Although there are cases where labels are sometimes perceived as negative, leading to stigmatisation (Elliot & Gibbs, 2008), it has been inferred that the label of

dyslexia presents benefits by enabling the individual with dyslexia to explain his or her difficulties to others: this eliminates the notions of ‘stupid’ or ‘lazy’, as had been attributed to these individuals (Riddick, 2000). Generally, students react to the dyslexia label in diverse ways and these differences in perceptions about the diagnosis indicate divergences in how self-esteem and self-perception are affected; some welcome the dyslexia label while others view it as an encumbrance (Pollak, 2005).

What is clear from the literature is that there are advantages and disadvantages associated with the dyslexia label. Some studies allude to perceived stigma attached to the dyslexia label and others have indicated a link between the dyslexia label and children’s negative self-concept. Conversely, some researchers have argued that labelling serves utility in increasing self-esteem, and replacing unhelpful labels such as ‘lazy’. Overall, based on the literature, I make the assumption that irrespective of the form of the dyslexia label, its associated difficulties are real, having considerable impact on the school experiences of dyslexic individuals. Having discussed the dyslexia label, in the next section, I will be examining affective factors associated with this categorisation, and discussing these in the context of school experiences.

2.1.4 Dyslexia, Self-esteem and School experience

In this section, I review the literature which is focused on the social and emotional impacts of dyslexia: the aim is to understand determinants of feelings towards reading and writing as a consequence of school experiences of dyslexic individuals.

Studies have found that even though dyslexia is mainly categorised as a literacy-based learning difficulty, its effects extend beyond the mastery of literacy skills. For

example, Riddick et al. (1999) conducted a study with 16 students with dyslexia and 16 students without dyslexia at an English university. Students were asked to complete an essay, self-esteem inventory and a questionnaire, and they took part in semi-structured interviews. The authors found that anxiety levels amongst the students with dyslexia, when engaged in academic work, were higher than they were amongst members of the control group. Furthermore, Riddick et al. (1999) reported that self-esteem was low amongst the dyslexic students, and explanation for this included the presence of negative memories of schooling, which in turn, had a negative impact on how well they performed in different literacy tasks. Similarly, anxiety has been reported as an emotional consequence of dyslexia, which in itself can have an impact on cognitive processes such as attention and retention of information (Terry & Burns, 2001).

There are a range of factors which have been linked to lack of educational success, some of which may be a consequence of social and emotional problems (Reis et al., 2004); for example, adolescents who are poor academic achievers may encounter many problems if their learning difficulty is highlighted unfavourably in an academic environment (Preece, 2009), impacting their self-esteem. Also, receipt of additional support is sometimes viewed as facilitating the exposure of one's learning disability. Consequently, rejection of this support is adopted as a coping mechanism to avoid embarrassment which could result from unwanted attention (Heiman & Kariv, 2004; Givon & Court, 2010).

The literature reviewed in this thesis frequently noted narratives of negative school experiences by individuals with dyslexia and such negative feelings being repeated in adulthood when the individuals are necessitated to reveal their condition (e.g.

Stampoltzis & Polychronopoulou, 2009; McNulty, 2003). Humphrey and Mullins (2002b), reported that some students with dyslexia felt that they were ‘stupid’, ‘lazy’ or ‘thick’ (ibid. 8), frequently associating skills in reading and writing with intelligence. Consequently, since these learners were generally poor at reading, they were inclined to view themselves as less intelligent. The authors further noted that some of them felt less confident when their dyslexic disposition was made apparent, for example, when asked to read out loud in front of a class. Some participants even expressed the desire that they could be someone else – someone without dyslexia (ibid).

McNulty (2003) conducted a comparative narrative analysis of the life stories of 12 adults who had received a diagnosis of dyslexia as children (that was before the age of 14). The study included an examination of the emotional consequences of dyslexia through the life-course with a view to gaining insight into how the participants experienced dyslexia in their lives. It was found that as children, they were already aware of difficulties with reading and writing, were questioning their academic intelligence, and considered themselves to be out of place. This had a negative impact on their self-esteem and self-awareness which culminated in difficulties at school and a consciousness that others viewed them as being ‘different’. The participants described their school experiences as traumatic, but also reported that any low self-esteem was ameliorated following diagnosis of dyslexia and receipt of support for this. They gave evidence that as adults, they were able to compensate functionally and psychologically for their difficulties, and attributed this capacity to having previously received support from parents and professionals. These participants were mainly from middle and upper middle-class backgrounds, and this may partly account for their positive trajectory; the same may not apply to

less advantaged individuals who are not able to receive a diagnosis and any consequent support.

Also related to the accounts of school experience by dyslexic students are the comparisons which these individuals make with their non-dyslexic peers, as well as an assessment of how others view them (Burden, 2008). Singer (2007) emphasised the dissimilarity between students with dyslexia and their non-dyslexic peers, noting that dyslexic pupils reported working hard in order to achieve good results; nonetheless, these did not produce positive academic outcomes. This is consistent with Ingesson (2007) who reported that dyslexic students felt inferior to their peers without learning problems.

Studies on dyslexia often draw attention to expectations of failure, relating these to loss of self-esteem. For example, recurrent failure can lead to higher levels of discouragement and lower self-esteem amongst people with dyslexia as compared with their non-dyslexic peers (Riddick, et al., 1999; Pollack, 2005), and this can exacerbate expectations of failure. Pollack (2005) explored personal experiences of dyslexic undergraduates by means of interviews. Participants reported failing academically at school, consequent embarrassment, questioning of their intelligence, and the development of high expectations of rejection and failure. Gibby-Leversuch et al. (2021) conducted a systematic review, exploring the relationship between literacy problems, dyslexia and self-perceptions of children and young people, as well as how other causes of attributional style and the dyslexia label can add to the self-perceptions of children and young people. The quantitative papers which were reviewed assessed the self-reported self-perception of children and young people who were dyslexic or had literacy problems, and measured this against the children and young people without dyslexia or literacy problems. The qualitative papers

investigated the lived experiences of children and young people with dyslexia and literacy problems, encompassing their self-perceptions and how these were impacted by a positive assessment for dyslexia. The findings indicated that children and young people with literacy problems and dyslexia can be at a higher risk of building negative self-views as learners, although their general self-worth may not be affected. The authors reported that positive relationships with peers and parents, adaptive attributional styles and favourable attitudes towards dyslexia and other learning difficulties were protective factors which supported the development of positive self-worth.

Overall, these studies suggest that, due to negative socio-emotional outcomes for dyslexic students, their school experiences are likely to be different from those of their non-dyslexic peers. For example, experiences of dyslexia may lead to emotional maladjustment (Humphrey & Mullins, 2002b), anxiety (Carroll & Iles, 2006) or even “the ‘scars of dyslexia’ (Edwards, 1994).

In this section, the literature has been reviewed regarding the emotional and behavioural implications for individuals with dyslexia as well as how this group perceives and makes sense of the experiences of being dyslexic. It also examined the school experiences of individuals with dyslexia with the aim of understanding associations between dyslexia and a person’s ability to operate effectively in an academic environment, formulating aspects of their learning identity. It was the aim in this thesis to determine relations between school experiences of the participants and their reading and writing attitude, from an attribution perspective.

In summary, the literature postulates that dyslexia is multidimensional, and its effects are often linked to complex and multiple issues which extend beyond academic

achievements. What is clear from the literature is that reading and writing are positioned as central and crucial skills because it is considered that overall school and occupational achievements are measured by proficiency in these areas. Hence, individuals with dyslexia are likely to face greater challenges in school and may experience early educational failure resulting in social and emotional problems which can have significant long-term effects. Consequently, these individuals begin to develop coping strategies - some of which are negative - aimed at ameliorating these secondary effects of dyslexia. Also, what the research has shown is the function of diagnosis and assessment in defining intervention strategies to enable the building of confidence and success, thereby highlighting the importance of the learning environment. Taken as a whole, these findings suggest that individuals with dyslexia are at an increased risk of social and emotional problems, which may in turn lead to negative life outcomes in relation to education, employment and relationships.

A view which is often expressed within the literature is that dyslexia can impact behaviour through academic failure, especially the inability to develop reading and writing skills. Therefore, in the next section, dyslexia and offending behaviour will be discussed because I consider that since my study is on female dyslexic offenders, this examination may provide some insight into the perceptions which dyslexic offenders develop about their learning difficulty.

2.1.5 Dyslexia and offending behaviour

The relationship between dyslexia and criminal activity has been studied since the 1970s (e.g. Critchley & Critchley, 1978), and an area which has been looked at is the prevalence rates of dyslexia in offenders, with most of the studies reporting that individuals with severe reading and writing difficulties are over-represented within

this population (e.g. Kirk & Reid, 2001; Snowling, 2000). Also, there are studies which claim that dyslexic difficulties in the classroom may lead to psychological problems or engagement in anti-social behaviour. For example, Morgan (1997) conducted a study on dyslexic offenders, using interviews and questionnaires, and reported that the participants' feelings towards school became negative because they were required to complete literacy activities – reading and writing - as well as memorise multiplication tables. The participants reported difficulties with learning as well as a lack of learning support, and hence underachievement at school. Furthermore, they reported that they were publicly reprimanded and ridiculed, including being moved to other classes. These issues caused self-doubt and invoked feelings of inferiority when they became adolescents, and may have accounted for their engagement in anti-social conduct.

Macdonald (2012) conducted biographical life-narratives with three individuals who had criminal backgrounds. The participants reported feeling disenfranchised from education, disruptive behaviour in school, and truancy – an established outcome for feelings of alienation in secondary school (e.g. Rack, 2005; Selenius et al., 2006). They attributed these feelings and behaviours to anxieties arising from lack of competence in literacy tasks. Although this study provides insight into potential relations between dyslexia and crime, the findings are not generalisable because of the small sample. However, the author emphasised the individual experiences of dyslexia and possible pathways to criminal activities. A shared view amongst the participants was that absence of support for their learning resulted in poor educational achievement, low level of literacy and a lack of academic qualifications: these presented barriers in the procurement of employment after leaving school.

Cassidy et al. (2021) conducted a reading and IQ study on 145 male and female prisoners who were selected at random and individually assessed: the IQ measure was used to distinguish participants with dyslexia from those who had cognitive impairments. The authors found that 47% of the participants were categorised as being dyslexic, 36% being proficient and 17% as having a cognitive impairment. Also, all the participants recounted having academic and behavioural problems at school, with 87% dropping out of school. It was reported that the dyslexic participants were slow readers, reading with a lot of effort even though they had average intelligence. Overall, the findings reaffirm a higher prevalence of dyslexia in the prison population compared to the general population, making a case for instituting specific interventions for dyslexic prisoners so as to make less likely any recurrence of their early educational experiences in adulthood.

Morken et al. (2021) examined the literature on the prevalence and nature of literacy and language disorders in the adult prison population over the last 20 years. The authors reported that most of the studies in this area are dated, noting that several of the pertinent studies dated back to the 70s, 80s and 90s. This review revealed that only 18 studies had been conducted in this area in the last two decades: fifteen were focused on literacy disorders while three were focused on language problems, demonstrating the gap in the literature on literacy and language disorders in adult prisoners. Findings showed a high prevalence of language disorders in this population, and although the authors recorded discrepancies in the outcomes within the studies on literacy problems, they concluded that, overall, there was evidence of a high incidence of reading and writing problems in the adult prison population.

Kirk and Reid (2001) studied the incidence of dyslexia among offenders in a young offenders' institute and presented the implications of their findings to professionals in

the field as well as the government. They argued for a relationship between dyslexia, crime and absence of appropriate support, claiming that lack of diagnosis or absence of support following a diagnosis may result in low self-esteem, which may induce anti-social behaviour as a means to gaining popularity amongst peers. They supported this claim with a study by Riddick et al. (1999), which reported that dyslexic students in higher education demonstrated lower self-esteem and were more anxious than their non-dyslexic peers. Kirk and Reid (2001) contended that if these differences present at higher academic levels, then it is probable that the gap would be wider in young offenders whose educational achievements were perceived as being low, compared to university students. According to the authors, low self-esteem can result in systematic deviant conduct which may culminate in greater involvement in anti-social behaviour and ultimately in custody. They concluded that dyslexia may have indirect links with criminal conduct. Whilst this study made claims about relations between dyslexia, self- esteem and offending behaviour, these were based on a study which was conducted on a non-offending population - university students. Therefore, it would be difficult to make comparisons between these two groups because of possible variables related to risk factors which may predispose an individual to offend.

In contrast to studies suggesting a link between dyslexia and offending behaviour, Waldie and Spreen (1993) conducted a longitudinal study with 65 participants to determine the relationship between learning disabilities and persisting delinquency. The authors reported that poor academic achievement in learning disabled students did not have a direct correlation with delinquency, having examined diverse variables which influence recidivism in adolescents with learning disability. They noted that supplementary academic intervention did not ameliorate delinquency tendencies,

and suggested that remediation should be targeted at psychosocial aspects. The participants in the study were individuals classified as having serious learning problems. A differentiation was not made for individual disabilities (for instance, dyslexia) and as such, the interview questions were not specific to the type of learning disability. This means that consideration of variation in interactive skills, self-satisfaction and flexibility, which vary according to form of disability (Pihi & McLarnon, 1984), was lacking. Additionally, the findings cannot be generalised because the participants were from specific areas with low racial diversity, and they were from middle-class backgrounds. These factors limited representativeness; although, it was emphasised by Spreen (1981) that the overall rate of criminal conduct in this region was comparable to the rate recorded in other regions.

In summary, the literature suggests that experiences of reading and writing difficulty can have a negative impact on classroom engagement and cohesion: affected individuals may develop behavioural problems, with the likelihood of dropping out of school, and engaging in anti-social behaviour. Also, there is evidence to indicate that the school environment can play a significant role in the development of offending behaviour; for example, in situations where dyslexic pupils encounter a build-up of negative school experiences. This often results in further alienation from the education system, impeding aspirations in education, and leading to barriers in achieving success in other areas of life. Ultimately, even though these studies may provide insight into possible relations between dyslexia and offending behaviour, they do not provide information on links between dyslexia and female dyslexic offenders' reading and writing attitude. Furthermore, although these studies give some useful insight into the accounts of the participants, it is possible that other

personal contributory factors leading to criminal behaviour may have been ignored or not accounted for.

As noted earlier, a view which is often presented in the literature is that reading and writing difficulties are common within prison populations and are over-presented in comparison with the general population. If this is the case, then it would be fair to examine the prison context in order to gain insight into the social reality of individuals in prison as well as understand the nature and dynamics of prison life for women prisoners. To understand the attitudes and behaviours of female adult dyslexic prisoners, it is necessary to examine the condition under which they live, encompassing the prison and their adaptation to imprisonment.

2.2 Situating the prisoner

This section is focused on the prison context, exploring how the environment shapes and constrains reading and writing practice: this has potential to enable understanding of an inmate's ability to form a reader and writer identity within the prison context. Aspects of prison culture and adaptation to prison life are also examined because of their ability to determine engagement in a range of prison programmes. This section provides an overview of the prison institution by analysing the nature of structured activities and prison regimes, enabling an insight into prisoner life, in general, within this institution.

2.2.1 Prison context

Prisons are unique institutions which are set up to accommodate individuals who have broken the law, placing extensive limitations on their freedoms: they are

symbols of punishment and deprivation of liberty (Garland, 2010). Within these institutions, all aspects of inmates' daily life, including education, training, work and socialisation occur in the same place and under the same authority. The activities, behaviours and movements of inmates are controlled by carceral arrangements while structured schedules, in line with policy, practice and prison management, reinforce the punitive demands of imprisonment. Goffman (1961) makes reference to prisons as 'total institutions', positing that imprisonment encompasses loss of personal identity through the process of confiscation of personal properties which are substituted with prison uniforms, being provided with an ID number, extensive body searches and submitting to prison authority. Individuals progressively adjust to the prison environment and to varying degrees, adhere to the culture of the prison (Clemmer, 1958): this includes understanding the informal practices and hierarchies of the institution, as well as the acquisition of a set of social behaviours and beliefs.

Prisons have been posited as foreign environments (Silverman & Vega, 1990), which cause a lot of stress for the inmates. Some of the common sources of stress are loss of liberty, limitations on amenities and activities, high risk of aggression, potential hostility from other inmates, absence of privacy and close proximity to other prisoners (Paulaus & Dzindolet, 1993), loss of agency and state of dependence (Sykes, 1958). Furthermore, prisoners face issues around extreme noise, loneliness, mundaneness, and bad conditions in the prison (Negy et al., 1997), while some struggle with conforming to prison rules, dealing with expectations from other inmates and prison officers, as well as bullying from other prisoners (Sultan et al., 1984). Prison authorities have extensive powers over the daily regimes; however, planning and implementation of all activities must consider the overriding matters of security and maintenance of order and discipline (MOJ, 2010).

The prison structure, encompassing intense monitoring and control, makes prisons a unique environment where trust and supportive social interactions are limited (Leibling & Arnold, 2012). Hence, interactions between prisoners are guarded and cautious, and are often initiated for specific purposes, including, for example, obtaining practical support or completing a particular task (Sykes, 1958). These social relationships are exposed to continuous scrutiny by other prisoners as well as close monitoring by prison officers (Sykes, 1958).

'Time in Purposeful Activity' is a central aspect of the prison regime which provides structure and direction for the daily lives of prisoners. It is described as engagement in "the formal activities aimed at helping prisoners to gain skills – for example, through education, training, work and participation in offending behaviour programmes." (HM, Inspectorate of Prisons, 2007). Prisoners are required to participate in these activities and The Green Paper (DFE/DWP, 2005) noted the significance of motivating and engaging offenders. Prison experience is not homogenous: for some individuals, time in prison can be viewed as the first opportunity to 'turn their lives around' through participation in prison rehabilitation programmes (Gordon & Weldon, 2003; Olson & Lurigo, 2014), including education, whereas for others, the extreme form of control can lead to low self-esteem (Gullone et al., 2000; Greve, 2001).

The prison, as an institution, lends itself to ongoing tension between the concept of punishment on one hand and crime prevention and rehabilitation on the other hand (Kerka, 1995, Rubin, 2017). This tension plays out in many ways, for example, although purposeful activities are proposed to facilitate rehabilitation, participation is coerced and stringently regulated in keeping with the institution's official practices

(Goffman, 1961). In this way, participation in purposeful activity cannot be separated from the disciplinary and correctional objectives of strict rehabilitative practices.

With regards to prisoners with learning disabilities, a report by the Prison Reform Trust: No One Knows (Talbot, 2008) posited that over half of prisoners with learning disabilities were afraid in prison, were inclined to spend time on their own, were unemployed, experienced bullying (50%), high levels of depression (52%) and anxiety (70%) (Talbot, 2008). Talbot (ibid) also reported that prisoners with learning disabilities did not communicate with their families while in prison and some of them did not know their release date: this report demonstrated the uniquely vulnerable position of prisoners with learning disabilities.

Thus far, I have provided a descriptive account of the prison context. What is clear from the literature is that the prison environment is significantly different from the reality outside, having the capability of taking away freedom of choice and suppressing a person's true personality through orders, rules and control. The next section focuses on women in prison.

2.2.2 Women in prison

In this section, I describe a generalised profile of women in prison in order to offer contextual information for understanding female dyslexic offenders.

There are about 78,324 prisoners in England and Wales, and 4% of this population are women (MOJ, 2021). Early prison studies were centred on male experiences or tended to focus on comparisons between the different ways in which male and female inmates are treated in prison (e.g. Wooldredge & Steiner, 2016; Salisbury & van Voorhis, 2009), or looked at the divergences in how women and men may

experience prison (Drake et al., 2015). It is possible that due to the relatively low number of female inmates, compared to male inmates, there seems to be limited academic literature on women in prison (Pollack, 2002; Johnson, 2002). Hence, they are considered a forgotten group for research purposes (Coll et al., 1998). This lack of research becomes even more apparent when applied to dyslexic women in prison: studies which are focused on this population are almost non-existent, suggesting that this area has received little consideration and been under-researched. Furthermore, although comparison studies serve to expand knowledge in the field, I make the argument that life for women in prison is unique and different from men's, hence meriting research in its own right. The present study has value in addressing a gap in the literature by adding to the existing studies on women in prison, helping to develop a portrayal of dyslexic women's experiences.

Often women who are involved in the criminal justice system are characterised by a complex set of vulnerabilities, have special needs and distinct characteristics (Fair, 2009): these individuals are socially and academically marginalised (Estrada & Nilsson, 2012). Within prison literature, it has been reported that, prior to imprisonment, some female inmates have experienced trauma, mental, physical and sexual abuse (Corston, 2011), poverty and drug addiction (Balfour & Comack, 2006), mental and physical health issues (Balfour & Comack, 2006; Owen et al., 2017). Furthermore, about 31 per cent of women in prison went into care in childhood (MOJ, 2012b). These experiences have potential to impact on the decisions which these individuals make while in prison. Kirby et al. (2020) explored the link between patterns of difficulties in four functional areas related to Neurodevelopment Disorder (NDD): attention and concentration; social and communication; coordination and organisation, and literacy and numeracy in women in prison. The study also

considered possible links between these difficulties and previous mental health diagnoses and history of head injury, self-harm and attempted suicide. Results showed that half of the participants recounted problems in one or more areas. Every potential combination relating to functional difficulties was reported, and functional problems were linked to accounts of self-harm and records of identified mental health issues. There were accounts of head injury in 32% of participants, although this was not linked to functional difficulties. However, the authors agreed that the sample size was small and the findings were based on self-reports.

When in prison, women endure a range of deprivations associated with the environmental stress of prisons (Chamberlain, 2016; Blevins et al., 2010). For example, evidence suggests that self-harm (Howard et al., 2017) and separation from children (Houck & Looper, 2002; Christian, 2005) are causes of distress for women in prison, this is particularly as the female prisoner is usually the primary carer for her children and other dependents (Luke, 2002). Consequently, being in prison can have significant negative impact on her ability to maintain her family ties, as well as her mental health (Sharp & Marcus-Mendoza, 2001). Quinlan (2022) explored the functions of the prison system in female establishments and measured them across England and Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. This study used case study design, adopting documentary analysis and deriving secondary sources from government reports. The study evaluated the female prison population, their offences and prison terms in conjunction with female prisons' policy initiatives within these regions. How the prison policies compared with the actual experiences of these female inmates were outlined. The study reported that across the four regions, the number of women in prison was low and emphasised the importance of providing a gender-specific response and regime for

female prisoners. The primary concern in the United Kingdom and Ireland, as noted in this study, is the absence of a fair criminal justice system. The study highlighted the unfairness of incarcerating women who have multiple disadvantages, emphasising a significant disparity of treatments based on gender within the criminal justice system.

Prisoners often adapt to particular conditions of imprisonment and according to the literature, there is a specific sub-culture among inmates in prisons (Ireland, 2000), where the daily experiences of prisoners are influenced by formal and informal arrangements of prisons (Leech & Cheney, 2002): these guide prisoner behaviour. For example, interacting with staff is discouraged and any prisoner who interacts with staff is seen as a 'snitch' (Sykes & Messinger, 1960).

There are studies which have revealed that women in prison experience victimisation (e.g. Wooldredge & Steiner, 2016), resulting in maladaptive responses which can disrupt successful adjustment to prison life, and presenting as a barrier to participation in prison programmes, including education (Walker et al., 2006). Also, bullying is a serious concern for women in prison: common forms of bullying include coercive behaviours, verbal and psychological abuse, name-calling and gossiping (Ireland & Archer, 1996). Issues of bullying in prisons are often under-reported because being a victim is often viewed as a sign of weakness, and can lead to stigmatisation (Connell & Farrignton, 1996).

As has been discussed, imprisonment leads to loss of control over most of the ordinary aspects of daily life and basic rights to privacy: this situation may lead to psycho-social problems. For example, low self-esteem has been reported in female offenders and this is often a consequence of circumstances which existed in their

lives prior to imprisonment (Kalemi et al., 2019), but which is often exacerbated by the prison environment (Smith, 2000; Sykes, 1958). Furthermore, prisons impose compromised social status as well as stigmatised social roles on inmates (Prison Reform Trust, 2020), and these can exacerbate low self-esteem. Moreover, lack of privacy and autonomy are likely to amplify stress by further diminishing the women's sense of control and security (Hooper, 2003), and hampering negotiation of life in prison.

When in prison, some women establish social relationships as a useful aspect of coping and adjustment to imprisonment (Cohen, 2004; Trammel, 2009). Such relationships help in ameliorating the difficulties associated with separation from family and friends (Cohen, 2004), and can provide inspiration for involvement in shared educational and employment activities in prison. Conversely, poor social network and lack of support can, possibly, incur extensive negative consequences for prison adjustment (Wooldredge & Steiner, 2016).

Maintaining contact with the outside world has been highlighted as a means of alleviating the feelings of isolation and deprivation for women in prison (Mawby, 1982; Mills & Codd, 2008). This serves utility in providing female inmates with a sense of support and encouragement (Chen et al., 2014). Prisoners are, generally, able to maintain contact with family and friends through the exchange of letters, visits and telephone calls (Brooks-Gordon & Bainham, 2004).

Among female prisoners, there exists a smaller sub-group - female dyslexic offenders - who require specialised attention because of their reading and writing difficulties, necessitating specific interventions which tend to their unique needs as prison inmates. I argue that the lack of skills in reading and writing makes these

women particularly vulnerable because there is an increased risk of exclusion from full participation in prison. While there are studies on female prisoners, my literature search did not reveal any studies on this sub-group - female dyslexic offenders -, suggesting very limited existing knowledge specific to this population.

In the next section, I will be examining education as a prison activity, in order to gain understanding of some of the factors which can impact reading and writing practice.

2.2.3 Education in prison

This section will examine education within the prison context, taking into consideration its role, purpose, function and any links which it may have with reading and writing practice. Every prison has an education department: there has been much debate about the goal and purpose for prison education, including how these are shaped by opposing viewpoints on the intentions of imprisonment. For example, there are scholars who believe that the primary goal of imprisonment is to punish and control individuals who have broken the law (e.g. Garland, 2010), thereby serving as a deterrent. Conversely, other scholars proclaim the success of personal change and transformation of the individual through education in prison, concluding that both imprisonment and education serve utility in being sources of change for the inmates (Gehring & Eggleston, 2007). This position suggests that education provides a pathway for inmates to drop their prisoner identity and become students, with the opportunity to gain academic skills as well as enhance their self-esteem and confidence. The difference between imprisonment as an instrument of control and education as an enabling tool for self-development and freedom has been discussed in the literature: according to Munoz (2009), providing education in prison is,

fundamentally, complicated because of the restrictive and controlling nature of prisons and presents challenges for education staff and prison inmates.

A general view is that education is an intervention with the potential to reduce reoffending by equipping inmates with skills and qualifications for employment when they leave prison (HM Prison Service, Department for Education and Skills, Youth Justice Board, National Probation Service, Learning and Skills Council and Jobcentre Plus, 2004), facilitating rehabilitation (Costelloe, 2014). Measurements of the potential of prison education as a transformative tool have been conducted using evaluations of reoffending rates. For example, Duguid and Pawson (1998) highlighted the multiplicity of factors which can influence human conduct. They concluded that although prison education can increase opportunities upon release, the success of these opportunities is dependent on a range of factors, including a person's social and cultural environment, and their experiences both before and after imprisonment (Duguid & Pawson, 1998).

From the 1st of April, 2019, the prison governor had the responsibility for managing the education provision in prisons, entailing a procurement process for new education providers, termed the Prison Education Framework (PEF), delivered through further education colleges. Subjects which are delivered through the PEF include a core curriculum of English and Maths (MOJ, Official Statistics Bulletin, 2021). Prisoners can enrol for educational courses which include basic literacy (reading and writing), and numeracy, as well as other training programmes, in order to gain skills and qualifications. The reasons for participating in education classes are complex, for some of the inmates, it is a mechanism for survival; for example, attending education facilitates the constructive use of time in prison, providing the opportunity for prisoners to advance through incentives and an earned privileges

system (HM Inspectorate of Prisons, 2021). Participation in academic programmes can be enabling, hence alleviating stresses associated with the prison institution (Meyer et al., 2010). Furthermore, inmates are incentivised to engage in learning by being remunerated for their attendance (HM Inspectorate of Prisons, 2021): for some inmates, this is the only reason for enrolling for education.

Although education in prison has the potential to improve reading and writing outcomes for inmates, enabling them to gain new skills, barriers to engagement have been reported: Cross (1981) suggests lack of engagement may be due to institutional, situational and dispositional barriers. For example:

- institutional barriers encompass those factors which are a consequence of the prison system; for example, issues of timetabling educational classes at the same time as other prison activities such as showers, telephone calls and exercise can constitute scheduling problems (HMIP, 2004).
- situational barriers comprise those which arise from inmates' life situations that impact their ability to engage in the programme. For example, some of the prisoners' concerns take precedence over educational sessions. Such concerns may include: sentencing, appeals and parole hearings and issues involving families or personal relationships. Also, there are prisoners who do not take up education because they prefer to work, as this pays more (Taylor, 2014).
- dispositional barriers are related to attitudes and beliefs which inmates hold in relation to their ability to engage successfully in learning activities. These factors encompass prior negative learning experiences, level of confidence,

value placed on learning, and lack of a sense of belonging within a learning community.

Generally, inmates' perceptions about the relevance of educational programmes can impede or enable participation. For many, negative experiences of compulsory education have resulted in unwillingness to engage in further learning, fostering resistance to prison educational programmes (Maclachlan et al., 2008; Kilgore, 2001). Also, classes in education last for 3 hours, which may be considered too long, particularly for individuals who have had little or negative experiences of classroom-based learning.

Although participation in education is seen as voluntary, education is prioritised above other activities, and most prisons require prisoners to enrol for functional skills (English, Maths and ICT) classes before gaining prison employment. Prisoners who do not wish to attend these classes are locked up in their cells all day or issued with a negative Incentive Earned Privilege (IEP), implying a mandatory element to engagement. This situation emphasises the authoritarian nature of prisons which can cause prisoners to reject education because it reminds them of early schooling. Also, the coercive nature of prisons has potential to limit self-directedness, hence becoming a barrier which can lead to negative responses to enhancing reading and writing skills within the education provision.

In this section, I have discussed the role of the prison in providing a place of learning, potential barriers to participation in education and possible outcomes for prisoners who engage in education. In the next section, reading and writing practice in prison will be discussed.

2.2.4 Reading and writing in prison

This section analyses distinct characteristics of reading and writing provision in prison. Typically, adequate reading and writing skills are necessary for completion of all prison education programmes; therefore, assessment of prisoners' level of reading and writing skills is normally carried out to enable provision of the right level of requisite support (Jones et al., 2012). A recent survey revealed that 57% of adult prisoners' initial assessment literacy scores were below those estimated for 11 year-old students (MOJ, Official Statistics Bulletin, 2021), suggesting that prisoners had lower levels of literacy compared to the general public. Hence, reading and writing have become a core part of many prison curricula and a major aim of educational programmes is to provide prisoners with basic skills which can enable efficient and effective functioning in prison and upon release.

Reading and writing programmes are offered to prisoners within the education department as well as by agencies and non-profit organisations. Most of the courses with reading and writing components are offered at remedial levels: these provide knowledge and related skills which are normally acquired at an earlier stage of a person's educational development. Some of these programmes form part of the sentence plan whilst others are voluntary. In this way, unless the reasons for non-attendance are addressed, a prisoner may choose not to attend these classes.

In addition to the Functional Skills English course, which is run within the education department, prisons use some schemes to encourage as well as develop prisoners' reading and writing abilities. These include:

- Turning Pages (formerly 'Toe by Toe'): this is a programme which is provided by the Shannon Trust, a charitable organisation, and it is directed at improving

the reading skills of adult prisoners who identify as beginner readers. The programme is delivered through a peer-mentoring approach, where adult prisoners, who can read, volunteer to teach non-readers. Research on peer support for women in prison posits that the provision is helpful for crisis prevention, and is viewed favourably as a source of empowerment (Syed & Blanchette, 2000). Adoption of peer support provisions in women's prisons has received support by the HM Inspectorate of Prisons, suggesting acknowledgement of its benefit for this group of prisoners (HM Inspectorate of Prisons, 2014).

- Reading Ahead (formerly Six Book Challenge): This is a reading initiative which is run through the prison library. The project is aimed at encouraging prisoners to read for pleasure, developing their literacy skills as well as their autonomy and knowledge through increased confidence in reading ability. Prisoners who complete the Reading Ahead Challenge are given a mini dictionary as an incentive.
- Prison Reading groups: this is a programme of shared reading of literature (poetry, fiction, plays and short stories) in prison establishments. The aim is to develop self-expression, so that prisoners who cannot read, or have reading difficulties can participate, meaningfully.

As I had discussed, a high number of prisoners would have had negative school experiences, including exclusions and disruptive behaviour resulting in poor academic and social skills: these are exacerbated by their imprisonment and the associated psychosocial issues which are inherent in the status of being a prisoner (Crewe, 2007; Goffman, 1961). Also, the literature has shown that reading and writing issues are prevalent within the offender population, suggesting that the

education system within prisons has an important role in supporting prisoners who have learning difficulties. According to the literature, reading and writing skills are major determinants of many elements of a person's life, including their educational life. Hence, I make the assumption that a main factor which may have direct links to the reading and writing skills is attitude towards these skills. In the next section I will be examining the concept of attitude, as this may highlight how participants in this study approach reading and writing tasks as adult prisoners.

2.3 Attitude

In this section, I examine the concept of attitude as an affective factor related to reading and writing, deeming it to be an important consideration in helping to understand female dyslexic offenders' reading and writing attitude, and their perceptions of success or failure. This examination will include a discussion of associations between the concept of attitude and a person's learning experiences, beliefs and values. Although some of the literature did not pertain to dyslexia specifically, I found existing studies which support the relationship of attitude with reading and writing.

2.3.1 Defining attitude

In this section, I examine attitude: this concept is central to my study; therefore, it is important to understand what it involves, relating it to reading and writing in order to gain insight into reasons which female dyslexic offenders may give for their success or failure in literacy development.

There are different definitions of attitude; however, most posit its evaluative nature which can be held at different levels of intensity: either positive or negative (Oppenheim, 1992), favour or disfavour (Manfredo & Dayer, 2004), and approval or disapproval (Asunta, 2003). This suggests that one's perception offers a conduit for an evaluation, leading to the formation of either favourable or unfavourable affect towards the attitude object, and evidenced as a direct or indirect reaction.

Attitude has been posited as enabling the formation of cognitive relationships which may ultimately predispose behaviours (Maio & Olson, 2000). This concept has been described as being relatively permanent and stable over time and context (Hogg & Vaughan, 2002), informing decisions on which behaviours a person would engage in (Maio & Olson, 2000). Also, it is concerned with perceptions which people hold about positions in which they find themselves in (Jonassen, 2004): for example, positive attitudes towards an object may orient an individual in a favourable way in relation to that thing.

According to the literature, attitude comprises three components: affective, cognitive, and behavioural (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). The cognitive component is related to a person's thoughts or beliefs about an event(s) or object(s), - in the case of my study this is reading and writing – resulting from positive and negative experiences associated with these skills. The affective component is the feeling or emotion based on how individuals view themselves in relation to reading and writing according to likes or dislikes, informed by past experiences with the object (Breckler & Berman, 1991). The behavioural component encompasses the tendency to respond in a specific way towards reading and writing: this may be positive or negative (Oppenheim, 1992).

Aiken (2002) defined attitude as ‘a learned predisposition or tendency on the part of an individual to respond positively or negatively to some object, situation, concept, or other person’: this definition emphasised the learned dimension of attitude. Allport (1935) provided a classic definition of this concept as ‘a mental or neural state of readiness, organised through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual’s response to all objects and situations with which it is related’ (p. 810), and argued that understanding attitudes would provide insight into people’s preferences and behaviours.

The above definition indicates that attitudes can be related to the way in which students come to understand themselves as learners, emphasising an evaluative nature (Ajzen, 2001) which may be explicit or intrinsic. Since this present study is focused on reading and writing attitude of female dyslexic offenders, attitude in the context of reading and writing will be discussed in the next section.

2.3.2 Reading and writing attitude

In this section, I explore reading and writing attitude in order to gain understanding of female dyslexic offenders’ perceptions about, as well as, how they approach the completion of reading and writing tasks. Most of the literature which I reviewed has discussed reading attitude and writing attitude individually: consequently, this format is reflected in my discussion below, where I make reference to either reading attitude or writing attitude, respectively.

Schiefele et al. (2012) defined reading attitude as a person’s feelings towards reading, also, constituting a significant component of reading motivation. Smith (1990) denoted reading attitude as “a state of mind, accompanied by feelings and

emotions that make reading more or less probable" (p.215). Meanwhile, writing attitude has been posited as a multidimensional construct, encompassing interactions and links between attitudes and beliefs, writing experiences and academic writing development (e.g. Leki & Carson, 1997). Furthermore, Graham et al. (2005) defined writing attitude as "an affective disposition involving how the act of writing makes the author feel, ranging from happy to unhappy" (p. 518).

It can be surmised from these definitions that reading and writing attitude constitutes a readiness or reluctance to read or write, based on positive or negative emotions and is linked to a definite reading and writing behaviour.

According to Day and Bamford (2000), reading attitude tends to develop from previous experiences associated with a range of factors including success or failure in reading while, Spira et al. (2005) noted the long-lasting consequences of reading attitude. McGuire (1969) argued that reading attitude becomes constant once formed and impacts reading behaviour either favourably or unfavourably. These assumptions connect to the work of Smith (1990), who conducted a longitudinal study focused on the development of reading skills and attitude from childhood to adulthood, using questionnaires which evaluated reading attitude, habits and views about reading. There were 84 participants, aged 35 to 44 at the final time of testing. The participants' reading comprehension and attitude to reading were measured on six separate occasions starting in 1st grade. Smith reported that the adults who had favourable attitude to reading had better achievements in a standardised reading test. They engaged more in reading and chose a broader range of reading materials compared to the adults with unfavourable attitude to reading. This study also involved a reading habits survey. Smith found that attitude towards reading had significant associations with everyday reading behaviour. The conclusion was that

there was significant link between attitude and behaviour, and adults who liked to read developed positive attitude towards this activity. Conversely, those who did not enjoy reading eschewed this activity or limited their reading to only essential materials which enabled them to 'survive' or keep abreast of relevant matters. This finding links with that of Kush et al. (2005), who also reported that early positive attitude towards reading, resulted in a lifetime of reading engagement. They applied a longitudinal covariance structure modelling in their study on links between reading in students in 2nd to 3rd grade and reading achievement in 7th grade. The authors found that reading attitude was a consequence of reading experiences of success or failure, remained unchanged over time, and was also a determinant of future reading achievement.

Additionally, reading attitude has been linked to reading engagement; Robinson and Weintraub (1973) reported that students who have positive attitudes to reading welcome opportunities to read, demonstrate higher levels of motivation, and possess higher sense of self-esteem. Furthermore, there are research reports that the attitude which students have about a particular reading activity has an impact on both the amount of reading activities they perform (e.g. Ley et al., 1994) as well as their reading success (e.g. Ghaith, 2003). Also, according to Guthrie and Wigfield (2000), negative attitude towards reading may restrict the desire to search for reading materials and as a result, students with learning disabilities do not do as well as their peers. Ivey and Broaddus (2001) investigated the reasons sixth grade students engage in reading. This study was conducted in the United States and involved 1,700 students in two separate districts. They reported that spending time on reading led to increased proficiency, enhanced fluency and comprehension, as well as vocabulary and mental development.

Similarly, writing attitude has been assumed as being a factor in a person's writing behaviour, enabling the development of writing competence. For example, Masny and Foxall (1992) conducted a study involving 28 adult ESL learners, and examined associations between writing apprehension, preferred writing process and academic achievement. They reported a link between students' attitude to and completion of writing tasks and their academic accomplishment, finding that high achieving students had positive attitude towards writing compared to low achieving students. Also, Knudson (1995) explored the relationship between writing attitude and achievement. Findings in this study indicated a link between achievement, grade level, perceptions and attitude towards writing; it was concluded that positive attitude led to increased skills in writing.

Some studies have revealed the significance of self-efficacy as a factor in writing attitude. Bruning and Horn (2000) posited that beliefs which an individual has about ability in writing are linked to motivation to write. According to these writers, individuals with high self-efficacy for writing are less anxious when required to write, also exhibiting higher levels of determination and patience in situations of challenging writing activities. This links with Aiken (2002), who noted that negative attitudes are evidenced by reluctance to perform writing assignments or homework, resulting from lack of confidence, method of classroom instructions and the educational environment. Graham et al. (2007) conducted a study exploring the link between the writing success of primary grade students and their attitude towards writing. In this study, they tested three models: (a) writing attitude influences achievement in a unidirectional manner, (b) writing achievement influences writing attitude in a unidirectional manner and (c) the effects of writing attitude and achievement are bidirectional and reciprocal. Their result showed that amongst

these models, the most applicable one was where writing attitude influenced writing achievement. They reported that positive and negative attitude towards writing relate to a person's competence in this area; for instance, success in writing may yield a favourable attitude towards writing, while failure in writing tasks may lead to unfavourable attitude towards the same activity. Further links between writing attitude and writing performance have been reported. According to Hashermian and Heidari (2013), students who have positive writing attitude are successful in their academic writing tasks, whilst those whose attitude is negative become unsuccessful in these activities. Furthermore, writing attitude has been reported as being stable over a lifespan. Graham and Perin (2007) conducted a meta-analysis of writing instruction for adolescent students in order to determine effective writing interventions for students in Grades 4–12. They noted that there are different instructional processes which can be used to improve students' writing skills. They discussed the importance of developing strong literacy skills, and how this enables full participation as adult members within a community. It was concluded that students who develop efficacy in their writing skills possess considerable advantage over those who do not, when they reach adulthood.

Meanwhile, there are studies in which the reading and writing attitude of individuals with dyslexia has been explored. For example, a study by Polychroni et al. (2006) examined beliefs of abilities in reading and writing and attitude, including the strategies which dyslexic students adopted in these areas compared to their non-dyslexic peers. They reported that individuals with dyslexia did not enjoy reading for personal improvement, pleasure and future accomplishments, compared to their non-dyslexic peers. Also, the dyslexic participants regarded reading as being of less value in relation to academic success compared to other participant groups in the

study. Likewise, Mohandoost et al. (2010) reported that students with dyslexia have unfavourable attitude towards reading, having less propensity to engage in reading tasks in comparison to their peers who do not have dyslexia.

In order to gain some understanding of the development of reading and writing attitude in individuals with dyslexia, I propose an examination of the process of achievement in reading and writing. This would include how individuals approach activities requiring skills in these areas, engage in and complete these tasks, focusing on willingness to put in requisite effort, thereby demonstrating motivation. Motivation has been posited as playing a vital function in reading engagement (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). Hence, motivation as relating to the formation of reading and writing attitude is discussed next.

2.3.3 Relating reading and writing attitude to motivation

As discussed, reading and writing attitude relate to a set of beliefs, developed over time and in a specific context, and which are crucial in reading and writing processes. According to Eccles and Wigfield (2002), motivation to engage in a task is driven by a sense of expectation which is linked to the value a person places on the activity. This suggests that motivation is concerned with a person's reason for performing a task, for example, anticipation of reward, and may provide the enthusiasm and willingness to read and write. In this way, motivation would involve both effort and wish to achieve success in reading and writing. According to Pintrich and Schunk (2002), motivation encompasses beliefs about ability as well as a desire to achieve a goal: these suggest that motivation is related to efficacy beliefs and accomplishments. Consequently, perceptions of control over success and failure may stimulate motivation, sustaining behaviour; for example, according to Weiner

(1974) attributing failure to lack of effort may enhance motivation whilst making this attribution to ability may impede motivation.

Describing motivation in an attribution context, Weiner (1986) postulated that in achievement situations, the development of motivation starts with the academic outcome; a positive outcome causes joy in the student, increasing motivation, while a negative outcome induces frustration and unhappiness, with possible consequence of lack of motivation (attribution theory is discussed later in my literature review). Furthermore, perception of control regarding learning outcomes may lead to the maintenance of motivation at making academic progress, and there is the tendency that learners will experience feelings of being in control when they make causal attributions which are internal and controllable (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2006).

Reading motivation has been linked to reading performance and academic success. There are studies which state that individuals who are motivated to read demonstrate greater academic achievement, compared to those who lack motivation to read (e.g. Logan et al., 2011). Also, students who do not ascribe value to reading are more likely to become poor readers (Sideridis et al., 2006) suggesting that lack of motivation may be a factor in reading failure (e.g. Sideridis et al., 2006). Furthermore, literature suggests that individuals with dyslexia are more likely to lack motivation to read and write because of their recurrent failures in these tasks (McGrady et al., 2001). Also, dyslexic students hold enhanced negative self-concepts (Burden & Burdett, 2005), experience increased helplessness (Valas, 2001), demonstrate decreased emotional self-regulation (Fulk et al., 1998), and do not engage in reading activities (Salonen et al., 1998) as often as their non-dyslexic peers. According to Torgesen (1982) these students have been termed ‘inactive

learners' who are reluctant to engage in academic activities and evaluation of their intellectual capabilities, and are indifferent to the requirements for task completion: this suggests an absence of motivation. Consequently, when the chances for taking personal charge of learning become limited, individuals ultimately begin to perceive a lack of control over the attainment of their scholastic ambitions (McGrady et al., 2001), indicating a lack of motivation.

Individuals, generally, adopt several ways of dealing with academic motivation – negatively or positively – and these strategies serve the purpose of preserving self-esteem (Hellendoorn & Ruijssenaars, 2000; Humphrey, 2002b; Mishna, 2003), and the particular coping strategy for tackling failure which a student adopts is associated with the motivation to persevere. Andreassen et al. (2006) reported that motivation is a major part of effective academic intervention. Also, Pintrich (2003) noted that there are various motivational strategies for enthusing and guiding attitude in the case of academic non-achievement. This author noted that some students may be reliant on the ability to achieve self-efficacy while some depend on the emotional and academic support from family and teachers; nonetheless, there are others who disguise their learning difficulties, feeling helpless.

As I have discussed above, attitude has generally been regarded as essential, having a key function in regulating a person's degree of motivation and intention to read or write, while mediating the link between a person's beliefs about reading and writing tasks. It is against this background that I will be outlining models of reading and writing attitude, next.

2.3.4 Models of reading and writing attitude

In this section, I present the theoretical assumptions on the concept of reading and writing attitude, and discuss models of reading and writing attitude in order to broaden understanding of the concept, generally, and focusing later on how it may relate to female dyslexic offenders. Although there is a range of integrated models of reading attitude (e.g. Teale & Lewis, 1981; Greaney & Neuman, 1990; Mathewson, 1994; Mckenna, 1994), there are currently none on writing.

Mathewson (1994) proposed a three-dimensional model of reading attitude: prevailing feeling about reading (affective), action readiness to read (behavioural) and evaluative beliefs about reading (cognitive) (1994:1435). Within this model, the intention to read and continue reading are emphasised as additional elements, being the actual determinant of a specific form (positive or negative) of reading behaviour. Mathewson's framework is helpful because it potentially explains how poor reading ability could result in unsatisfactory reading experience, causing an individual to become disinterested, thereby influencing future reading behaviour (Kirby et al., 2011). Within this model, negative attitude towards reading may be a consequence – owing to unfavourable experiences – as opposed to being causal, in relation to poor reading ability (Petscher, 2010). These indicate that attitude to reading can be understood to encompass a person's feelings, beliefs and values regarding different reading-related experiences.

Mckenna (1994) proposed an alternative model of reading attitude, adopting a one-dimensional approach, considering the concept as being primarily affective in nature, and eschewing a cognitive element. This model highlighted the causal relationship between attitude and beliefs. In explaining the long-term development of reading

attitude, Mckenna (1994) proposed that a person's reading attitude is developed over a period, being influenced by beliefs about the outcomes of reading which will be impacted by these interrelated factors:

- Normative beliefs (social factors)
- Personal beliefs about outcomes of reading (a consideration of reading based on pleasure, utility, frustration or boredom)
- Specific reading experiences

According to this model, normative beliefs are developed in relation to completing activities and their eventual outcomes. Likewise, the social norms related to reading are informed by cultural practices, possibly impacting attitude towards reading. Specific reading experiences, for example, negative reading experiences will lead to the development of extended negative attitude, including when the individual becomes bored or frustrated. Mckenna's (1994) categorisation is useful because it helps an understanding of factors which influence attitude.

Meanwhile, Mizokawa and Hansan-Krenin (2000) have argued that all three components of attitude interact, being also interdependent and interrelated. They emphasised that investigating reading should encompass enquiries about making choices and assessments (affective), actions (behaviour) and the making of inferences (cognitive). Additionally, van Schooten and de Glopper (2002) have argued against the adoption of a single dimension in the study of reading attitude. In their study, they extended their examination beyond the affective, cognitive and behavioural components of attitude to include subjective norms – a person's belief about how social influences dictate engagement or non-engagement in their behaviour. They reported that the variables did not have similar strengths in

predictions for reading behaviour, because different elements impact different facets of reading attitude. According to them, these variables constitute a chain of causal associations, culminating in the eventual action of reading.

For the purpose of my study, I have used a tripartite model of attitude arguing that this preserves a richness of the description of attitude through the discussion of affective, behavioural and cognitive composites, affording me a comprehensive approach in the examination of reading and writing attitude in the study population. Also, the employment of all three dimensions is common in research studies, being depicted as either components or contributing factors (e.g. Ostrom, 1969; Mathewson, 1994; Mizokawa & Hansen-Krening, 2000) which are seen as the most significant predictors of reading behaviour (van Schooter & de Glopper, 2002; Broeder & Stokmans, 2013). My discussions so far demonstrate that reading attitude, as an acquired predisposition which is informed by an individual's reading experiences, has relevance for my study because it helps to elucidate factors which may be linked to the reading and writing attitude in female dyslexic offenders.

According to the literature, attitude plays an integral role in both reading and writing, and has been shown to influence the development of these skills, as well as willingness to engage in activities in these areas. What the literature has shown is that positive feelings about reading and writing can lead to feelings of efficacy and increased motivation. Conversely, negative attitude can lead to feelings of inadequacy and hence reluctance to read and write. The attitude of a learner can have an impact on the outcome of their work; for example, reading ability is related to reading attitude. Likewise, writing performance has been linked to writing attitude and a person's belief in their ability to write. According to the literature, much

research has focused on attitude towards reading and writing in the general student population; however, there are no known studies on reading and writing attitude in the prison population. Having identified this gap, this study is addressing it by focusing on female dyslexic offenders. Furthermore, on the basis of my literature review, I make assumptions that formation of reading and writing attitude can be better understood by embracing the notions of self and identity arising from school experiences. Therefore, I discuss the role of school experiences next.

2.4 School experience

This section discusses school experiences, focusing on learning identity, reading and writing identity and relationship with peers, teachers and parents as outcomes of these experiences, as well as societal expectations for academic attainment. This examination could provide insight into how dyslexic individuals navigate an understanding of dyslexia, describe their dyslexic experiences, develop reading and writing attitude and explain success or failure in these areas.

2.4.1 Learning identity

Construction of identity as learners has been linked to the academic environment (Wortham, 2006), ability (Hart et al., 2004) and learning (Black et al., 2010). Also, there are literature reports that dyslexic students are more inclined to report challenges in coping in educational environments based on past experiences (e.g. Lackaye & Margalit, 2006), leading to the development of negative sense of self (e.g. Burden, 2005). Hence, I will be adopting learning identity as a framework for gaining understanding of the significance of female dyslexic offenders' learning history, how

beliefs about learning are informed by past experiences, and how these are interpreted in the context of current and future learning behaviours and approaches.

Furthermore, discussion of the construction of learning identity may provide a lens through which dyslexic individuals' conceptualisations of what it means to perform reading and writing, can be understood, in order to capture a holistic view of their identity development process. However, it is not the intention within this study to conduct an extensive examination of identity development theories. Instead, learning identity will be examined, and revisited throughout this study as it relates to the examination of dyslexic experiences and how these link with reading and writing attitude, and attributions for success and failure in these skills.

According to McEwen (2003), a person's sense of self and beliefs concerning social groups are formed through associations within the wider social context where dominant values regulate norms and expectancies. Learner identity has been closely linked to a sense of belonging and engagement (Bliuc et al., 2011) and a learner's sense of belonging has been linked to their experiences of participation in the learning process (Osterman, 2000), self-determination, degree of engagement and peer association (Kuh, 2009). In this way, identity may be constructed from a person's experience in relation to self-perceptions, significant others and learning situations.

Accordingly, the current study explored the pathway from dyslexia diagnosis, its affective consequences and school experiences as elements of identity construction, to how these relate to the development of reading and writing attitude. This is within the context that competency in reading and writing is regarded as an essential commodity within and outside the educational contexts and used as a medium for

measuring school achievement (Chapman & Tunmer, 2003), forming a constituent part of self-development. According to Williams and Burden (1997), a person's perception of the world, including how they see themselves within it, are determinant factors in their learning and understanding in an academic environment. Therefore, I argue that learning identity as related to dyslexia may present a system of perceptions and expectations which may explain the relationship between a person, the academic environment, their self-perception and ensuing attitudes.

Also, this thesis argues that academic institutions provide environments whose primary purpose extends beyond the construction of knowledge and into the understanding of a sense of self. According to Wenger (1999), education facilitates engagement in community practice and vice versa. This implies that involvement in educational practices within a school environment enables recognition as a member of that community, enhancing the opportunity to identify with it and promulgating a sense of group belonging. Wenger (1999) further postulates that education is 'an experience of identity' (p.125). Identity has been posited as a tool for self-examination in academic settings and an examination of the concept of learning identity can enhance an understanding of students' perceptions of their academic experiences and outcomes (Gee, 2001). Also, Sfard and Prusak (2005) have noted that identity can be employed as a diagnostic tool in academic settings, and suggest that an investigation into the process of identity formation may provide insights on perceptions of academic experiences and achievements.

Identity has been posited as a mutable construct (Norton, 1997; Skilton-Sylvester, 2002) which is multifaceted and dynamic, being perceived as ambiguous (Norton, 1997), and should be analysed in the context of human relations (Jenkins, 2008).

Hence, learning identity may encompass reflections about actions, emotions, and thoughts established in the structure of an individual's understanding of being a learner.

Identities are often undergoing reconstruction which is contingent on social environment or situation (Norton, 1997), having the possibility of being adjusted through dialogue and associations (Taylor & Littleton, 2006). This suggests that how identities are constructed may have implications for students in academic settings. Hence, I make assumptions that learning identity may be determined by experiences of past successes and failures as well as attributions about these successes and failures. Students engage in the modification or negotiation of their identity as dictated by the operations in different social contexts (Skilton-Sylvester, 2002), and become involved in a process of re-defining oneself. Consequently, in this thesis, I adopt the position that the academic experiences of female dyslexic offenders may be embedded in the formation of their learning identities, providing a trajectory for the negotiation and construction of this identity. This has the potential of aiding an understanding of the attitude which they develop towards reading and writing as well as perceptions of success or failure in these.

According to Falsafi (2010), the potential for success in a new learning activity is judged by past experiences in similar situations, indicating that learning identity is augmented if new learning experiences replicate past encounters. Identities are closely related to a person's actions and how they are understood in relation to associations with others (Baumeister, 2011), suggesting an identity formation which is prompted by self-perception dictated by environmental factors, being also related to human relations within a society.

Learning identity may have implications for self-identity in individuals with dyslexia. Burden (2005) proposed a range of factors which may influence a student's construction of dyslexic identity, noting, also, that previous academic achievements and self-efficacy are concepts which contribute to this process. Accordingly, experiences of learning difficulties associated with dyslexia may be linked to the development of a sense of self. This may have implications for the relationships which individuals with dyslexia form in school and afterwards, as well as the understanding they have of themselves within these paradigms.

Overall, the literature reviewed in this study emphasises learning identity as a theoretical foundation for the critical evaluation of environmental forces, sense of agency and assumption of personal responsibility in an academic community, for example, a school setting. Consequently, schools can be posited as playing a vital role in students' identity formation. Hence, I make the assumption that individuals with dyslexia do, to varying degrees, hold beliefs about who they are as learners, reasons for being in school and their expectations. Furthermore, these perceptions may influence their educational conducts. Also, according to the literature, a person's identity position facilitates self-understanding which, in turn, guides choices and future aspirations, thereby linking their past, present and future. On this basis, consideration is made for academic tasks and strategies which either enhance or impede evaluation or engagement in the learning processes. Accordingly, in the next section, I will be focusing on the examination of reading and writing identity.

2.4.2 Reading and Writing Identity

I propose that understanding of the construction of identity as readers or writers may provide insight into how individuals interpret their dyslexic experiences. As I have

presented earlier, a basic assumption underlying this present thesis is that dyslexia mainly impacts reading and writing (Lyon et al., 2003; Hoein & Lundberg, 2000), presenting challenges in the development of skills in these areas. I propose that attitudes can be linked to the identity of individuals who express them; accordingly, I will be examining the descriptions which individuals hold of themselves both as learners, and as readers and writers. Furthermore, an examination of constructions of reading and writing identity may be valuable in understanding educational processes (Gee, 2001), also being a lens (Bauman, 2001) through which educational experiences can be explored. These may enable an understanding of the interpretations which female dyslexic offenders ascribe to school experiences, their reading and writing attitude, as well as their attributions to success and failure in these areas. It is important to clarify that it is beyond the scope of this present study to explore components of reading and writing identity, rather, this concept is used to gain understanding of descriptions of dyslexic experiences, reading and writing attitude, and reasons ascribed to success or failure in reading and writing - the main focus of the research.

Enriquez (2011) defined reader identity as “the accumulation of beliefs, characterisations and official documentation of what students can and are willing to do while reading printed texts” (p.91). The role of identity in relation to reading and writing engagement has been discussed in the literature (e.g. Hall, 2012; Moje & Luke, 2009). It has been suggested that literacy extends beyond the performance of skills and transference of learning but also necessitates communication, involvement and engagement through which a person’s sense of self and others are recognised, positioned and negotiated (Gee, 2001). Reading is not an isolated activity but occurs in the context of a person’s life experiences and their understanding of the world

(Ryan & Anstey, 2003). Likewise, writing has been posited as an essential constituent of identity construction, whereby a person's beliefs about writing and interactions with others during the writing process shapes their identity and impacts their self-perception as writers (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005).

Reading and writing identity development emanates from a range of factors: cognitive abilities, early years literacy experience, support for increased engagement in reading tasks and favourable learning environment (Snow et al., 1998). Classroom instructions and literacy practices have been denoted as having the highest level of impact on students' learning experience and identity (Smith, 2008; Martens & Adamson, 2001). Some of the studies I discussed are focused on adolescent years because it is reflected in the literature that these constitute the formative years in which a sense of identity is developed. It is a time when individuals are continuously exposed to influences of significant others and communities (McCarthey & Moje, 2002). Relations with others, including how a person is perceived by others, also underscore the description of self (Gee, 2004). McCarthy (2001) examined the views that students hold of themselves as readers and writers, and reported that perception of teachers, peers and parents as well as educational environments informed perceptions of literacy learning and identity of those who were in the categories of high, average and low achievers. Irwin (2003) emphasised the relevance of understanding the impact which reading has on identity formation, stating that learner's identity is constructed from a person's self-assessment of reading abilities which may, also, be a factor in reading engagement.

Also, identity has been related to culture within specific academic environments. For example, according to Alvermann (2002), culture in the context of identity is described as "the routines, artefacts, values, and concerns that people produce,

make meaning of, and share as they work communally with others in their group" (p. 678), positing the function of the school culture in the shaping of students' identities (Alvermann, 2002). According to this assertion, students are usually ascribed labels which they feel inclined to accept. Echoing this standpoint, Bartlett (2005) denoted labels such as 'slow reader' (p.3) as a form of 'cultural artefact' (p.3) which is critical to reader identity. This indicates that for struggling readers, reading identity may also be influenced by the ascription of labels derived from lack of competence in reading skills.

According to Kauffman (2006), the value which students place on reading and writing informs their self-perceptions as successful or unsuccessful readers and writers respectively. This label may serve the purpose of identifying and categorising people whose proficiencies in reading and writing do not meet social and academic expectations, since these identities are further informed by literacy practices in an academic environment (Compton-Lilly, 2006). Additionally, identity has been positioned as a theoretical and practical concept in literacy studies and educational curriculum because its categorisation can be applied in the labelling or marginalisation of readers and writers as inept or proficient, imaginative or unimaginative (Lin, 2008).

Hall (2012) noted that a person's reading identity is constructed on the basis of educational experiences, encompassing perceptions of competence within the academic environment. This view suggests that a person's sense of self is vital to reading and writing, which may have implications for how they are perceived in the culture of an academic environment, and contribute to the forming of their identity through the assumption of labels (Moje & Luke, 2009). This may be evidenced in reference to individuals with dyslexia: a condition which is mainly described and

understood through reference to a history of failure in satisfying societal norms and curricular reading and writing demands (Bell et al., 2011). The lack of ability in reading and writing as well as a reluctance to read and write usually present unfavourable long-term impacts on sense of identity, academic trajectories and may have implications for life choices (Alvermann, 2002; Gee, 2001).

Having explored learning identity and reading and writing identity as outcomes of educational experiences as well as societal expectations for reading and writing, I will be examining school experiences and relationships with significant others in order to gain understanding of how these may link to interpretations of dyslexic experiences, reading and writing attitude and attributions for success or failure in reading and writing.

2.4.3 Relationship with peers, teachers and parents.

In this section, I will be examining relationships which individuals with dyslexia have with peers, teachers and parents, exploring how these may be linked to understanding of their dyslexic experiences, and encompassing the construction of identity as individuals with dyslexia. Exploring these concepts would enable understanding of the primary focus of this present study. The role of relationships within educational environments on students' identity development has been noted in the literature (e.g. Kaplan & Flum, 2009; Wigfield & Wagner, 2005); also, relationships with family, teachers, peers, have been posited as factors in the construction of identity (e.g. McDermott et. al., 2006).

2.4.3.1 Peers

The influence of peer relationships in adolescence (e.g. Wentzel, 2009) and adulthood (e.g. Adams & Blieszner, 1995) has been noted in the literature: in school, these relationships facilitate the personal, social and emotional development of students (Wentzel, 2009), creating a conducive social environment within the classroom (Kinderman, 2007). Nelson and Debacker (2008) reported that adolescents who felt respected and accepted by their peers were inclined to engage positively in their learning. Also, positive relationships with peers have been linked to positive classroom conduct, including academic engagement (Libbey, 2004). Therefore, it is possible to view peer relationships as significant in relation to the development of a sense of self for individuals with dyslexia, also, being a factor in how they approach reading and writing tasks as well as attribute causes to success or failure.

Many dyslexic children report negative approaches adopted by peers, including bullying, name-calling and teasing (Edwards, 1994; Riddick, 1996; Humphrey, 2002; Glazzard, 2010). The increased risk of bullying by peers has also been noted as a factor in the psychosocial problems experienced by dyslexic children (e.g. Mishna, 2003), leading to low self-esteem (Singer, 2005). Singer (2005) investigated the strategies used by Dutch pupils with dyslexia to preserve their self-esteem when bullied by peers, in a study involving 60 participants between the ages of 9 and 12 in mainstream schools. Pupils' coping mechanisms and interpretations of the link between dyslexia and being teased at school were explored using a hypothetical scenario about a dyslexic child who was teased in class. Most of the children who were examined (83%) experienced teasing because of their dyslexia, with 25% noting that the experiences of teasing and bullying were regular. The results of this

investigation indicated that pupils with dyslexia were vulnerable in environments where their difficulties were exposed, being susceptible to low self-esteem, as well as experiencing shame and teasing by peers. Thus, it can be suggested that individuals with dyslexia may develop enhanced social anxiety in situations of public performances necessitating reading and writing skills.

Also, some dyslexic students highlight experiencing isolation from their peers (Humphrey, 2002; Glazzard, 2010) because they often fell behind in completing their class tasks (Long et al., 2007). The consequence is that continuous undesirable relations between students with dyslexia and their peers may have extensive psychosocial implications that continue into adulthood (McNulty, 2003; Ingesson, 2007; Riddick, 2010). Pupils with dyslexia often do not reveal their learning difficulties to peers, directing their energy to other areas (Hellendoorn & Ruijssenaars, 2000), and this may be because they wish to avoid the unpleasant consequences which are associated with negative attitudes from peers.

Dyslexic children compare themselves to their peers, and this has negative impact on their self-esteem (Humphrey, 2002; Glazzard, 2010; Humphrey & Mullins, 2002b). Glazzard (2010) further noted that such comparisons result in undesirable feelings, causing them to feel “stupid”, “disappointed,” and “isolated” (ibid p.64). Also, the ability to read is highly acclaimed in western society, serving as a marker for intelligence (Burden, 2005), promulgating the belief of being stupid and lacking in intelligence (Humphrey & Mullins, 2002a.) when compared with their peers.

Relationship with peers has been linked to the learning environment and there have been discussions about the most suitable educational environment for children with learning support needs (e.g. Hornby, 2015). Although there are arguments favouring

segregated special educational settings (e.g. Kauffman& Hallahan, 2005; Copper & Jacobs, 2011) there is an increasing recognition of the benefits of inclusion for all students within a mainstream school setting (Blandul, 2010). A main driver for this approach is that mainstream education provides an inclusive approach to learning, recognising students' entitlement and need to participate in full education in order to gain social skills which would enable them to be part of the wider society (Mitchell, 2005; Topping, 2012). This can eliminate the stigma associated with special schools (Peter, 2003) thereby, gaining exposure to diversity and acceptance (Fisher et al., 1999). Nonetheless, there is the recognition that there are students who cannot be successfully educated in inclusive mainstream classrooms (Kauggman & Badar, 2014a) and who may require some aspects of their learning to be done separately (Hornby, 2015).

Relationship with peers is likely to both strengthen and diminish students' engagement and learning, and has been posited as a central factor in identity construction in adolescents (Molloy et. al., 2010). Peer friendships provide or deny students the full access to social resources in an academic setting, consequently setting the context for the development of sense of self. Rassart et al. (2012) posited that positive association with peers has advantages for how individuals identify as students, and according to Ryan and Anstey (2003) these relationships result from associations within small and close groups. In this way, interactions with peers create a learning community for how individuals identify as learners (Hill et al., 2007). Belonging to a peer group can contribute to the development of identity through the modelling of behaviour in order to fit in with the group culture (Steinbeig & Morris, 2001). Additionally, membership of a peer group may encompass the provision of

emotional support as well as the accordance of social status which is a requisite for identity development (Nawaz, 2011) in school.

2.4.3.2 Teachers

The teacher is perceived as an influential person in an academic community (Morita, 2004). Pupils' scholastic accomplishments, behaviours and competences have been associated with teachers' attitudes (Goddard et al., 2004), necessitating teachers to encourage and understand the needs of their students, as a means to enhancing their self-worth (Gwernan-Jones & Burden, 2010). Furthermore, there are studies which suggest that teacher expectations have a significant impact on the achievement of students (e.g. Jussim & Harber, 2005). This becomes evident where they hold negative views about pupils with learning difficulties (Campbell et al., 2003). Teacher expectation has been explained as assessment of individual students' academic capability based on teachers' interpretations (Riley & Ungerleider, 2012). These expectations may affect teachers' attitudes, impacting their interactions with the students, and having implications for the students' academic achievement (Kaplan & Owings, 2013). This may be, particularly, relevant for individuals with dyslexia.

Holding prejudiced views of dyslexic students does not only influence interactions which teachers have with these individuals but also affects the method of subject delivery and involvement opportunities given to them, impacting their learning achievements (Alvidrez & Weinsten, 1999; Paterson, 2007). For example, teachers could have reduced expectations for dyslexic students compared to their non-dyslexic peers; whereby these beliefs could, potentially, influence students' success. This may cause dyslexic children to become isolated and disillusioned, resulting in

increased risk of psychological and behavioural problems if requisite intervention is not implemented to support their learning (Macdonald, 2009). Therefore, the role of teachers is significant in the academic trajectory of dyslexic children (Humphrey, 2002).

Hornstra et al. (2010) explored the attitudes and perceptions of teachers towards dyslexia, evaluating the impact that these had on the scholastic attainments of dyslexic students against those of learners without the condition. The authors noted that most teachers held negative views of dyslexia, reporting that these perceptions, in turn, had adverse effects on the scores awarded to students. The study also emphasised the effect of teachers' attitude on dyslexic pupils' academic progress, noting that this group of students obtained lower scores in their writing tasks. This indicated adverse implicit teacher behaviour towards this learning difficulty. Teachers who held favourable understanding of dyslexia were able to support these students better compared to those who held unfavourable explicit perspectives about the learning difficulty (Hornstra et al., 2010). This outcome suggests a validation of 'confirmation bias' (Nickerson, 1998), demonstrating that teachers' perceptions of dyslexia are reflected in their evaluation of the dyslexic students' competency.

Ascribing the dyslexia label to this group of learners can result in adverse consequences for teacher-student interactions as well as teachers' beliefs about individuals with dyslexia. It is noted in the literature that reduced teacher expectation can be a consequence of labelling or group stereotyping (Jussim at al.,1995), influencing the scoring of learners' essays and other academic work (e.g. Fazio & Olson, 2003). Consequently, the dyslexia label may have implications for student achievement in this way.

Gibson and Kendall (2010) examined factors which affected academic accomplishments and self-esteem in four university students with dyslexia; Glazzard (2010) also conducted a study in a secondary school, interviewing nine pupils with dyslexia, and exploring matters impacting their self-esteem. Both studies reported that teachers play a significant role in attending to academic needs of the students, with some participants stating that teacher input was positive while others had negative experiences of teacher attitudes. Evidence from these studies confirms the unfavourable effect of lack of support from teachers on dyslexic students' self-esteem. Gibson and Kendall (2010) further contended that teachers should attend to the learning needs of students with learning difficulties, extending this support to their individual, social and psychological needs.

Research evidence showed that students with dyslexia had a dislike for teachers who made them read aloud in class, also stating that they suffered discomfort when they did not complete their academic tasks at the same time as other children (e.g. Singer, 2005). Lack of support for dyslexic individuals can result in isolation and marginalisation, having negative impact on their socio-emotional well-being (Macdonald, 2012). According to Burden and Jones (2009), positive interaction with teachers can ameliorate these negative impacts, and support from teachers can help in attending to the educational needs of these individuals; this constitutes a major pathway in their academic experience and accomplishment (Campbell et. al., 2003).

Teachers have been posited as being involved in the development of a sense of self in students (e.g. Harrell-Levy & Kerpelman, 2010), being a fundamental part of a classroom setting because they play a critical role in the creation of the learning environment and the atmosphere for student contributions and relations (Thomas, 2007). According to Noddings (2005a) teachers' opinions and assessments of

students, including the type of nurturing relationship which exists between them, may inform the way students view and think about themselves. Therefore, in establishing a caring educational environment which enhances a sense of affiliation and belonging, teachers consciously or unconsciously deliver feedback which supports the exploration and formation of identity (Faircloth, 2009).

Students usually engage in divergent trajectories in defining themselves (Markus & Nuris, 1986) and feedback from teachers may be vital for perceptions which they hold of themselves as readers and writers. For example, teachers have the potential to support students in the development of understanding about the attributes of a reader, thereby affording them the power and choice in determining the sort of readers they wish to become (Hall et al., 2011). Moreover, teachers regulate and implement classroom code of conduct as well as convey their expectations for and appraisal of learning (Thomas 2007; Hall & Brassard, 2008). This suggests that emphasising abilities in reading and writing would represent assumptions that skills in these areas are valuable tools which would enable acceptance within the classroom setting. Hence, these expectations and feedback from teachers form a conduit through which student behaviours are fostered or discouraged, also impacting the exploration of their learning identities (Thomas, 2007), potentially, as readers or writers. In this context, Kelman (2006) postulated that identity is a central issue which guides interactions with others within social environments, whereby individuals verify their sense of self, seeking social authentication by submitting to the authority of other individuals. In this regard, identity has been posited as a person's acceptance of control from another individual or a group as a means to creating or upholding a fulfilling self-identifying association with either of them (Kelman, 2006): this may apply in teacher/student relationships.

Overall, although dyslexia presents a risk of academic failure, a favourable relationship with the teacher, offering emotional support was reported to result in improved participation and enhanced motivation in academic work (Murray & Malmgren, 2005), leading to positive scholastic outcomes which may enable the construction of positive sense of self.

2.4.3.3 Parents

Parental involvement has been described as interaction between home and school (e.g. Epstein, 1991), supporting learning at home (Keith et al., 1993), taking part in school events (e.g. Stevenson & Baker, 1987) and contributing to the decision process within the education system (Fantuzzo et al., 2004). Also, there are some academics who defined it as developing academic success in the home environment. This may include cases where some parents may prefer to be actively involved in learning activities outside school such as their child's homework or in other community-centred learning as opposed to taking part in learning events which are held within school settings (Walker et al., 2010) e.g. parents' evenings.

The role of parents has different definitions and conceptualisations; in the present study, the role of parents will be denoted as parental involvement in their child's learning in relation to the child's academic experience. There is consensus on the positive impact of parental involvement on children's academic achievement. For example, a meta-synthesis by Wilder (2014) examining nine meta-analyses revealed consistency in the finding of positive associations between studies, irrespective of the diverse definitions and assessments adopted in describing parental involvement.

Students had more positive attitude towards education and performed better in their learning if their parents were knowledgeable and interested in their learning (e.g.

Anthony & Walshaw, 2007). Parental involvement has been linked to other positive outcomes, for example: regular school attendance, enhanced sense of well-being, positive perceptions of school and educational success (Greenwood & Hickman, 1991). This involvement has also been linked to higher marks in science (van Voorhis, 2003), better reading assessment results (Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996) and an association with higher standardised test scores (Griffith, 1996). I argue that input from parents regarding their child's academic accomplishment may encompass tasks such as supporting the child in reading and writing, providing other opportunities for engagement in these areas, as well as supporting the development of a positive attitude towards them.

Additionally, parents have been postulated as being significant in the development of students' sense of self by empowering and facilitating their learning as well as their view of the world (Webber, 2008). The relationship which students have with their parents is a determinant factor in the formation of identity (Bersonsky et al., 2007) and positive adolescence development (Lerner et al., 2005): these have been associated with results in productive adult life (Lerner et al., 2005). Schachter and Ventura (2008) discussed parents as identity agents, asserting that their role is a rudimentary factor in identity development of their children, and which can be linked to their learning in school.

I argue that examination of school experiences has the potential to enable explanation of how individuals encounter dyslexia, develop learning identity as well as reading and writing identity, linking these to relationships with peers, teachers and parents. Hence, I make assumptions that past schooling experiences, which include narratives of struggle, isolation and failure, conceptualised within one's sense of self

and relationships with others may be associated to predispositions which are formed as adults: these can be related to practices in reading and writing.

The literature positions reading and writing as central and crucial skills because it is considered that overall school achievement is dependent on proficiency in these areas. A recurring theme is that individuals with dyslexia are likely to face greater challenges in school and may experience early educational failure which can incur emotional and social consequences. According to the literature, socio-emotional problems begin to develop when individuals with dyslexia compare their educational outcomes with their non-dyslexic peers, with a focus on the inability to meet learning expectations. Consequently, these individuals adopt coping strategies, some of which are negative, aimed at ameliorating the secondary effects of dyslexia. Also, the literature highlighted the social factors of school as the most vital aspect which promotes a sense of belonging and psychological wellbeing of adolescents.

In the next section, I will be discussing Weiner's attribution theory, exploring perceptions of causes for success or failure in reading and writing. This would enable deeper understanding of the interplay of aspects of school experiences, as discussed above, in the development of female dyslexic offenders' conceptualisation of efficacy in reading and writing.

2.5 Attribution theory

In this study, I employ attribution theory as a framework for understanding dyslexic experiences and reading and writing attitude. The central thesis of attribution theory is that a history of 'failure' or perceived failure, may lead an individual to find an explanation for such outcome (Weiner, 1974). For example, an explanation that

points to the presence of dyslexia may have the effect of lowering expectations, encouraging negative emotions, and reducing levels of perseverance when faced with challenging academic work (Palmer et. al., 1982). Also, since failing at a task may cause an individual to seek an explanation (Weiner, 1974, 1979), experience of failure may be a significant factor in accounting for why an individual may develop attribution beliefs.

Another case for employing attribution perspective is that following years of laboratory experiments, attribution researchers have made causal connections between interpretations which individuals give to events and the consequences of such interpretations (Weiner, 1974, 1979, 1986; Weiner et al., 1979). It has been demonstrated that the kind of causal explanation proffered for an incident impacts the emotions experienced (including shame, guilt and loss of self-esteem), anticipations of future success and failure, as well as the nature and intensity of consequent conduct. Although I am not seeking to make causal connections, I anticipate that my findings would enable understanding of the relationships between experiences of dyslexia, reading and writing attitude, and attribution beliefs. This is based on the notion that attribution theory is concerned with the processes which create understanding, prediction and controllability of success and failure in achievement-related situations.

Therefore, employing attribution theory (Weiner, 1974, 1986, 2000) in this thesis is based on the assumption that the kinds of attributions which people make affect future behaviours and direct predictions regarding future conducts. Also, my literature search did not reveal studies on dyslexic offenders which have applied an attribution perspective in the examination of reading and writing attitude, even

though the studies which I have discussed signal that such an application is appropriate.

Attribution theory was first advanced by Heider (1958) and Rotter (1966); Weiner (1974, 1986) extended the theory, drawing on their conceptualisations: it has been adopted in various domains in educational contexts as a frame of reference (Graham, 1991; Bempechat et al., 1996). Weiner's attribution theory proposes a general theory of motivation and emotion as key determinants of achievement behaviour. It is based on academic classroom achievement, focusing on reasons that people ascribe to results (success and failure) and events, especially those which are unusual, significant or negative; for example, an examination situation. Accounts of the impacts of failure are strongly associated with the basic principles of attribution theory: that individuals search for causal explanations for outcomes; the explanations which they derive inform subsequent behaviour, cognition and affects (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002).

Attribution is ascribing a cause to an event or behaviour (Kent & Matinko, 1995); Weiner (1974, 1986, 2000) theorised that attributions emanate from peoples' self-perceptions, which impact their expectancy, values, feelings and beliefs about their ability, and ultimately their motivation. A main assumption of this theory is that a person's behaviour is determined and regulated by the need to understand and master the environment (Assouline et al., 2006). This theory has been used in studies investigating student motivations (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002), and suggests that attributions for success and failure may determine future expectations for learning and achievement.

According to Weiner's (1974) theory, there are four main tenets which are vital in the explanation of an achievement-related situation – ability, effort, task difficulty and luck; attributions for success and failure are made to one or more of these four main causes. However, Bar-Tal and Darom (1979) argued that using these four causes to explain success or failure is restrictive: this is because there is no consideration of the experiences which may guide any attribution to these specific causes, as well as other factors that can influence the process of causal assessments in real life contexts. Furthermore, it has been argued that Weiner's four attributions are restrictive because they do not consider the intricacies and disparities inherent in the causal analysis of students in ordinary educational environments (Frieze & Snyder, 1980). Also, some researchers located other causes instead of asking participants to select from pre-determined fixed items (Bar-Tal & Darom, 1979). In these instances, children, for example, identified support from others, such as teachers (Humphrey & Mullins, 2002a) as a cause for improvements in their performance.

Nonetheless, an analysis of relevant studies indicated that these four causal attributions were cited by students as reasons for their scholarly attainments (Weiner, 1986). In the eight studies examined by Weiner, the frequently cited causal attributions for success or failure were effort and ability. Weiner (1986) recognises that there is a wide range of possible causes for achievement related results, for example, character and malpractice. However, it would seem that Weiner's four causal attributions are embodied in most individuals' causal reasoning in educational settings (Weiner, 1986).

A principal assertion in Weiner's attribution theory is that there is a fundamental dimensional construct regarding the explanations which individuals proffer for

events. According to this theory, classifying explanations into dimensions: locus of causality, stability and controllability, would lead to a clearer understanding of the affective responses to success and failure as well as the changes in predictions for future events (Weiner, 1974, 1979, 1986):

Locus of causality:

According to Weiner (1974, 1979, 1986), locus of causality is related to the ascription of outcomes to internal or external factors. In this way, people who subscribe to an external locus of causality understand their behaviour as an outcome of external events, while individuals with an internal locus of causality interpret their achievement outcomes as emanating from factors which are within them. For example, in failure situations, students with an external locus of causality attribute their failure outcomes to sources which are external to them, i.e. bad luck: unfavourable exam conditions or task difficulty. On the other hand, students with an internal locus of causality may make internal attributions such as lack of ability or effort for unfavourable results.

Stability:

Stability, the second dimension, relates to factors which are stable or unstable, referring to the level of consistency inherent in an ascribed cause. For example, internal causes, such as ability, are viewed as constant and unchanging, while effort and mood are alterable depending on situations and contexts. This dimension differentiates causes according to time and constancy, impacts learners' future attainment expectations and denotes stable attributions, for example, ability, as being more indicative of future achievements compared to unstable attributions e.g. effort (Weiner, 1986).

Controllability:

Controllability serves utility in extending attributions designated as internal or external, stable or unstable, by considering the extent of control which individuals have over a cause (Weiner, 1986). Comparable to the stability dimension, controllability is closely associated to individual views about self-efficacy and future performance. For example, effort is presented as a controllable factor whereas ability is denoted as an uncontrollable attribution. Accordingly, failure which is attributed to effort has the possibility of enhancing confidence compared to if it is attributed to ability (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1998), resulting in a belief that success can be achieved in the future by making greater effort on the basis of past failures.

These three causal dimensions are linked to expectancies for future conduct, encompassing behaviour modification, and incorporating self-efficacy beliefs and emotions (Schunk & Meece, 2006). However, they have been questioned on the basis that individuals do not always adopt dimensional thinking patterns by engaging in automated and logical thought processes. For example, Anderson (1991) claimed that people do not utilise these dimensions by relating possible causes to them, but rather, causes develop instantly in the absence of a conscious dimensional consideration. Conversely, Hau and Salili (1993) argue that since individuals can proffer unlimited causes, classification is essential in order to explain the connections between these causes; this makes a case for the three causal dimensions proposed in Weiner's model of attribution theory (Weiner, 1972, 1979, 1986).

Also, attribution theory has been criticised for not taking into account the social and cultural differences which may impact causal attributions because research into attributions has focused mainly on western cultures and as such, lacks universal

generalisability. For example, Semin (1980) argued that attribution theory does not take into account divergences in cultural systems, practices and representations, and as such, cannot be applied to people's everyday lives.

In spite of these criticisms, I argue that since this theory is concerned with how individuals respond to 'why' questions, applying it to dyslexic offenders' reading and writing attitude has potential for examination of associations between principal factors, questioning processes, and how these relate to subsequent conducts. Also, this model emphasises achievement and encompasses a wide range of cognitive, affective and motivational outcomes, and can provide a framework for predicting achievement motivation and behaviour (Perry & Penner, 1990). It was anticipated that since attribution theory proposes implications for future behaviour, it might provide insight into associations between dyslexic experiences, reasons given for success and failure in learning, and reading and writing attitude.

2.5.1 Attribution theory in education research

Weiner's attribution theory has been applied in a range of academic contexts, including in individuals with learning disabilities: this theory has been adopted in the exploration of the function of students' attribution beliefs about their performance in school tests (e.g. Likupe & Mwale, 2016; Bempechat et al., 1996; Boruchovitch, 2004). Some of the studies reviewed in this thesis on attributions have focused on students who have been broadly described as learning disabled because the literature search showed that few studies have been exclusively directed at a homogenous subgroup of students struggling with reading and writing, for example, dyslexic students. Also, learning disability is used in America to denote reading disability. Therefore, as my study is directed at a subgroup of learning-disabled

individuals – offenders with dyslexia – I consider that these reports are relevant. Additionally, although some of the studies reviewed are dated, I have included them in order to enable an understanding of the development in this field, demonstrating how this concept and the issues I would be addressing in my study are historically located.

Likupe and Mwale (2016) explored causal attributions made by high and low achievers regarding their success and failure. This study was conducted across five secondary schools in Malawi, involving 50 students and at least one teacher from each of the schools. Although the participants were not dyslexic, the study highlighted attributions of high and low achievers. They found that higher achievers mainly made attributions of success to effort and ability whereas low achievers linked their academic outcomes to luck and task difficulty. Farrha (2004) also reported similar findings in a study which was focused on attributions of low and high achievers amongst secondary school children about their perceived reasons for success and failure. High achievers attributed their success and failure to effort and ability (internal attributions), while low achievers attributed their outcomes to luck and task difficulty (external attributions).

There are also studies which have been conducted on students with learning disability, and which demonstrate associations between causal attributions and achievement-related behaviour. Relevant to these findings in attributions research in dyslexic learners is the study of Humphrey and Mullins (2002a), who examined the personal constructs and attribution for academic success and failure, utilising an eight-item Likert-scale questionnaire. This study employed locus of control, learned helplessness and motivation in describing students' attribution for success and

failure. Participants were dyslexic students, aged between eight and fifteen, who were recruited from mainstream schools and centres for children with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD). They found that the children with dyslexia were inclined to attribute academic success to external factors such as teacher quality as opposed to internal factors, for example, their own intelligence. The authors reported that these learners felt that their achievement of success in learning was beyond their control, because of their learning disability. They reported that non-dyslexic students on the other hand, attributed failure to controllable factors, such as lack of effort or lack of interest in a subject instead of an uncontrollable factor i.e. lack of ability, thereby preserving their self-concept. This would suggest that the non-dyslexic learners possessed a strong sense of control over their success.

These findings contrast with those of Burden and Burdett (2005) who investigated factors associated with successful learning in pupils with dyslexia by means of an interview with each participant and a Likert-style questionnaire for the measurement of locus of control. The study was conducted in a specialist school for pupils with dyslexia and the participants were aged 11 to 16. The authors reported that the participants attributed success to effort, and concluded that most of the participants showed a high level of controllability attribution, whereby they saw themselves as being capable of performing well in tests if they wished to. However, the authors expressed doubt that this result would be replicable in pupils with dyslexia in a mainstream secondary school.

Studies on attributions of adolescents with LD (learning disabilities) have consistently found differences between these students and their non-learning-disabled peers (e.g. Pearl et al., 1980; Palmer et al., 1982; Compas et al., 1981; Jacobsen et al., 1986; Kistner et al., 1988). Pearl et al. (1980) conducted two studies of success and

failure attributions of LD children and their normally achieving peers. In the first study, there were no differences in attributions for failure, however, in success situations, LD children made less internal attributions compared to the non-LD children. In the second study, no difference between the groups in self-perceived ability or luck was found, although LD children were less inclined to attribute failure to lack of effort. Conversely, Palmer et al. (1982) reported comparable attributions in success situations, whereby both LD and non-learning-disabled students ascribed effort more to success than failure. However, in failure situations, LD students were predisposed to attribute failure to internal factors, more than the non-learning disabled students.

Compas et al. (1981) investigated causal attributions linked to learning or behaviour problems about success. Participants in their first study comprised children who had been described with a range of labels associated with learning problems, like, learning-disabled (dyslexic), and were from diverse ethnic backgrounds. The authors in this study reported that these students were inclined to make internal attributions for success and were not consistent in their inclination to make external attribution for failures because approximately half of them attributed failure to internal causes.

In the study of Jacobsen et al. (1986), participants were required to provide answers to a hypothetical situation where they had the chance to make improved effort to change their results (for example, “your English teacher gave you homework where you had to read a story and informed you that you will be tested on this the following day. You fail the test, what reason can you give for this failure?”). They reported that LD students attributed success to external factors more than the normally achieving students and attributed failure to internal factors – effort – more than the non-learning disabled group. However, it is conceivable that the discrepancy in findings

may be because the participants in Jacobsen et al.'s (1986) study believed they were accorded enough time to study the story thoroughly, and failure could only result from insufficient effort. Likewise, the type of academic task may have been a determinant factor because even though sufficient time was given for the reading, the learning-disabled students may have felt that time would not impact the outcome of their performance anyway, because of their low ability. Furthermore, interpretation of the term 'effort' may be divergent and vague, throughout the different stages of task performance.

Overall, some of these outlined studies did not report the race of study participants. This has implications for interpretation because, according to Stipek (1993), studies have demonstrated that causal ascriptions to achievement may be socially constructed and may depend on cultural orientation. Also, there may be cultural definitions of success and failure because notions of achievement, according to Maehr and Nicholls (1980), are multidimensional and have cultural basis. From this perspective, the principles guiding a person's view of success and failure may differ according to one's social group and context. Support for this assumption can be found in a study by Duda (1986a) which reported that Navajo and Anglo adolescents provided different definitions of success and failure. For example, Anglo students defined success and failure in terms of objective and competition-oriented standards, such as, test scores or sports results, whereas, Navajo students elaborated individual elements such as personal-referenced or skills-based understandings of attainment.

Furthermore, in some of the studies, the participants made attributions which were outside the four main causes proposed by Weiner (1985): this would make it difficult to fit them into each of the three dimensions (Kent & Martinko, 1995) as proposed by

Weiner (1985). Moreover, the methodologies adopted in some studies have measured attributions in hypothetical situations on a Likert scale in experimental settings. This eschewed the measurement of real-life responses, and presented a limitation on the range of causes which they could select from. In the current research, the semi-structured interviews did not involve hypothetical situations because these would not capture the descriptions of participants' lived experiences in their own words.

As the aim in the current study was to investigate reading and writing attitude from an attribution perspective, I considered that it would be helpful to examine the construct of locus of control, because this also relates to perceptions of success and failure in an academic environment and in the context of attribution theory. However, I will first of all discuss the difference between locus of control (Rotter, 1966) and locus of causality (Weiner, 1974).

2.5.2 Locus of control and locus of causality

I start this section by examining the conceptual difference between locus of control (Rotter, 1966) and locus of causality (from Weiner's attribution theory) as both concepts might be seen to be overlapping and perhaps indistinguishable. They may both be used in describing the interpretation which individuals give to events, although they each explain different aspects of a person's interpretation of outcomes. Attribution theory is focused on interpretations which a person may give to an event in order to understand behaviour, and makes links between perceptions and behaviour, while locus of control is focused on the reasons for the attribution.

Locus of causality is related to the extent to which individuals perceive that their actions are ascribed to internal or external causes (Weiner, 1979); this concept is described in the context of causal ascriptions. With regard to locus of control, Rotter (1966) denotes this concept as judgements which people make about personal control over things which happen to them, interpreting the concept in the context of 'perceived outcome contingency' (Palenzuela, 1984). Also, according to the concept of locus of causality, internal control relates to a person's perception of self as the cause of events whilst external control reflects attribution of the cause of events to outside causes. With regards to causality, the individual recognises possible causes to what happens to him or her, categorising them as internal or external. In the case of locus of control, following the ascription of reasons to one of different personal traits or to the environment, the person evaluates factors which are implicated in order to determine the amount of control they have over the situation. Accordingly, a belief that events are attributable to internal causes (locus of causality) does not essentially equate to a belief in ability to control these outcomes (locus of control). Equally, perceptions of external causes do not suggest a belief in lack of ability to control the event.

In examining the difference between locus of control and the causality dimension of attribution theory, Lefcourt (1991) noted that the main difference between these concepts is that attribution theory relates to achievement motivation whereas locus of control is focused on outcome expectancies derived from experience. Also, attribution studies are focused on the conditions and processes of how individuals ascribe causality, whereas studies on locus of control propose that personal differences in individual perceptions guide attribution. This signifies a "chronic way of

explaining one's own successes, failures or other experiences when environmental conditions do not provide any other explanation" (Fiske & Taylor, 1991, p. 72).

The literature which I reviewed makes clear that attribution theory provides complex variations of the mechanisms guiding attribution processes and outcomes. A major strength of the consequences of attributions is the emphasis on emotions, future expectations and behaviour. Another important aspect of attribution theory is that it gives priority to a person's perception of the actual cause of events, irrespective of what produced the outcome. Across a large number of studies, there is a clear difference between the attributional pattern of high achieving students and low achieving students as well as a generalisation that attributing failure to stable causes leads to higher expectations of future failure. This theory has been applied successfully in clinical and hypothetical settings, across a range of disciplines, but qualitative studies which have used it to explain experiences are rare. The literature on attribution theory notes a link between locus of control and educational performance. According to Weiner's theory, academic performance, expectation for future performance and emotional reactions to performance are all impacted by subsequent interpretations of the cause of a particular outcome.

Overall, making attributions of causality to internal or external causes is conceptually different from perceptions of having control over outcomes. In this study, I used locus of control to examine the participants' perceptions of control, but also locus of causality to explore the extent to which they make attributions to internal or external causes. I discuss locus of control in the next section.

2.5.3 Perception of control (LOC)

Locus of control has been utilised in the examination of a broad range of behaviours and it is discussed within the conceptual framework of attribution theory. Burden (2005) considered that locus of control can offer valuable insights into the interpretation given to school experiences by dyslexic students. He described the construct as a 'person's belief about their control over life events' (p.20) and he further proposed that: '*some people termed 'internalisers' feel personally responsible for everything that happens to them, whilst others termed 'externalisers' feel that their outcomes in life are determined by forces beyond their control, e.g. fate, luck or other people.'* (Burden, 2005, pp. 20-21).

Following an examination of studies on attribution in the context of academic accomplishments, Burden (2005) determined that a person's belief in having personal control is linked to greater accomplishments. This would indicate that students with dyslexia may attribute reasons for their reading and writing difficulties to external factors, consequently believing that they may lack control over the outcomes in their academic achievements.

Locus of control is related to the extent to which a person accepts that events are attributable to their own behaviours hence subject to their control, or if these events are a result of non-contingent matters (Rotter, 1966). According to Rotter (1966), who developed the construct in the 1950s, locus of control is a dimension of personality which aids in understanding a person's traits and behaviour. The term is used to describe people's views on personal control over life events and the environment (Lefcourt, 1976; April et al., 2012). According to Rotter (1966), these behaviours can be informed by a person's values, expectations and the immediate

circumstance. This suggests that students' thought processes inform perceptions of control which they have over an outcome, and may guide the decisions which they make in their learning.

Individuals with internal locus of control hold the perception that they have personal control because their behaviour is guided by personal effort, determination and ability (Rotter, 1966). This suggests that such individuals may make internal attributions for success and failure, leading to self-reliance on accomplishing personal targets as well as understanding reinforcement, following an event, as being contingent on their attitude and resulting in the upholding of the perception of control. However, people with external locus of control hold the perception that their behaviour is a product of external factors such as luck, chance, fate and significant others (Rotter, 1990). Those with this perspective view reinforcement as derivable from events outside their control, thereby having decreased perceptions of control (Marks, 1998). This view may impede personal development of academic skills and abilities because of the belief that they do not have control over life events and therefore lack the ability to direct their lives as desired. A student's locus of control disposition can help in identifying patterns in their classroom behaviour, including the different strategies which they adopt in their learning (Grimes et al., 2004): this would indicate a link between locus of control and academic attitude.

Accordingly, I argue that the concept of locus of control will help to highlight any associations between perceptions of control and attitude towards success or failure in reading and writing activities. It is hoped that this construct will enable an understanding of how female dyslexic offenders explain their dyslexic experiences

and the degree to which they believe that reading and writing outcomes are contingent upon their personal behaviour or are guided by outside forces.

Locus of control has been applied in academic settings and to educational accomplishments (Kirkpatrick et al., 2008; Shepherd et al., 2006); positive perceptions of control influence behaviour and emotions because higher sense of control leads to increased interest and beliefs about success in learning environments (Patrick et al., 1993). Kirkpatrick et al. (2008) conducted a two-phased study involving college students. The first part of the study measured students' locus of control, grades and overall point average, using Levenson' LOC survey, across two semesters. The second phase was based on the outcome from the first phase and involved 34 participants from the original 232 in the first phase. The participants completed a Rotter LOC, Levenson LOC scale and a questionnaire on LOC related activities. The authors reported a link between internal locus of control and college course grades: those who had internal locus of control did better than those with external locus of control.

Shepherd et al. (2006) also suggest that locus of control is a strong predictor of the perception which an individual has about whether control with regards to academic success or failure is external or internal to them. In their study, participants were drawn from seven schools and were a diverse group between the ages of 14 and 19 years old. They completed a locus of control scale and provided answers to 40 questions based on definitions of internal-external control according to Rotter (1966). The authors reported that based on students' Grade Point Average (GPA) scores, the academic performance of students who had internal locus of control was better than those with external locus of control.

Research literature has shown that the function of locus of control extends beyond the prediction of scholastic accomplishment, and also provides insight into behaviours linked with the learning process. For example, studies show that an internal locus of control relates to studying for longer periods of time (Bodill & Roberts, 2013), a more structured method of studying (Cassidy & Eachus, 2000) and a reduced possibility of criticising teachers for poor performance (Grimes et al., 2004). Also, the impact which locus of control has on academic accomplishment is based on perceptions of sense of agency which informs attitudes, enabling achievement of set targets (Ford, 1987). These indicate that individuals who believe that they have low personal agency are inclined to eschew participation in academic activities. Therefore, external locus of control may have implications for individuals who are predisposed to academic challenges or lacking in scholastic accomplishments (Finn & Rock, 1997).

There are studies which have found that dyslexic pupils exhibit external locus of control, believing that they do not have control over the result of their academic success (Humphrey & Mullins, 2002a); they typically attribute positive outcomes to task difficulty and luck, demonstrating poor internal locus of control. They also display a perception of lack of control in influencing outcomes of academic tasks, believing that results of success or failure have no bearing on their effort. Several studies have shown that these individuals show a considerably higher external locus of control compared to their peers who do not have specific learning disabilities (Rogers & Saklofske, 1985). I make the assumption that since locus of control is focused on perception of contingency between action and outcome, it is important to understand individuals' sense of control and the extent to which they have a general expectancy that actions may affect outcomes.

Overall, the literature has shown that locus of control focuses on causes of events, suggesting associations with a person's future expectation of success or failure. Since locus of control is focused on a person's belief regarding their ability to control life events and the environment, (April et al., 2012), it has been adopted in this thesis in an attempt to understand the development of reading and writing attitude, in the context of the attributions which individuals with dyslexia make for success or failure.

2.5.4 Post-data analysis literature review

My initial literature review was valuable in providing information on existing knowledge in my topic of interest, guiding the development of the research questions, as well as choice of research methods. Moreover, this literature review provided a framework for the analysis of data and discussion of results, linking my findings to previous studies.

However, as my data analysis progressed, I considered how literature on some concepts, which had emerged from my data, could be reviewed because of the potential in providing further evidence to support interpretations on aspects of my findings. These concepts were: learned helplessness as a consequence of participants' dyslexic experiences, and resilience, being a mechanism for coping with these experiences. These two areas are discussed in what follows.

2.5.4.1 Learned Helplessness

I discuss the concept of learned helplessness in order to gain insight into how a person may explain the ability or inability to change negative situations, including perceptions related to exercising control over future outcomes. An examination of

this concept may aid understanding of how individuals with dyslexia may react to failure on the basis of attributions which they make.

Overall, research shows that experience of failure initiates the attribution process, indicating that in such situations, a person will seek an explanation for the outcome. There are also studies which report that following initial failures, some individuals do not attempt future tasks; according to attribution theory, causal attributions are fundamental in causing such negative reaction.

On the basis of the attribution tendencies of students with dyslexia (already discussed), it has been suggested that some individuals will experience a negative learning disposition – learned helplessness – a concept which was first discussed by M.E.P. Seligman in the 1970s (Burden, 2005). Accordingly, this thesis makes the assumption that attributions which individuals with dyslexia make may indicate a susceptibility to learned helplessness, a model which has also been adopted in explaining the extensive consequences of failure on some students. For example, poor academic performance has been reported as a consequence of exposure to failure situations (e.g. Hiroto & Seligman, 1975) and the reformulated learned helplessness model (Abramson et al., 1978) suggests that these performances are informed by an individual's causal attributions to failure. It can, therefore, be deduced that students who become hopeless at achieving success may do so because they frequently offer explanations which eschew personal responsibility for failure outcomes.

Associations between the concepts of attribution theory and learned helplessness can be surmised in Craske's (1988) elucidation: a situation of learned helplessness occurs when a person believes that he or she cannot influence the achievement of

an anticipated result. Also, studies on learned helplessness have emphasised attributions as indicative of perceptions of control on results, and these beliefs have been demonstrated as principle factors in regulating attitudes in achievement conditions (Diener & Dweck, 1980). On the basis of the nature of attributions made by individuals with dyslexia, which I have discussed earlier, it is probable that some of these individuals will adopt the 'learned helplessness' disposition (Burden, 2005). This concept, encompassing low self-concept of ability was reported by Butkowski and Willows (1980) in a Canadian study of 5th grade students who were termed 'poor readers'. Also, avoiding challenges, giving up and lack of enjoyment have been postulated as constituents of learned helplessness (McNabb, 2003). Therefore, I propose, in this study that learned helplessness may provide an understanding of reasons which are linked to perceptions of ability or inability to complete reading and writing activities in individuals with dyslexia, following a failure outcome.

Learned helplessness was reformulated by Abramson et al. (1978) to encompass attribution theory. The authors suggested that performance expectancies, pertaining to perceptions of internal or external control of events, will influence future expectancies for similar events and are determined by the attributions which that person makes regarding the event. This concept has been applied, extensively, in the field of academic achievement; Sutherland and Singh (2004) noted that learned helplessness has implications for academic success. Accordingly, the implications of learned helplessness are examined as outcomes of causal attributions for success and failure, as well as perceptions of control as related to reading and writing outcomes.

The fundamental proposition of learned helplessness hypothesis is that individuals develop an expectation of non-contingency between their response to a situation and future outcomes. This expectation presents three forms of deficits which have effects on future learning processes (Abramson et al., 1978; Maier & Seligman, 1976):

Motivational deficit: this makes the individual passive and reluctant to initiate effort because of the perception that it will not have an effect on the undesirable outcomes. In this case, voluntary responses which will enable control are not instigated.

Cognitive or learning deficits: individuals learn that action and result are unrelated, suggesting to them that responses to future learning do not produce outcomes.

Emotional deficits: lack of control can result in depression (Abramson et al., 1978).

There are studies (e.g. Filippello et al., 2013; Macher et al., 2012) which have shown that experiences of learned helplessness may impact on students' academic progress because it is based on personal perceptions, viewpoints and attitudes – these inform learning. Accordingly, these individuals have low self-confidence in their competencies, accepting that their failures are as a result of personal factors including for example, lack of ability (Sorrenti et al., 2018). It can therefore be surmised that when students make internal, stable and global attributions to failure, the state of helplessness will be sustained for a long period and may extend to other tasks, further exacerbating low self-worth. In this way, they believe that success is elusive while failure is inevitable; when they succeed at a task, they attribute this to external factors such as luck or easiness of task (Scheleider et al., 2014). These students lack self-belief in controlling outcomes, accepting that these results are unavoidable and out of their control; accordingly, they demonstrate behaviour of learned helplessness (Seligman & Maier, 1967; Abramson et al., 1978). Such

disposition may be exhibited in decreased motivation to instigate the reaction which can lead to success as well as the inability to understand what these specific responses should be. This form of response may implicate future achievement because it inhibits the functionality of learners who are exposed to academic challenges brought about by a learning difficulty.

The phenomenon of learned helplessness is typified by apathy in academic work, especially in tasks which necessitate tenacity or which are seen as difficult by students inclined towards learned helplessness, believing that they cannot perform those (Dickhauser et al., 2011). Consequently, these students become unenthusiastic towards academic work, developing stress and agitation (Dickhauser et al., 2011) as well as problems which may result in truancy and low school attendance, and having sustained adverse impact on learning progress. According to the literature, engagement in learning determines educational achievement, enhancing self-confidence (Filce & LaVergne, 2015).

Hence, I argue that individuals with dyslexia can experience learned helplessness (Thomson, 2003), particularly when they have an intense perception of non-achievement (Burden, 2008). Some also develop low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, loneliness and disruptive attitudes (Berkley et al., 2011) because of the extensive experience of failure. These may cause them to perceive failure as inevitable, feeling helpless, and developing negative attitudes towards learning as well as becoming demotivated to engage in the learning process in order to achieve success. Also, research shows that students with learning disabilities are more at risk of developing learned helplessness because of their perception of lack of control over a situation (Gordon & Gordon, 2006), being predisposed to make negative attributions compared to their non-disabled peers (Banks & Woolfson, 2008).

Furthermore, these students have reduced self-perception, and react negatively to challenges in completing tasks by abandoning them, and giving up (Dweck & Reppucci, 1973).

It has been suggested that students with specific learning disabilities consistently display characteristics of learned helplessness (Licht et al., 1985). Dweck and Repucci (1973) in their study which assessed learned helplessness in students, categorised the participants into two groups – those whose behaviours indicated learned helplessness and those who demonstrated mastery orientation. On experiencing failure, the learned helplessness group demonstrated a reduction in effort expenditure, attentiveness and complexity of methods and resilience: this resulted in depreciation in their effort. Conversely, the pattern of behaviour for the mastery-oriented group was conflicting, whereby they improved in these same areas. These two groups of students demonstrated the same level of intellectual competence, consistency, accuracy or complexity of method used to answer questions. However, their interpretations of the causes of failure were dissimilar. For example, helpless students were disposed to make stable attribution, particularly, lack of ability (poor memory) or loss of aptitude (confusion), whereas the mastery-oriented group were inclined to make attributions to unstable causes.

Overall, since learned helplessness is concerned with perceptions that actions will not lead to desired outcomes as well as beliefs of inability to control events, I propose an examination of resilience as a factor in the assessment of and adaptation to outcomes. The concept can provide insight into interpretations which female dyslexic offenders give to success or failure events and how this relates to their reading and writing attitude. Accordingly, resilience is discussed in the next section.

2.5.4.2 Resilience

The concept of resilience was explored as a way of coping with failure situations in reading and writing, in the context of individuals' dyslexic experiences and explanations for causality, stability and controllability for success or failure at reading and writing. It was anticipated that investigation of this concept would provide understanding of perceptions of future performances on the basis of attribution beliefs towards success and failure, as well as reading and writing attitude. Resilience has been reported by university students with dyslexia or graduates with dyslexia as a protective factor in academic difficulties (Stack-Cutler et al., 2014), having the potential to affect academic progress of students.

Luthar et al. (2000) describe resilience as a "dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity" (p. 543). People with reading difficulties are more likely to face negative outcomes where the challenges inherent in their condition may incur stress, anxiety, under-achievement and disappointment. However, there are protective factors which may ameliorate the negative effects of reading disability, increasing the chances of success (Spekman et al., 1993); these include one's personality and proficiency in utilising individual abilities (Goldberg et al., 2003) or other factors which include assistance from significant others, for example, family (Werner, 1993), teachers and peers.

Furthermore, positive self-belief and sense of agency promote individual achievement (Friborg et al., 2003), supporting the ability to deal with challenging situations and taking charge of personal environments (Werner, 1993). The adoption of positive self-perception was associated with favourable transition to adulthood, according to Werner (1992), whose study also reported that resilient adolescents

demonstrated a disposition towards success and as adults, surpassed the academic and occupational achievement of their contemporaries who were at risk of non-achievement.

Interviews with individuals with learning difficulties revealed that determination plays a key role in achievement in further education (e.g. Litner et al., 2005) and in adulthood (Hellendoorn & Ruijssenaars, 2000). According to the literature, adults with reading disabilities reported that hard work enabled success when they encountered challenges in their learning, supporting resilience (Corkett et al., 2008; Hellendoorn & Ruijssenaars, 2000). Corkett et al. (2008) also noted that reading disabled adults who exercised self-belief maintained focus on their objectives, being determined to attend university.

Firth (2010) posits that resilience is vital for success in the academic trajectory of dyslexic students and supports self-perception and attitudes. There are studies which have indicated that some individuals with dyslexia develop compensatory strategies (Hellendoorn & Ruijssenaars, 2000) depending on some of their personal characteristics. Ingesson (2007) also addressed resilience in a study where two thirds of the study participants reported that as adults, although they continued to experience difficulties in completing activities involving reading and writing, they made adaptations with increased recognition of their inadequacies and improved coping mechanisms.

Raskind et al. (1999) investigated the patterns of change and the determinants of success in adults with learning disabilities in a 20-year longitudinal study. Success was measured by employment, status, educational and living attainments. Information on these was obtained using in-depth interviews. The study found that

perseverance was one of the attributes which was identified in successful adults with learning disability. Nonetheless, individuals with dyslexia may struggle with staying resilient because of the embarrassment and challenges brought on by their learning difficulty (Glazzard, 2010).

2.6 Literature review conclusion

In this chapter, I have reviewed relevant literature in the attempt to develop an understanding of the themes which are incorporated in my study. I started by discussing literature on dyslexia, positing that the condition is fundamentally related to literacy skills: reading and writing. Conceptualisations of dyslexia were presented to enable understanding of current knowledge. Furthermore, I attempted to establish that the management of early reading and writing difficulties at school can be linked to the situation and context of dyslexia for female offenders, providing a framework for an examination of their dyslexic experiences, reading and writing attitude and attribution beliefs.

The literature has shown how female dyslexic offenders can be impacted by a complex network of inter-related factors which are linked to the schooling system, the prison system and the individual: these may have potential impact on overall representation of dyslexic experiences. Although educational practices sometimes place constraints on learning support demands, social and cultural influences also have an impact on the values and perceptions of dyslexic individuals. Some of the studies which were reviewed suggest that within the prison context, perceptions of control can diminish autonomy, while self-efficacy beliefs, expectations of outcomes and individual goals are significant in determining engagement in reading and writing practices.

Furthermore, the literature provided insight into the institutional power dynamic which is meant to control the social interaction within prisons, reflecting the complex relationships which shape choices and behaviours in prison estates, and presenting the prison as a social system. According to the literature, women in prison represent a unique population, characterised as having troubled backgrounds, therefore encountering psychological and emotional needs resulting from these experiences. Also, the role and relevance of prison education, as well as reading and writing provisions were highlighted: these expanded understanding of prison life, emphasising the ways in which these individuals respond and adapt to the demands for skills in reading and writing in the prison environment.

Additionally, the literature review has revealed that attribution is related to how an individual reflects on their own abilities and the prospect of achieving success: it can influence motivation. Therefore, attribution pattern may have particular relevance for female dyslexic offenders because of the common difficulties which these individuals experience in learning, and lack of success in achieving the desired level of proficiency. In this way, this theory provides a guide about future behaviours by providing understanding of past behaviours.

Overall, the literature has highlighted the scarcity of research which is focused on imprisoned dyslexic women, indicating a significant gap in knowledge. This informed my major aim, which was to investigate female dyslexic adult offenders' reading and writing attitude, examining their experiences of dyslexia and the reasons which they give for success or failure in reading and writing from an attribution perspective.

My research questions are:

- How do female dyslexic offenders understand and make sense of their educational experiences of reading and writing?
- What are the relationships between their experiences of being dyslexic and their learning attribution beliefs?
- How do these relationships relate to their reading and writing attitude from early schooling to their time in prison?

Summary: Chapter Two

This chapter presented the literature review, examining the background research which forms the basis of this thesis, and helping to formulate the research questions. The chapter presented definitions, identification and labelling issues surrounding dyslexia, and a discussion of some of the main assumptions and beliefs about dyslexia. The major theories and concepts within this thesis are examined. Literature on the prison context is presented, exploring prison educational practice, culture and adaptation to prison life. This also included a general profile of women in prison in order to offer contextual information for understanding dyslexic women in prison. Furthermore, the literature on specific concepts which emerged from my data – including 'learned helplessness' and 'resilience' - was reviewed because of their potential to assist in providing interpretations of my findings.

In the following chapter, I outline the methodological approaches adopted including, data collection and analysis processes.

Chapter Three: Methodology

In the previous chapter, the literature relevant to dyslexic experiences, school experiences, women in prison, reading and writing attitude and attribution theory was reviewed. This review constituted the basis for the construction of a research design which aimed at exploring the thoughts, beliefs, perceptions and behaviours of female dyslexic offenders. It is a qualitative study about their dyslexic experiences, reading and writing attitude and attribution beliefs. My research questions informed the choice of methodology and guided this study.

This chapter outlines the focus and aim of the study, going on to explain the specific approaches and techniques used, describing the research methodology, and providing a detailed explanation of the structure for data collection and analysis. Information relating to the various stages of the research process and setting, including the study participants is provided. The considerations which guided both the development and application of the research design, as well as rationale for the adoption of these methods are discussed. Finally, issues of validity and reliability as well as ethical considerations are discussed.

3.1 Focus and aim of the research

This study was focused on understanding how female dyslexic adult offenders understand and make sense of their educational experiences of reading and writing, their dyslexic experiences and the attributions which they make for their success or failure in reading and writing. It has also been important to explore the prison context in order to understand the uniqueness of this group of participants, as well as reading and writing practices within prisons.

The overarching aim was to explore how these individuals experienced, perceived, understood and attended to their learning disability, the role of the prison context and the links which these had with their reading and writing attitude. I argue that my research questions cannot be answered in isolation but through identifying and illuminating participants' beliefs and understandings of their own behaviour. This would be from early schooling to their time in prison, as expressed in their own views and voices.

3.2 Methodological approach

In this section, I outline the nature and characteristics of the methodological approach which was used to gain access to the participants' descriptions of their experiences, in their own words, capturing their individual accounts. The interview processes as well as the justification for my choice of methodological framework are also provided. Hence, a discussion of interpretivism as an appropriate research paradigm in relation to the research topic, aim and approach is presented in the next section.

3.2.1 Interpretivism

Interpretivism offers a dynamic and flexible approach, allowing the researcher the scope to examine the participants' world with them, as it focuses on a premise that reality is socially created (Krauss, 2005). This paradigm proposes a research process which is underpinned by assumptions that knowledge and understanding derive from interpretations which people give to everyday events and experiences. This study's objective is situated within the interpretivist framework as it aims to gain an in-depth understanding of participants' views of the world through their voices,

actions and behaviour as an outcome of dialogical interaction between researchers and participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Furthermore, the interpretivist paradigm is focused on research methods which search for understanding in the activities and behaviours of human beings (Creswell, 2014) who are at the centre of my study - female dyslexic offenders. This approach allows for the exploration of the descriptions, understandings and interpretations of events and perspectives as portrayed by each participant (Neuman, 2014; Creswell, 2014). Within this approach, emphasis is on the individual by recognising differences between each participant, facilitating the exploration of personal beliefs and values, and enabling an in-depth engagement with the data (Thomas, 2013). In this way, interpretivism allows me to simultaneously assess the nature of individuals' experiences as well as probe abstract psychological constructs, i.e. judgements and views (Wellington & Szczerbinski, 2007), and contextualise the human self within social environments (Creswell, 2014).

Overall, interpretivist research is aimed at providing a perspective of a given phenomenon, investigating experiences in order to generate knowledge about the way in which individuals interpret experiences in specific contexts. I considered that an interpretive approach was most suitable because the nature of the present research necessitates the examination of not only complex and relational social practices, but also how these practices are perceived and interpreted by social actors (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Thus, this approach emphasises a search for new knowledge, holding that humans construct knowledge through the interpretation of their experiences. Therefore, I argue that this approach has potential to facilitate the achievement of my research objective which is to examine participants' dyslexic

experiences, reading and writing attitude and the reasons which they give for success or failure in reading and writing. Also, this approach aligns with the goal within this present study, to gain a rich understanding of participants' view of the world by understanding their social constructions of reality (Creswell, 2014) through their narratives, actions, beliefs and attitudes.

Additionally, an interpretivist position recognises and accepts the inter-relatedness of researchers and the research process, incorporating the values and beliefs of the researcher in the study (Ponterotto, 2013). Hence, since my thesis is an examination of attributions, attitude and experiences of female dyslexic adult offenders, I cannot consider myself as being separated from the reality being studied because I worked in the prison establishment where this study was conducted. According to Creswell (2014), researchers should be aware of their involvement; for example, their interactions within the phenomena of interest. Therefore, I make the assumption that in uncovering the interpretations of experiences provided by my study participants to the phenomena, I also rely on my own experiences and understandings of the same phenomena as I carry out research in my professional field.

This study provides analysis and interpretation of the social world of the prison in which the research participants interact and function. In line with the interpretivist framework, I situate all the beliefs, attitudes and experiences of my participants in this very specific context. Accordingly, the research design, approach and techniques which are employed in the data collection and analysis align with interpretivist paradigm. In conclusion, adopting the interpretivist paradigm enabled the development of holistic conclusions (Bryman, 2006). Employing different approaches to my data analysis provided the flexibility which was required for this

study in order to reflect different aspects of the phenomena (Mingers, 2001), enhancing the richness of my research results (Mingers, 2001), and helping in answering my research questions. In the next section, I will be describing the research design.

3.2.2 Research Design

In formulating the research design, my main focus was to obtain in-depth information from the participants, whilst allowing for flexibility and adaptability in the data collection process. I considered that conducting three separate interviews, on different occasions, with each participant would enable a robust exploration of the women's perceptions, experiences and behaviours. The first two were the semi-structured interviews and the third interview was the administration of the attribution questionnaire.

In developing an interview guide for the first semi-structured interview, I avoided using the word 'dyslexia' in the questions: this was deliberate. The intention was to allow the women to recount their school experiences, including attributions for success or failure in reading and writing, learning behaviour and relationship with significant others, using their own words to describe these experiences. It was important to determine if in recounting their school experiences, the women would include reflections on the impact of dyslexia as part of these experiences, as this may be an indication of the significance of dyslexia in their academic trajectory. Having allowed the women to describe their school experiences, the second interview was focused on the women's dyslexic experiences, encompassing their diagnosis, perceptions and understanding of dyslexia. The aim was to capture the explanations which they gave for their reading and writing difficulties, before and

after the dyslexia diagnosis, as well as the support which they may have received for their learning. The third interview was the administration of the attribution questionnaire which was focused on Weiner's attribution theory. Adopting this format allowed me to use a standardised structure to report the women's attributions for success or failure in reading and writing, as well as to develop any interpretation from a focus on individual details to specific patterns and processes within Weiner's attribution theory. These interview instruments are discussed further in sections 3.3.1 and 3.3.2.

My research design included the administration of a screening test for dyslexia, as part of the process for selecting the study participants. I was a dyslexia support tutor and have a Masters degree in Adult Dyslexia, Diagnosis and Support, having both the professional and academic competency to administer the dyslexia screening test to the participants. Hence, I screened potential participants using the Adult Checklist (Smythe & Everatt, 2001) for dyslexia in adults. Screening tests enable the identification of potential processing features which are contributing to dyslexic difficulties, and help to determine if an individual may require extra learning support. Scores from the screening test provided background information regarding participants' categorisation as dyslexic. Those who scored 60 or above on the checklist were selected because there is a widely held view that individuals who score above 60 have moderate or severe dyslexia (see, for example Smythe and Everatt, 2001). In the next section, I will be discussing my research methodology.

3.2.3 Qualitative approach

To address my research questions, a qualitative methodology grounded in the interpretivist paradigm was chosen: this approach, which best suited the exploratory

nature of this study, was applied to under-pin the data collection and analysis processes. I considered that this approach was most suited to answering my research questions (Crotty, 2003) with the aim of understanding human behaviour from the perspective of the individual (Meyer, 2001), encompassing participants' descriptions of events, experiences and understandings (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998) in a specific social context. For this reason, the researcher becomes the main human tool for the gathering of data, as well as analysing the data (Merriam, 2002), enabling understanding of participants' descriptions and expressions, as well as preserving their stories (Punch, 2005). The qualitative research approach gave me the means to gather in-depth detailed data about main motives, attitudes and purposes of participants, including the reasons behind these; it enabled an understanding of the context-specific setting within which these individuals interpret thoughts, emotions and behaviours (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Furthermore, qualitative research fits well within a broader interpretive paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), allowing for various kinds of analysis in order to engage with the data. Additionally, the small study sample which is typically required in qualitative analyses (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), offers the advantage of questioning, as an integral part of the interpretation process, and emphasising the different and unique perceptions of each participant (Creswell, 2014). In this way, understanding of phenomena is deepened, facilitating the generation of rich data which enables the answering of research questions, maintaining the scope of the study (Meyer, 2001), and gaining a new perspective on the research topic (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

My research was aimed at understanding attributions, attitudes, behaviours, perceptions and experiences of adult female dyslexic offenders (a marginalised

population as noted in the literature); hence, a qualitative research strategy enabled me to listen to descriptions and interpretations which these women afforded to their divergent experiences (Creswell, 2014) both before imprisonment and while in prison. During the interviews, I generated a high level of detail from the participants, enabling the exploration of their encounters and giving them the opportunity to tell their stories in their own way (Creswell, 2014). According to Blaikie (2000), the type of study being undertaken and the questions which the research seeks to answer can shape the choice of research design. I chose qualitative methodology because within this study, I was able to generate data which could answer my research questions, obtaining detailed information which provided insight into the participants' personal experiences.

Additionally, I considered that the present study was exploratory because it was aimed at bringing new understanding and knowledge that have not been extensively researched, to the topic of dyslexia in offenders. Hence, adopting a qualitative approach was particularly suitable for examining emergent areas of research where there is little knowledge of patterns or common characteristics that exist in the population. In my study, I encouraged each participant to present perceptions about the same or similar situations from their individual point of view, treating each person's understanding as important and significant, exploring the phenomena from as many different angles as possible. In this way, the distinctive explanation of the women's social reality had their unique signature as a means of presenting personal interpretations of analogous situations (Einser, 1998). This thick description was used as a basis for analysis of patterns with the help of the theoretical framework.

Nevertheless, qualitative research has been criticised for being inherently subjective, and data generated cannot be replicated (Pope et al., 2000). Cohen et al. (2011)

noted that participants in qualitative studies present their stories differently, highlighting their uniqueness, thereby making generalisation difficult and emphasising the individual person. In further emphasising the personal elements which are integral in qualitative studies, Cohen et al. (2011) posited that qualitative research is focused on the complexity of human nature and the uniqueness of each person in relation to their encounters and experiences. However, I argue that although the present study is on a specific group of participants, the findings can provide valuable insight into the wider types of outcomes which relate to dyslexic individuals within the criminal justice system in general. This is where the use of a specific theoretical framework, attribution theory in the case of this study, can allow moving the interpretation away from individual detail to broader patterns and processes.

There are a range of methods which qualitative researchers can adopt, affording the choice of different methodological tools to suit research topics and questions (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Although there are no specified designs for collecting data in qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), interviews are commonly used as a data collection tool to gather information about participants' experiences, views and beliefs relating to specific research questions or topics (Lambert & Loiselle, 2007). In the present study, I used semi-structured interviews and attribution questionnaire – each of these methods was focused on obtaining specific forms of responses from the research participants (Denzin, 2009; Thurmond, 2001), providing triangulation (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I argue that use of these methods was an attempt to describe the complexity of human behaviour in-depth, by exploring it from different stand-points through the use of different types of interviews. A single method of data

collection may not provide data relevant to explain the different aspects of the phenomenon of interest.

A pilot study was planned as part of the qualitative study design for testing my research instruments; however, it was not possible due to time and prison regime constraints. Shortly after obtaining permission from the National Offender Management Services (NOMS) to conduct my interviews, it was confirmed that the research prison establishment was going to close down. Consequently, it became critical that I planned my recruitment and interview processes in ways which minimised the burden to prison gatekeepers and prison systems. It was important to make considerations for all matters relating to safety and security within the establishment, particularly at a time when the prison was focused on ensuring that both the prison regime and the prison closure were run effectively and successfully. Furthermore, I had to consider the aspirations and emotions of those being interviewed; this was particularly relevant because a pilot study would have required the recruitment of participants who would be different to those for the full research, resulting in a higher number of participants overall. Also, I considered that my data collection and analysis processes were flexible and iterative; hence in conducting three separate interviews with each participant, my entire process of data collection and analysis provided opportunities for refining my approach, if required. Overall, the qualitative nature of my study enabled me to make improvements to my interview processes, ensuring that the interviews were used to generate responses which helped to answer my research questions.

In summary, the present study is a qualitative study which has integrated different methods in data collection and analysis, enabling triangulation by seeking integration

of findings from divergent methods (Denzin, 2006; Creswell, 2014). I discuss the data collection methods next.

3.3 Data collection

In making decisions about data collection tools, I considered that it was necessary for participants to share their views and explanations, and to have their voices heard. It was also important to understand the attributions which they make in success or failure situations, and how this may explain their reactions to reading and writing outcomes. Additionally, it was necessary to take into account the very specific research environment by adopting a qualitative approach which would fit within the strict regime and structures of the prison establishment. Therefore, I considered different qualitative forms of data collection in order to determine which one would be possible in practical terms as well as most suitable for answering my research questions.

In considering observations, I reasoned that since I was interested in experiences, it was important to speak to the study participants. It became apparent that observation research would not help to answer my research questions because although it may enable me to make judgements about the participants' reading and writing attitude, I was not going to be able to observe the thoughts, feelings and evaluations which they make about reading and writing. Additionally, availability of prisoners is heavily dependent on the rigidly structured prison regime (Caulfield & Hill, 2014), and would have had time implications for prison officers. Also, since this study took place in the prison cells and not in a structured learning environment: it was going to be difficult to predict when the participants would engage in a reading or writing activity.

Focus groups were also not considered as the appropriate form of data collection for this study because of the complexities within the prison environment. For example, the regimented structures presented challenges with regards to assembling the groups. Furthermore, it was considered that a group setting could influence the responses of individuals (Macphail, 2001): assembling a group to discuss a particular topic is considered unnatural (Morrison, 1998) because focus groups serve greater purpose when they are constructed naturally (Krueger & Casey, 2014). Therefore, as my study was focused on individual views and perspectives, not capturing the 'voice' of each participant extensively and exclusively, would have affected the outcome. Additionally, there was the possibility of limited discourse as a result of the group dynamics (Harner & Riley, 2013) where some participants may not have wished to be part of the focus group because they lacked capacity in articulation and confidence – both of which are reported features of dyslexia. Also, some participants may have faced the challenge of sharing their real feelings publicly, owing to the prison environment where vulnerability can result in degradation regarding their social status (Ireland, 2000): those labelled as weak are perceived as helpless and susceptible to extended exploitation (Edgar & O'Donell, 1998).

Having considered that observations and focus groups were not suitable, it became reasonable to look at utilising face-to-face interview methods - semi-structured interviews and administration of structured interviews using attribution questionnaire - as I considered them to be appropriate tools for building understanding of the phenomenon, enabling the finding of answers to my research questions as well as being suited to the research environment. The combined use of semi-structured interviews and structured interviews for attribution questionnaire, facilitated the

development of a more holistic description of participants' accounts (Patton, 1999), enhancing the internal validity of my study (Bryman, 2006), and fostering triangulation. Additionally, triangulation of interview methods enabled convergence of responses from different methods of data collection with the aim of providing a more comprehensive understanding of the findings. Finally, use of two forms of interview suggests that potential limitations in one method can be ameliorated by including data from another method (Sandelowski, 2000). The interviews which I conducted with the women were in three sets: the first two were semi-structured interviews and the third one was the structured interview for administration of attribution questionnaire. I used the Semi-Structured Interview Guide 1, Semi-Structured Interview Guide 2 and Attribution Questionnaire for each of the interviews respectively. I will discuss the interview methods in the next section.

3.3.1 Individual semi-structured interviews

I used individual semi-structured interviews as a method of data collection for the examination of the social and psychological issues linked with participants' thoughts, perspectives, behaviours and feelings. Cohen et al. (2000) noted that in-depth interviews provide broad avenues for personalisation and opportunities for probing, permitting the interview process to progress and evolve in thought-provoking ways.

I created interview guides (please see Appendices 1 and 2) for the first and second interviews. These were aimed at generating responses which were important in gaining understanding of similar and differing experiences of the participants. The interview guides provided focus and boundaries for the interview process, enabling me to attend to responses which needed expansion (McCracken, 1988). My research questions guided the process of eliminating and combining topics, leading

to development of interview questions which allowed the research participants the scope to put forward descriptions of their experiences (Morse & Field, 1995). Also, existing literature on dyslexia, attributions, learning identity, and reading and writing attitude facilitated the development of the interview questions: these have been influenced by several authors as illustrated in my literature review.

The interview questions adopted a simplified format and I grouped them under specific headings; the purpose of these questions was to encourage the participants to talk, shaping the direction of the interview, in the hope of gaining insights into their thoughts. Consequently, I compiled questions which facilitated interview discussions, and fostered participant cooperation in talking about their experiences. In this way, the participants were not overwhelmed or confused, and I was able to obtain their individual views.

Additionally, commonalities in their experiences necessitated an interview schedule with a common set of questions for all participants. I was able to discuss many pre-determined themes which were generated from my review of literature, whilst allowing the scope for new themes to be investigated as they developed (Cassell & Symon, 2004). Furthermore, semi-structured interviews served as a framework, which allowed for flexibility and direct involvement (Thomas, 2013), being an interpretative process between the interviewer and the interviewee (Galletta, 2013): this encouraged spontaneity in participants' responses in relation to the specific topics which were pertinent to my research.

Furthermore, previous studies have successfully used interviews to report on the social aspects of dyslexia. Riddick (1996) used interviews as a data gathering instrument in the research on dyslexic students and their families. Similarly, Edwards

(1994) used interviews as the key tool for data collection to study the educational experiences of recent secondary school graduates with dyslexia. Also, Cory (2005) used in-depth semi-structured interviews to explore the opinions and views of college students with invisible disabilities. Semi-structured interviews have also been used to study identity development and sense of self in people with dyslexia (e.g. Pollack, 2005), consequences of dyslexia diagnosis and labelling (e.g. Riddick, 2000) and effects of dyslexia on pupils' self-esteem (e.g. Glazzard, 2010) (discussed in my literature review).

Accordingly, my interview guides, respectively, consisted of questions in sections relating to early school experiences, learning behaviour, relationships with significant others, views about reading and writing, reading and writing practices in prison, future plans on improving reading and writing, perceptions, discussions about dyslexia and attributions for success or failure in reading and writing. I followed up primary questions with probing the participants' responses, where necessary, extending understanding of the phenomenon of interest and enabling an in-depth insight into their personal interpretations of events and relationships.

3.3.2 Attribution questionnaire – structured interviews

I administered the attribution questionnaire in person using a structured interview approach, and reading out the questions to the participants. The items can be seen in Appendix 3. Participants were presented with a choice of four answers for each question, and were asked to respond by selecting one option from the list (Dillman, 2007). As participants in this study have dyslexia and experience reading and writing difficulties, I considered that completion of interviews in written form may put them under pressure, causing anxiety because of their learning difficulties; also,

handwriting problems have been linked to dyslexia. Furthermore, I considered that these women may find it more encouraging to talk rather than complete a paper and pencil interview process. Administering the questionnaire face-to-face allowed me to explain aspects of the interview – questions and responses – which they did not understand. I also gave explanations if they were unclear on option of choices.

I developed a closed-ended attribution questionnaire based on Weiner's attribution theory (Weiner, 1985; 1986). This instrument presented twelve reading and writing situations which had successful and unsuccessful outcomes: participants had to choose from a list of likely reasons. Their responses were post-coded into four different categories under ability, effort, task difficulty and luck (Weiner et al., 1979). The rationale for this classification was derived from Weiner's three causal dimension model: locus of causality, stability and controllability. Also, each question was carefully considered with regard to its potential contribution to answering the research questions.

Before the final version of the questionnaire was achieved, I created several drafts and made corrections according to the feedback from my doctoral supervisor as well as two of my dyslexic work colleagues. In administering the questionnaire to the participants, I ensured that there was accessibility and consistency in interpretation of language which I used. I found that all the participants understood the language and instructions of this instrument. The questions and choice of responses were developed using language and context which were familiar to the participants, creating clarity to encourage participants in answering interview questions (Stark & Roberts, 1996). Participants' answers were recorded on the questionnaire.

This style provided uniformity for data gathered because repeating the same questions for all participants increased reliability by reducing misinterpretation of the questions and allowing comparison of responses (Peterson, 2000; Stark & Roberts, 1996). Standardisation of the questions increased the likelihood of communicating the same content at the same time enabling cross-verification of information from participants across other data obtained from each of them (Patton, 2002) in the semi-structured interviews.

Although use of questionnaires is generally described as a rigid interview style (Bryman, 2012), the questions which I asked were comprehensive and based on specific criteria (Peterson, 2000). Consequently, this served the aim of obtaining specific information on participants' attribution style, facilitating exploration and understanding of relevant processes, associations and concepts within my study, and enabling the answering of my research questions. This helped to create awareness of the participants' reality as well new insights into attribution beliefs.

3.3.3 Interview process

Prior to commencing the interviews, I initially met each participant to explain the purpose of the interviews and why they had been chosen, explaining all aspects of the consent form, and ensuring a good understanding of the remits of my study, encompassing scope and location of the interview (Herzog, 2012). Participants were provided with the information sheet and consent form. The interviews (semi-structured and structured) were conducted face-to-face, and the same twelve participants were interviewed for both. All the women who were interviewed in this study participated voluntarily. The interviews were scheduled in advance and took place in an office in the prison wings (cells). Overall, I conducted three separate

interviews, on different occasions, with each participant – the first two were the semi-structured interviews and the third interview was the administration of the attribution questionnaire.

Interviewing the women in this study on two occasions for the semi-structured interviews enabled me to re-examine the interview guide, to ensure that my research questions were answered through the generation of rich and pertinent information from the participants. I used Semi-Structured Interview Guide 1 for the first interview and Semi-Structured Interview Guide 2 for the second interview. The questions were aimed at eliciting in-depth responses whilst allowing me to use follow-up questions to gain clarity, and probes for added depth and detail. The probe questions were tailored to each participant's response in order to obtain additional or more specific information. Gaining in-depth understanding of events and behaviours of the participants through their voices during the interviews enhanced the validity of the study (Ayres, 2008).

I took notes during the semi-structured interviews: this was a preferred method of recording the interview as opposed to audio recording because it was considered less threatening, particularly as it concerned prisoners. Moreover, it made the interview an active process in which participants had the scope to explore different aspects of their thoughts (Coolican, 2017), communicating their reality. Also, this process allowed me to highlight key points which could be clarified later. Additionally, sensitivity issues around the use of recording devices in prison establishments, usually for safety and security purposes, made note-taking the best option (Byrne, 2005).

Administration of the attribution questionnaire was conducted after the two semi-structured interview sessions and was carried out in one session: closed-ended questions were utilised. I introduced the session by revisiting the aims of my research, reminding the participants of the consent procedures. I described the format of the interview, informing them that the interview was aimed specifically at examining how they explained their success or failure in reading and writing. They were informed that questions and answers would be different from the two earlier interviews (semi-structured) because they would be choosing their responses from a list of four pre-determined answers in line with the research context and which I would read out to them. I stated that their responses will help me to assess whether their earlier responses, in the semi-structured interviews, overlapped or offered new as well as different information. I provided reassurances by informing them that I would be clarifying any ambiguities or unclear questions and answers. I ensured that they understood the format of the interview. For the attribution questionnaire, participants' responses were recorded during the interview on the question form, and were marked afterwards against the pre-specified response formats.

Participants were debriefed shortly after the three interview sessions, providing an opportunity for discussion of the procedure and outcomes of the study. This also served the purpose of showing respect and appreciation for their contribution to the study.

3.4 Analysis and interpretation of data

Data analysis in qualitative research has been described as ways of reading and interpreting data (Cohen et al., 2011) to find themes and trends which help to answer the research question. It involves condensing large amounts of information,

generated through different data collection methods, and categorising as well as interpreting it in order to gain insights into the phenomena under study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This process requires ordering, structuring and interpreting information correctly (Schwandt, 2007). Consequently, I make the assumption that my research questions provided structure for the organisation of data, as well as focus for analysis in order to find answers to my study inquiry (Schostak & Schostal, 2007). The interview data were analysed in the following order: semi-structured interviews, attribution questionnaire and analysis of common characteristics. These will be discussed in the next sections.

3.4.1 Analysing the semi-structured interviews

The analysis of data from my semi-structured interviews followed a thematic approach, allowing for data from several participants to be examined and merged in order to achieve coherence in interpreting participants' accounts (Braun & Clarke, 2006), thus facilitating the answering of my research questions. Also, thematic analysis provided a structured methodology for the identification and categorisation of the main themes which emerged from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Thematic analysis has been criticised for not providing well-defined guidance for researchers, lacking comprehensive outline of how results have been analysed (Attride-Stirling, 2001). However, Braun and Clarke (2006) noted that this is a method which is not fused with any prescribed theoretical or epistemological framework, does not entail an in-depth familiarity with any framework, and can be employed within divergent theoretical frameworks in multi-dimensional forms. Consequently, I argue that thematic analysis provides a rich and informative form of qualitative analysis which enables researchers to understand data and summarise

the main findings of an inquiry, with links to particular research questions and defining a given phenomenon (Braun & Clarke, 2006). At the same time, this analytical approach allows for the exploration of the data from bottom up, ensuring that the voices of the participants are honoured and heard.

When working with the raw data, I engaged in thorough reading of participants' responses in order to become familiar with all relevant ideas in the interview transcriptions, examining, evaluating and identifying patterns, coding this data by noting significant points before analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Coding also ensured data validation, enabling interpretation and description of data in order to understand what it represents (Patton, 2002), and contributing to further understanding in the field, as well as facilitating the answering of my research questions. The codes formed the basis for developing the themes; I created an initial chart entry for commonly occurring themes in the accounts of the participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006), extending this chart (please see Appendix 4) to ensure that the key ones were identified, verified and recorded until a saturation point was attained (Creswell, 1998).

The final phase of my data analysis encompassed making sense of the themes (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, Braun & Clarke, 2006) arising from the interview responses, determining how particular facets of the data were represented within each theme, and annotating my interview data accordingly (please see Appendices 5 and 6) for annotated interview notes). Thereafter, I searched for links between these themes and the main concepts, established literature and theoretical perspectives (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Nvivo, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (Patton, 2002), was used to enhance the reliability of the findings, facilitating transparency by providing an understanding of how the analysis of data was conducted (McLafferty & Farley, 2006) as well as eschewing duplication of codes through its data retrieval capacity (Bazeley, 2007). This software package was chosen as the qualitative software tool because of its range of abilities which include categorising, sorting, organising and handling of data (Seale, 2000). The first task was to create an Nvivo project - a functional filing and analytic system. Thereafter, each participant's interview scripts were imported into the project and organised before being saved in one survey folder. The data from these scripts were then explored in order to identify commonalities and key words among participants' responses to the same questions. These commonalities and key words were used to provide thematic classification through the creation of nodes and subcategories of nodes, thereby streamlining the analysis process from reading the data widely to identifying patterns and creating themes. Use of Nvivo improved the rigour of analysis by facilitating management of my data information, i.e. coding and retrieving data as often as was required (Richards, 2002), enabling a systematic approach to my data analysis.

3.4.2 Analysing attribution questionnaire

Data collected from the questionnaire, using closed-ended questions (please Appendix 7), were analysed in order to identify participants' attributions for success or failure in reading and writing, according to Weiner's (1974) attribution theory. This data was analysed numerically, whereby a table was drawn of the raw data (please see Table 6), recording frequencies of participants' attribution to the four main factors influencing attributions for achievement i.e. ability, effort, task difficulty and

luck. The principle aim of my data collection method was to provide answers to my research questions, while maintaining as much validity and reliability as possible in the analysis, emphasising focus on the main results (Sandelowski, 2001). The numerical data gave the overall profile of the participants, specific to their attributions.

Use of numerical data in qualitative studies has been posited as serving utility by facilitating the emergence of patterns, thereby enabling understanding of analysis (Sandelowski, 2001). Also, according to Dey (1993), deriving meaning in qualitative research is partially reliant on numbers in the same way that numbers rely on meaning. Furthermore, it has been posited that numerical information enables transparency of data analysis, establishing focus by enhancing understanding of the main findings (Sandelowski, 2001), and providing exactness in qualitative data (Maxwell, 2010).

I argue that analysing participants' accounts, using numerical representations, guided the description of the basic features of the data, by providing focus and enabling a more comprehensive understanding of my data (Dey, 1993).

In summary, within the above sections, I discussed the analytical tools which were used in this study to facilitate understanding of how female dyslexic offenders make sense of events, enabling the analysis of my data in a purposeful way, as well as, determining how these may have influenced my findings. Overall, the data analysis tools which I employed: thematic analysis and numerical analysis, respectively, provided better understanding and explanation of my research and informed the answers to my research questions.

3.4.3 Analysis: Common Characteristics

The description and interpretation of data were supported by analysing participants' common characteristics according to the semi-structured interviews, fostering an in-depth understanding of the women's distinctive characteristics (Hatch, 2002) and how these could be grouped together according to commonalities. I utilised Hatch's (2002) model as the framework for identifying the common characteristics: the process began with the identification of types using data from the semi-structured interviews. Their accounts were read and relevant data were marked, noting the key ideas. Furthermore, themes and patterns linked to characterisations across participants were identified, and excerpts from the interviews were used to support the findings. Following on from this was the examination of significant findings and the identification of links between the themes. The analysis procedure concluded with an outline of common characteristics amongst the women's accounts.

The identification of common characteristics facilitated a comparative analysis whilst maintaining an individualised profile of each woman, setting this in the context of my research. Exploring the dynamics of each participant's individuality allowed for a rich description of their personal accounts (Bailey, 1994), elucidating the underlying reasons behind their behaviours. The identification of common characteristics enabled a high-level ordering of my qualitative data, allowing for a discussion about patterns across individual cases and an analytical exploration of the commonalities.

Furthermore, the identification of common characteristics facilitated explanations about connections between concepts within my study (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003), complementing the qualitative analysis of data from the semi-structured interviews and data from the attribution questionnaire. This analysis method provided a good

understanding of how links are established between these different aspects of my data to form overarching categories. In addition, a description of relationships between concepts was established, aiding my response to the research questions. Identifying participants' common characteristics in this way enabled me to go beyond the description of participants' cases to engage with the data, capturing nuances and differences (Bailey, 1994) through the identification of significant categories which overlap.

A limitation in the classification of the common characteristics is that some aspects of the data may have been overlooked. However, this form of analysis facilitated explanations about connections between concepts within my study (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Overall, grouping the participants' common characteristics facilitated a synthesis of my data sources to present a holistic outline of participants' personal accounts in the context of their dyslexic experiences, reading and writing attitude, and attributions for success or failure.

3.5 Research Participants

In qualitative research, the aim is to find participants who would provide rich data pertinent and central to the main purpose(s) of the study and the selection of this category of participants is referred to as purposive sampling (Bernard, 2002). Purposive sampling of research participants was utilised in this study because it enabled me to focus on particular characteristics as well as specific experiences of the population of interest – female dyslexic offenders, aged 18 and over. The demographic information on the participants is presented below.

Table 1: Participants' demographic information

Name	Age	Ethnicity	First language	Dyslexia Diagnosis
Tee	36	White British	English	Yes
Star	40	White British	English	Yes
Mak	19	Asian	English	Yes
Cal	50	White British	English	Yes
Mora	44	White British	English	Yes
Jay	28	White British	English	Yes
Bem	55	Black British	English	Yes
Fig	32	White British	English	Yes
Pela	49	White British	English	Yes
Cee	25	White British	English	Yes
Dew	34	White British	English	Yes
Neon	30	White British	English	Yes

All participants were proficient in English language: this ensured that they understood all aspects of the study including the notion of informed consent, as well as participation in the interview process.

Participants' Pen Portraits

Bem

Bem was 55 years old and the oldest participant when I interviewed her. She was very pleasant and happy to participate in the interviews. Self-image was important to her and she was concerned about other prisoners treating her differently if they knew

that she was dyslexic. Hence, she made efforts to demonstrate that she was not just as competent as the prisoners without dyslexia but in fact more competent or capable. She prided herself as a person whom others came to when they had problems - both in prison and outside of prison. She became excited when speaking about her children, who wrote to her regularly, proudly showing me a picture of her son. According to her, each time she came to prison, she lost the opportunity to be there for her children, expressing regret about her crimes. She wished to stop committing crimes and coming back to prison, and wanted to improve her reading and writing so that she can go on to work as a receptionist.

Cal

Cal was 50 years old at the time of her interviews and she found life in prison quite difficult. Before she came to prison, she was living with her partner whom she relied on to complete her reading and writing tasks. She shared that she enjoyed ‘a drink or two’, being drunk and disorderly sometimes, but insisted that she could stop drinking if she really wished to. She spoke well about the impairments and barriers which she faced because of dyslexia, and her recollections of school were searching and insightful. She was open and quite engaged, seeming to be glad that she had the opportunity to share her experiences with me.

Cee

Cee was a respectful and quiet participant who was 25 years old but came across as much younger. She spoke slowly and appeared to choose her words carefully, and needed time to process the questions before responding: some of her responses were tentative. Her family was frequently in her childhood memories, most of which were unpleasant because her parents moved very often, which meant that she had

to change schools several times, also having many periods of non-attendance. In recalling her experiences of dyslexia and early schooling, she became angry and on one occasion, she uncharacteristically hit the table, demonstrating the depths of her negative feelings towards those aspects of her life. She apologised about this behaviour and engaged well with the interviews.

Dew

Dew was 34 years old at the time of the interviews, but appeared younger. She was respectful and had a calm temperament. She appeared hesitant when expressing herself and spoke barely loud enough to be heard, mumbling some of her responses. She was pleasant and was able to answer the interview questions although she needed time to process some of the questions before responding. She sometimes spoke in general terms, but, after some prompting, she was glad to share her own experiences; as when, for example, she said that no one wants to be in prison because it is a dangerous place, and that she was scared to be in prison.

Fig

Fig, who was 32 years old at the time of the interviews, had a warm personality and was sometimes agitated during the interviews. When she was sharing her early school experience she became visibly upset and her responses were emotional, speaking angrily and ending up swearing. She apologised to me, making sure that I understood that her frustration was not directed at me. Her reaction may have been an indication of strong negative feelings towards teachers. She intermittently spoke about her home environment which was quite chaotic, and became frustrated when she discussed her parents, telling me that at first her mother showed interest in her schooling until she was excluded and expelled from school a few times.

Jay

Jay was 28 years old when she was interviewed. She appeared to be self-conscious and smiled awkwardly when she spoke about her time in prison. She did not always maintain eye contact and came across as having very low self-esteem. She reasoned that she had been mixing with the wrong crowd who influenced her decisions most of the time before she came to prison. In prison, her room mates were always asking her for 'stuff' from her canteen purchases and she was too scared to refuse. She was bullied in school and did not have many friends. Being in prison made her anxious and prevented her from taking part in prison activities, including education and exercise, preferring to stay in her cell.

Mak

Mak, who was 19 years old at the time of interview, was the youngest participant. She was quite relaxed during the interviews and conducted herself remarkably well, coming across as wanting to project a respectable image of herself. She explained that being in school made her tough because she learnt to fend off the bullies through self-defence. She spoke about her plans to desist from crime, stating that age was on her side because she was young. She said that she had encountered some prison inmates who were much older and still going in and out of prison. She stated that it was time to stop and 'turn a new leaf' as she did not want to be like 'those' prisoners. She acknowledged the limitations which dyslexia presented in her early schooling, saying that when she leaves prison, her key worker will help her to access education and employment support in the community. She came across as sincere when she spoke about not wanting to return to prison and 'turning her life around'.

Mora

Mora was 44 years old at the time of the interviews and she was pleased to be interviewed. She demonstrated very negative self-perception and told me that her life before imprisonment was centred around getting drunk when she was with her friends, which fuelled her involvement in criminal activities. Nonetheless, she expressed a desire to move away from offending when she was released from prison, but acknowledged that not being able to read and write would make it difficult to find a job. She found stability in prison, stating that she would struggle to turn her life around if she was released back into an environment where she will face negative influences which she thought would be outside of her control.

Neon

Neon, who was 30 years old when I interviewed her, was polite and obviously made a lot of effort with her appearance. She was an eloquent story teller who stated that she was innocent of the crime which she had been charged with. She sometimes seemed preoccupied by her thoughts during the interviews, coming across as recollecting the events around her arrest. She was open and seemed pleased that she had the opportunity to speak to me. She whispered when she spoke about the offence which she had been charged with, seeming visibly upset and agitated. She asked that I do not include those statements in my interview transcriptions: I reassured her that my interviews were focused on her early school experiences, dyslexia and literacy, explaining that participants' offences would not be included in my data. She relaxed after hearing my reassurances.

Pela

Pela was 49 years old and happy to take part in the interviews. She was likeable but slightly haughty and self-assured. Pela had children and was in contact with them through visits and telephone calls. The visits were not frequent and Pela told me that letter writing would have helped her to communicate more with her children, and that lack of reading and writing skills was an impediment. She expressed that she had been let down by 'the system', saying that being sent to prison had not been helpful: she had not gained skills which could help her to desist from a life of crime, telling me that she came in to prison not being able to read and write and still, now, she had not learned to read and write.

Star

Star was 40 years old when I interviewed her. Her recollections of her early school experiences were very vivid and she spoke with clarity, describing the negative treatments which she received from both her teachers and peers. She described a home life which was unsettled. There were times during the interviews when she was very angry about being in prison, seeming to blame her involvement with crime on her upbringing, as well as the lack of educational support in early schooling. She explained that she always felt ill at ease in social situations. She suffered from anxiety and was withdrawn at times.

Tee

Tee was 36 years old when she was interviewed and was homeless before coming to prison, stating that she would have nowhere to go to on her release from prison. She explained that she was in the same situation when she was released from

prison the last time, which led to her being exposed to the same group, which, in turn, led her back to reoffending. She was visibly distressed about having been in this predicament. She relayed that lack of reading and writing skills had limited her life choices and led to a life of crime, and she seemed regretful. She seemed relieved to have the opportunity to speak about the impact of dyslexia on her life trajectory, almost as if it had been a burden which she wished to overcome. The interview appeared to be a positive experience for her.

Sampling of Participants

The present study was conducted in a female prison establishment: prisons are distinctive, highly controlled, and in some instances, unpredictable settings which function as custodial environments. In considering this factor, a major determinant in choosing this sample was that it was available to me because at the time of my data collection I was working in this female prison, had security clearance, and access to the research site – a main factor in gaining permission to conduct my research. Also, I considered that obtaining permission to access a male prison would have been very challenging, if not impossible, particularly as assisting researchers in the conduct of a study is not classified as a principal interest in the majority of prisons (Hart, 1995). Furthermore, access to prisons for research purposes is tightly regulated and requires extensive levels of formal and informal processes (Roberts & Indermaur, 2008). Also, 'holding keys', which enables access to different parts of the prison, meant that I did not need to be escorted round the prison, thereby, reducing demand on prison staff.

The sample size was mainly determined by time limitations, as well as capacity on me, as the only researcher: twelve women were chosen for this study and this

number was considered to be sufficient in serving the research aims. Additionally, it is common to utilise small samples in qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) because the purpose is to generate rich data through in-depth understanding of social phenomenon instead of attaining broad generalisations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The participants were recruited from the education department, prison induction sessions, Additional Learning Support (ALS) sessions, and Toe by Toe Prison Project sessions (a reading programme run through a charity – The Shannon Trust - using the 'Toe by Toe' phonics-based scheme, developed for those with reading difficulties, including dyslexia). Drawing the sample from different populations meant that "thick descriptions" of the views and perceptions of study participants were generated (Gall et al., 1996). Denzin (2001) denoted this type of data as narratives which emphasise individuals' perceptions of themselves as related to their social environments, including how they interpret and understand their life experiences. Also, 'thick' and comprehensive data enhanced validity, demonstrating researcher involvement and direct participation in the research process (Cohen et al., 2011). Additionally, deriving data from participants selected from different populations within the prison further supported triangulation, enhancing the depth and breadth of understanding different aspects of the phenomena of interest.

3.6 Research site

Whilst there are commonalities in the main purpose of prisons, each establishment determines its own culture and structure which function around a regime. People's activities within prisons are closely monitored and controlled, necessitating careful planning and time management regarding my data collection processes around the

prison systems. Prisons are strictly controlled and monitored environments, where gaining access is generally regulated, whilst access for research purposes is particularly challenging. Permission for access to conduct my interviews involved making application to the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) headquarters where the application was reviewed by a lead psychologist and the Number One governor of the local establishment where the research was conducted. Additionally, the cooperation of the 'gatekeepers' in the local establishment was required, who in this case were the prison officers in the cells (the living quarters). In this whole process and at all levels, I was required to convince the officials of the merits of my research, as well as my integrity as a researcher. Of great relevance was the fact that I worked within the establishment, and so had security clearance, keys, as well as the backing of my work manager. Approval of my ethics application from IOE, UCL and a letter of endorsement from my lead supervisor helped to ameliorate some of the challenges inherent in gaining permission.

Seeking permission entailed protracted clarifications with National Offender Management Service (NOMS) about the aims of the study, benefits to the NOMS business priorities, protection of the participants, minimal disruption and demands on prison resources, overlap with other current/recent research projects, data protection/security implications, and relevant data implications. Additionally granting permission was dependent on NOMS's perceived significance of the topic. My initial enquiries regarding the feasibility of my study revealed that there had not been requests for research in the areas of dyslexia, reading and writing, which meant that NOMS accepted that my topic was relevant and required better understanding.

Conducting research requires thoroughness in approach and this becomes even more so when the study involves prison inmates. As I have discussed earlier,

regulations for prison research are typically restrictive and applications are scrutinised to ensure that they meet the high ethical standards because the participants are classified as a vulnerable group. Moreover, this research is focused on adult female dyslexic prisoners, a population which has tended to be under-represented in published research to date; consequently, my methodological choices encompassed the application of high ethical standards to my research activities. Also, the design and conduct of my research were underpinned by the desire to enable active participation of these women in the interviews, thereby providing a means to gaining an in-depth understanding of their experiences, and generating explanations and interpretations in order to answer my research questions.

3.7 Ethical considerations

I addressed relevant ethical issues, applying for and obtaining ethics clearance from the Institute of Education (IOE), UCL as part of the research process, and ensuring that these principles were not compromised. Ethical decision-making in a prison research becomes even more relevant because the prison is a complex setting with several internal and external obstacles which can deter research in the establishment (Harvey, 2005) and contact with prisoners is regulated by the systemic policies and tensions of the establishment (King & Wincup, 2008).

Ethical considerations were particularly vital and rigorous in this context because of the processes for ensuring that participants gave informed consent on one hand, and issues around guaranteeing absolute confidentiality on the other hand. Moreover, prisoners are generally categorised as a vulnerable group for research purposes (Pont, 2008). One of the reasons for this rationale is that the constraints of imprisonment, including the coercive nature of the prison environment and

restrictions on autonomy have potential to constrain voluntary consent (Moser et al., 2004). Moreover, a high number of prison inmates are illiterate, have reading and writing disabilities, extensive health problems, drug and alcohol dependency issues (Pont, 2008): these characteristics raise concerns about their ability to provide informed consent (Elgar, 2008). Other challenges of the prison environment, including the stringent security measures, for example, the regulated and physical movement procedures and the requirement of escorting prisoners to meetings, may mean that basic prerequisites of ethical research such as confidentiality and privacy are not guaranteed (Pont, 2008; Robert & Indermaur, 2008). Meanwhile, women in prison have been posited as the most vulnerable group of women (Maeve, 1998): this vulnerability is mainly drawn from one or more of the characteristics which I described earlier.

During the data collection stage of my study, it was important for me to create a welcoming, non-threatening environment in which the interviewees were willing to share personal experiences and views. I hoped to create an informal atmosphere where the women would feel valued and respected, minimising any power dynamics. In prison, clothing plays a significant role in how prisoners feel about themselves, serving as a constant reminder of the wide difference in status between prisoners and prison staff, and having the tendency to exacerbate issues of low self-esteem and loss of pride in inmates' personal appearance. Most of the prisoners wore t-shirts, sweat shirts, trainers, track-suit bottoms or jeans, and, therefore, I too dressed in jeans, trainers and t-shirts when interviewing the women, ensuring that I did not stand out as an authority figure. Furthermore, I approached each interview with sensitivity, reminding the women on several occasions during each interview that they had the liberty of making decisions about what, when and how they wished to

participate in the interviews, reiterating that their consent was an on-going process which they could review and indeed withdraw at any time.

Characterising prisoners as vulnerable can make access for research purposes difficult, and may lead to their exclusion (Moser et al., 2004). Hence a balance between protecting prisoners and facilitating their involvement in research is necessary (Elgar, 2008) because prisoners have a right to participate in research which has potential value for them and others. Such a balance may be realised when research design accommodates the particular complexity inherent in the prison research context, including how complexities can be ameliorated through appropriate research methods (Pont, 2008; Roberts & Indemaour, 2008). Therefore, for my research, permission for access entailed, at all levels, additional protections for this group. This was even more so in this research because the prisoners are dyslexics. These factors had extensive influence on my research design, including the approach which I adopted in conducting and facilitating the entire data collection process.

Overall, I acted ethically and ensured that my research design adhered to the ethical guidelines set by the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2004) which set out four main areas that a research study must abide by, these are: respect, competence, responsibility and integrity. These guidelines were complemented by the research ethics standards of the Institute of Education, UCL. Also, I was considerate to ethical issues associated with dual-role research, the potential conflict of interest, preserving the rights of the study participants, and assuming responsibility for the preservation of these rights with regards to the interview process.

3.7.1 Process of gaining informed consent

Consent to participate in the study was voluntary, without undue influence. In addition to gaining the informed consent of the participants, it was important that they "understood the process" (BERA, 2004, p. 6.). Cameron and Murphy (2007) noted that when conducting research involving individuals with learning disabilities, the process of informed consent can be fostered by making careful considerations about the quality of information which is presented to the participants. This should be done in light of their language skills and the support offered to them to express themselves. Accordingly, I went through the consent form with each participant; this ensured that they fully understood the information that they were receiving as well as their role in the study. Also, reading the consent form to the female prisoners was particularly important because this group was likely to be less educated than the general population: it has been reported that 71% of women in prison do not have academic qualifications (HM Government, 2005; Prison Education Trust, 2018). Hence, ensuring that the participants understood the consent requirements was particularly relevant because of the presence of dyslexia.

I prepared an information sheet which was given to the participants, ensuring that they understood it: following this, an opportunity was given for them to ask questions in order to clarify any points that they did not understand. In preparing the information sheet, I considered the reading and writing difficulties that dyslexic students generally present and ensured that information was presented in a clear and concise manner. An interview date was only set when consent had been obtained and participants had the choice of keeping a copy of the consent form.

The participants' self-determination (BPS, 2009) is fundamental to any research project and researchers should be aware of the interviewee's prerogative to withdraw at any time and inform them accordingly (BERA, 2004). Furthermore, the researcher should not make attempts to pressurise or coax participants to continue with the process whilst requests to withdraw should be acceded to without interrogation (BERA, 2004). In line with the above, I made it clear in the consent letter, also verbally, and prior to the commencement of the interview process, that participants had the right to withdraw their participation. I also reminded them of this right, several times, throughout the whole interview process.

3.7.2 Anonymity and confidentiality

In this present study, all participants have been represented by pseudonyms: their names were not recorded so that anyone accessing the results of the interviews would not be able to identify them from the results or any data held. Cohen et al. (2000) noted that anonymity implied that participants' data are not traceable to or would not expose their identity. This is in accordance with their rights to anonymity (BERA, 2004). The identity of the establishment has also been anonymised.

I abided by the terms of the Data Protection Act (1998), ensuring that confidentiality was maintained, and achieved this by ensuring that all original unedited and potentially identifiable data were stored in securely locked cabinets where access could only be gained by me. These would be kept for the university recommended time period for audit purposes and thereafter, be destroyed. Nonetheless, it was vital to inform participants that confidentiality could not be assured if during the course of the interview, any matter came to light that placed either the participant or another person at risk of harm or any illegal activity was revealed (BERA, 2004). Therefore, I

ensured that the participants knew about the boundaries of confidentiality: this was necessary because of the vulnerability of women in prison, characterised by history of physical and sexual abuse (Corston, 2011), growing up in care (MOJ, 2012b), and engaging in poor health behaviours, including drug and alcohol abuse (Balfour & Comack, 2006). When in prison, female prisoners' vulnerability is exacerbated by experiences of sleep deprivation, increased depression and greater levels of self-harm, making their imprisonment a traumatic experience (Bloom et al., 2005; Wooldredge & Steriner, 2016).

Another way in which I addressed the power difference with the participants was by acknowledging their agency as co-collaborators in the interview process. I approached each interview with sensitivity, establishing trust and rapport by showing respect to the participants and recognising each woman's unique experiences. Also, I made the intent of my study clear, sharing with them the rationale for conducting the research as well as the research questions which informed my work. I demonstrated a genuine wish to understand their views and perspectives, being non-judgemental. Overall, all the women were comfortable in sharing their stories.

Summary: Chapter Three

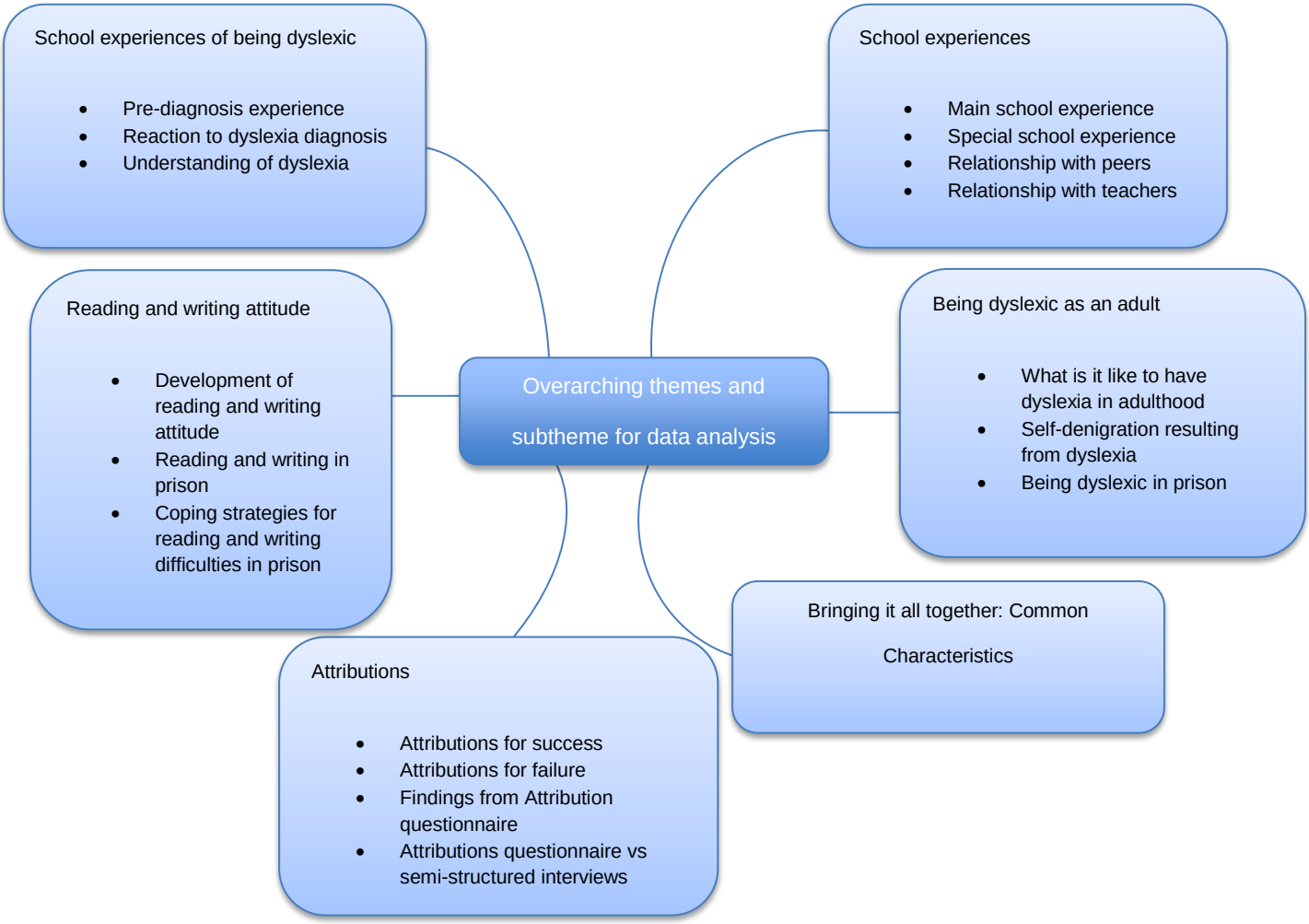
This chapter details the focus and aim of the study, outlining my qualitative methodological approaches and presenting the influences and justification for their selection. The specific approaches and techniques used are presented, providing a detailed description of the structure and process of data collection, analysis and interpretation. There is a discussion of the various stages of the research process including the selection of participants, conducting the interview, the research site, and information on the research participants. The considerations which are specific

to the research location – the prison context - are described, encompassing the application process to conduct research in the prison as well as the ethical considerations relating to the participants, including preserving their rights to provide informed consent.

Chapter Four: Data analysis and discussion

In this chapter, the research findings following the analysis of data from both the semi-structured interviews and attribution questionnaire are outlined. In order to present a narrative for these findings, quotes from participants' semi-structured interviews have been applied in explaining themes and subthemes generated from these interviews. Throughout this analysis, the findings are explored in line with research literature on this study. In analysing data from the participants' accounts of their school experiences, I hoped to gain understanding of the women's worldviews by attempting to trace connections between their early school experiences, interpretations of their reading and writing difficulties, and the meanings which they attributed to the outcomes of their performances in reading and writing. Hence, the analysis of data from some parts of the interviews was more extended than in other parts. Furthermore, the women's responses to the interview questions varied in length, being more protracted in some sections than in others: this, also, is reflected in my data analysis. Nevertheless, all the sections are equally relevant and significant, presenting different aspects of the women's life experiences according to their personal accounts.

Thematic map illustrating the overarching themes for data analysis and discussion.



4.1 School experiences

In order to provide contextual background to the difficulties which participants experienced with reading and writing, the presentation and analysis of data from the semi-structured interviews started with the exploration of their perceptions of school. Furthermore, it was the intention within this study, during fieldwork, to explore how participants explained their perceptions of school in the absence of direct questioning about their understanding of dyslexia. In this way, it was anticipated that any reference which they made to dyslexia in the first interview would have been

based on how they related it to their perceptions of school. It is assumed, within the present study, that dyslexia can begin to reveal itself in an individual at a young age. Additionally, I make the assumption that school experiences may have lasting consequences for academic and social development, as well as later lives, because they inform the understanding which individuals develop for explaining success or failure in school. Also, it is considered that educational experiences, as interpreted by participants, may contribute to the development of learning identity, as well as provide the foundation for future learning.

Furthermore, this study considers that the participants' perceptions and opinions, in relation to school experiences, are central as the basis for the formation of their reading and writing attitude. Attribution theory is used to explain how these attitudes are formed based on past reading and writing explanations for success or failure. As I have already noted, reading and writing are the foundation for all teaching and learning within an academic environment, as well as fundamental to active participation in society. Accordingly, participants' perceptions of school and their learning experiences from a young age are explored in the following section.

Table Two below provides a general overview of data from the semi-structured interviews and dyslexia screening, encapsulating each participant's descriptions of school experiences, and relationship with teachers and peers. All the women scored above 60 in the dyslexia check list test, demonstrating signs which are consistent with moderate or severe dyslexia. Most of them reported negative school experiences which encompassed poor relationships with peers as well as lack of support from the teachers. None of them obtained any qualifications at school.

Table 2: Participants' age, general overview of data from the semi-structured interviews, and participants' Dyslexia Checklist result.

Name of participant	Dyslexia Checklist result	Age	School Experience	Relationship with teachers	Relationship with peers
Tee	73	36	Negative Special school	Negative Lack of support	Judged and rejected
Star	79	40	Mixed feelings about school Special school - positive	Negative Lack of support	Did not interact
Mak	65	19	Negative Disruptive behaviour Special school	Negative, embarrassed to discuss learning difficulties	Ignored and bullied/became a bully
Cal	80	50	Negative, teased/ bullied	Negative	Ridiculed, self-conscious, felt left out
Mora	75	44	Negative Special school	Negative Lack of teacher support	Ridiculed, ignored alienated
Jay	73	28	Negative	Lack of support	Loner, bullied, alienated
Bem	80	55	Negative Special School - positive	Negative	Ridiculed, made to feel stupid
Fig	75	32	Negative, disruptive behaviour	One to one support was helpful Lack of teacher support	Negative/bullied/became a bully
Pela	75	49	Negative Special school - positive	Negative	Disguised difficulty
Cee	64	25	Negative Disengagement	Unsuitable teaching style	Avoided peers
Dew	86	34	Negative Bullied Truancy	Negative Lack of support	Negative, bullied, disruptive behaviour
Neon	73	30	Negative Bullied	Negative One to one support - unhelpful	Ignored

4.1.1 Main-stream school experience

Participants' accounts of their time in main stream school illustrated commonality in early learning identity being informed by social experiences as well as difficulties in reading and writing. Most of the women who were interviewed had negative memories of their time at school. Furthermore, in describing their negative learning

experiences, they disclosed social and emotional distress as well as a decrease in self-esteem: they linked these to their learning disability. This is consistent with literature reports that dyslexia has adverse psycho-social impact on individuals (e.g. McNulty, 2003; Humphrey & Mullins, 2002; Hellendoorn & Ruijssenaars, 2000). At the same time, a few of the participants reported positive experiences of school linked to social situations where they were not pressured by classroom reading and writing demands: this revealed the adoption of avoidance techniques in ameliorating some of the emotional and social consequences of dyslexia.

In reporting some of the negative school experiences, participants recalled memories of bullying and rejection from fellow students as a result of their dyslexia, leading to feelings of alienation and lack of safety. These exacerbated the negative emotions of their learning difficulties, making them feel worse about themselves. This finding is consistent with the literature which notes that dyslexic students frequently become the target of bullying; for example, Mishna (2003) reported experiences of being bullied in individuals with dyslexia. The women's accounts also revealed the development of low self-esteem arising from their low academic outcomes, echoing Stampoltzis and Polychronopoulou (2009), who reported that failure experiences in school led to psychological problems.

Dew (whose response is recorded below) was 34 years old at the time of the interviews. She scored 86 in the screening test (Adult checklist, Smythe & Everatt, 2001), indicating moderate or severe dyslexia, and left school without qualifications. She recounted memories of school which were dominated by the impact of bullying with a consequence of low self-esteem, isolation and withdrawing from learning: she reported absenteeism as a function of the severity of bullying. Additionally, she recalled a perception of being a failure because of her difficulties in reading, feeling

particularly threatened if required to read out loud. This led to perceptions of low self-opinion and development of learning identity as a failure: ‘my reading was bad’. She stated that she was not interested in school work, indicating a negative attitude which had caused her to avoid reading and writing tasks. Additionally, her narrative suggested the development of feelings of helplessness as a consequence of a perception of lack of control. This adds to literature reports (e.g. Butkowsky & Willows, 1980; Bar-Tal & Darom, 1979) that learned helplessness may result from attributing failure to internal factors.

Dew

Primary: I hardly went. I used to get out of school. I didn’t want to be there.

Secondary: Didn’t like school. Didn’t have friends. Was bullied quite a lot. Didn’t have anyone to hang out with. Didn’t do my homework – wasn’t interested. Go around town and stay off school. Bunked off school…

Didn’t like school. The people – girls, boys used to pick on me. Didn’t get on with the girls. They used to say that I was thick and stupid. They called me dumb because I couldn’t do the school work. I couldn’t answer the questions when the teacher asked me to. I couldn’t read out loud in the class. My reading was bad. I made a fool of myself when I tried to answer.

Neon (below) was aged 30 at the time of the interview. She left school without any qualifications, reporting an overall negative experience of school. She scored 73 in the dyslexia screening, suggesting moderate to severe dyslexia. Similar to Dew, Neon reported that other students’ behaviour provoked negative emotional experiences which triggered self-consciousness and negative self-image. She related experiences of bullying to her reading and writing difficulty, leading to experiences of negative self-perception and low self-confidence: she became

anxious when required to read out loud, believing that this would expose her inadequacies. This links with McNulty (2003) who reported that reading and writing failures eventually result in psychosocial insecurities and low self-belief. Furthermore, Neon's narrative revealed beliefs related to development of negative learning identity which followed her to adulthood and prevented her enrolment in FE basic educational courses in prison. This links with evidence that the consequences of negative school experiences, as recounted by individuals with dyslexia, may re-occur in adulthood (e.g. McNulty, 2003; Stampoltzis & Polychronopoulou, 2009), when they encounter other academic situations.

Neon became anxious and reluctant to participate in reading and writing activities in prison. It is possible that the prison environment was challenging for her self-esteem, confidence and motivation to engage in education, also being a cause for re-living negative past experiences with education. This account also supports findings which link participation in prison education to a person's experiences before imprisonment (e.g. Duguid et al., 1998). Neon's interview accounts suggested that she held negative beliefs about her reading and writing competence, ascribing her struggles in these areas to her learning difficulty: a stable and uncontrollable cause. Consequently, she developed negative reading and writing attitude: this extends literature which posited an association between perceptions of ability and attitude, noting that individuals who lack proficiency in reading, show negative reading attitude compared to more able ones (e.g. Mckenna, 1994).

In describing her school experience, Neon said:

Neon
I didn't really like it. When I moved house and in the new school I was bullied quite a lot and I had bullying to contend with as well as my learning difficulty…
Bullied... Because I struggled to read and write. Reading was worse because the teacher would ask us to read out loud. The other kids always watched: it was awkward.
Prison: I don't go to education – I tried it but it was a lot like school and brought bad memories… don't want to relive school. Can't cope with it anymore – it's scary – I don't want to keep failing.

Cal was 50 years old when I interviewed her, scoring 80 in the screening test: an indication of moderate to severe dyslexia. She did not obtain any qualifications at school. In discussing her school experiences, Cal noted that she was perceived as different by her peers who ascribed the negative label - 'thick'. This stigmatising process was maintained, exacerbating her dislike of school, with a possible consequence of feelings of inferiority and low self-belief. Her accounts echo the literature which reports that individuals with dyslexia develop emotional insecurities and self-esteem difficulties (McNulty, 2003). Furthermore, her reading and writing difficulties caused feelings of embarrassment and isolation leading to a dislike of engagement in these areas.

This finding supports the assumption that experiences of stigmatisation in school would lead to the association of educational situations with negative consequences (e.g. McNulty, 2003), and this, possibly caused anxiety and the activation of defensive strategies when she attended prison education classes. Also, Cal's narrative indicated that she attributed reading and writing failure to uncontrollable

factors, with a potential outcome of greater negative feelings towards tasks in these areas. Consequently, she had low expectations of success in reading and writing, similar to Neon and Dew, and developed a learned helplessness disposition. She stated that she did not care at all. In this way, she diminished the benefits of reading and writing skills and this may have provided some reassurance.

Cal

Junior School

It was not good because I used to get bullied by all different people. I didn't like school. Hated school and didn't understand what was being taught. I couldn't read and didn't like reading.

I didn't care at all. Didn't like it. I couldn't read or write at all. It was embarrassing when the teacher asked me to read out loud to the class. Didn't know how to read and I hated it. I used to sit there and the kids will tease me and say 'thick – she can't read'…

I hated school and didn't want to be there. I didn't enjoy anything at all in school and dreaded going in. If you can't read or write then you feel uncomfortable and nothing seems to fall in place. You feel left out.

Tee was 36 at the time of the interview, and did not obtain any qualifications at school. Her screening test score was 73, suggesting moderate to severe dyslexia. Similar to Cal, Tee's memories of school were based on a perception of being socially defined and perceived as different which resulted in stigmatisation and exclusion, leading to discomfort and a sense of not 'fitting in', as well as experiences of rejection and isolation. This is consistent with the literature (e.g. Humphrey, 2002; Glazzard, 2010) that individuals with dyslexia experience isolation. Tee's account of school revealed the unfavourable treatment from her teacher which led to negative

self-image, indicating that the social and academic experiences of dyslexia were devastating. This links with literature reports that individuals with dyslexia are viewed unfavourably by teachers (Hornstra et al., 2010). Her negative perception of school continued into adulthood where she, similar to Neon, did not enrol for educational courses in prison. Prisons form a unique learning environment, which present specific challenges, different from those in conventional educational systems; therefore, Tee's educational lack of motivation has to be considered in the context of both personal and environmental factors. This extends literature report on impediments to engagement in education, noting situational and dispositional barriers as examples (Quigley, 1997).

Also, she described low levels of motivation which could be linked to attributing the cause of her failure to ability. Consequently, she was similarly discouraged from engaging in reading and writing activities in prison, suggesting negative attitude.

Tee
Didn't like school – because I didn't feel comfortable. My head didn't fit in there. Felt like I was not wanted. Teachers just wound me up/also my sister – the way they spoke to us... The other kids laughed when they know you can't read and write.
In prison - I don't go to education. It reminds of school and I can't deal with it.

Mak (below) was 19 at the time her interview. She left school without any qualifications. Her dyslexia screening test score was 65, indicating moderate to severe dyslexia. Her account of school suggested a dislike of school resulting from comparisons which she made with her peers, whereby she felt less perfect. Similar to other participants, she recounted beliefs of lack of ability, accepting that she was not capable of 'learning', and suggesting that she was not in control of her reading

and writing problems. This attribution may have lowered her self-esteem, keeping her away from attempting to improve her reading and writing skills. Consequently, she did not adopt any problem-solving strategies, lacking motivation to engage in learning: this links to Weiner (1995), who posited that a person's attributions about the cause of a problem may play a determining role in the problem-solving process. Her experiences are echoed in the literature, positing that individuals with dyslexia may have low expectations, experience negative emotions, and demonstrate low levels of resilience when faced with challenging scholastic tasks (e.g. Palmer et. al., 1982). Furthermore, she noted negative emotions which she experienced because of the unpredictable behaviours of her peers. Additionally, holding the perception that there was nothing she could do to change the situation, suggested a state of helplessness.

Mak

I hated school because I wasn't learning as quick like the other kids. They were learning so quick and went to other classes but me, I was just sitting there and not doing much.

I didn't think I was any good with learning and scared of what other kids would do.

Although most of the participants' accounts indicated that their educational experiences, in the context of their reading and writing difficulties, were negative, a few of the participants (3 out of 12) reported memories of school enjoyment. However, this was not based on their classroom reading and writing performances but was focused on avoiding completion of tasks in this area, as they were not required to read and write. The narratives of Star, Bem and Pela represented such reasons for enjoyment of school.

In describing her memories of school, Star (below) revealed preference for certain aspects of school life, while disliking others. She was 40 years old when this interview took place. She did not gain any qualifications at school. Also, she scored 79 in the dyslexia screening test, suggesting moderate to severe dyslexia. She liked school because it enhanced her social interactions and relationships as she could spend time in the playground with her friends. On the other hand, she disliked school because of failure to meet academic requirements related to reading and writing. She reported feeling different and preferred to stay out in the play area. Her perceptions and behaviour extend the findings made by Dale and Taylor (2001) who discussed the concept of difference.

Furthermore, her account revealed that interactions with friends in the playground removed the pressures of learning demands, diminishing the effects of the negative experiences within the classroom, as well as being a coping strategy. Overall, her account (below) suggested the perception that her failures were a result of uncontrollable and stable causes, resulting in the internalising of her struggles.

Star
Enjoyment of school: I did and I didn't… I didn't like sitting in one place for too long and didn't understand things like others. Couldn't concentrate… I got into mischief and I would hang in the play area with some friends.
Did not like: Reading, and spelling. I struggled with them and it made me sick.

Bem was 55 when this interview was conducted. She left school without any qualifications and scored 80 in the dyslexia screening test: this indicated moderate to severe dyslexia. Similar to Star, Bem discussed her enjoyment of being in school; however, this was because she did not want to be at home. Unlike Star, she did not

engage socially with her peers; instead, she self-isolated in school, creating a space (playground) where she was alone, felt safe and avoided other forms of social contact within school. She maintained that staying in the playground also allowed her to avoid being in the class where her learning difficulty would be exposed. Additionally, Bem's narrative revealed the adoption of avoidance strategy: this suggested that she explained her failures in terms of stable attributions (ability), also a permanent state. Her narratives indicated the presence of negative self-perception which impeded motivation: development of psycho-social problems, arising from dyslexia, was echoed by Burden (2008), who posited that negative self-concept results in low self-belief, and reduced motivation to engage in classroom tasks.

Bem

I liked being in school because I didn't want to be at home because I could be myself and get away from things. My mum was very strict and expected a lot from me. Don't get me wrong, she was a good mum and wanted me to do well but it was too much.

At school I liked staying out in the playground on my own where no one bothered me and I didn't have to do maths, English, science.

Pela (below) was 49 years old at the time of this interview. She did not gain any qualifications at school and scored 75 in the dyslexia screening test, an indication of moderate to severe dyslexia. Pela's account (below) revealed some of the strategies which she adopted in avoiding class work. Similar to Bem, she embraced spending time in the playground, because this provided comfort, facilitating non-participation in reading and writing. Skills in reading and writing are emphasised in school, therefore, difficulties in these areas constitute major setbacks in the academic process: Pela probably believed that she was not capable of achieving skills in these areas,

ascribing her failures to a lack of ability. This links with Palmer et al. (1982) who posited that in failure situations, learning disabled individuals attributed failure to ability.

Furthermore, Pela's self-perception, as well as struggles in reading and writing, which she recounted, limited her motivation to engage in activities in these areas: she expressed a dislike for subjects necessitating skills in reading and writing. According to her, education in prison invoked the unpleasant memories of school, suggesting that her setback early in the educational process, which shaped adverse assumptions about her learning identity, re-emerged in later life. This is consistent with the literature which reports that negative school experiences could have extensive negative consequences which stretch into later life (Ingesson, 2007).

Pela

I loved the playground and the teacher didn't care about the pupils… There was a lot of reading and writing to do in school and I struggled and couldn't do as well as others. I liked dancing, didn't like history because it involved reading and writing. I struggled at school and in the 70s there was no help.

Prison: I did English in Education then I stopped because it was a bit like school.

There were participants who also compared prison education to their time at school. For example, Cee's account (below) was focused on experiences of failures at school, leading to negative emotions. These possibly resulted in associating learning situations with unpleasant consequences, encompassing emotions of frustration, anxiety and fear. Such feelings inhibited her motivation, enhancing the unwillingness to make efforts to overcome her reading and writing problems.

Cee (below) was 25 at the time of this interview, and did not have qualifications. Her dyslexia screening test was 64, indicating moderate to severe dyslexia. Her account regarding her school experience suggested that she viewed the classroom as an environment where her learning inadequacies would be exposed. Consequently, she made decisions to eschew reading and writing activities, perpetuating adoption of avoidance techniques. She also spoke about disrupted schooling because her parents 'moved a lot'; this was a factor in her inability to settle down in school. Furthermore, Cee reported that she spent time wrapped up in her own thoughts whilst teaching and learning were taking place, and living in her own world: this denoted a lack of interest. Her narratives support the findings in Polychroni et al. (2006) and Humphrey and Mullins (2002), who posited that school experiences, comprising regular failures, lead to self-doubt about one's ability to learn, and according to Burden and Burdett (2005), these result in reduced motivation and low self-esteem. Additionally, Cee possibly made uncontrollable and stable attributions for these failures, suggesting the development of learned helplessness: this is consistent with Humphrey and Mullins (2002) who reported that failure experiences may lead to learned helplessness in individuals with dyslexia.

These early experiences in mainstream school formed the basis for the current negative beliefs which she divulged about learning; and this was reflected in her decision, as an adult, not to attend education in prison. She reported being afraid that the negative experiences which she endured in school would reoccur.

Cee *I wasn't really interested in school. My parents moved about a lot and this disrupted my attendance in secondary school… Learning was really difficult. Things didn't make sense to me and I go into my own world… It didn't make sense. My head was not there.* *Regarding prison education: It brought back memories of school because others may be better than me and then not knowing what the teacher is saying or struggling with the work. Don't want to repeat looking stupid.*

4.1.1.1 Conclusion – Mainstream school experience

The above section presented data and the analysis of data on perceptions of mainstream school, revealing that participants brought with them a range of divergent perceptions about their school experiences: some of these were foundational to their current attitude towards engaging in reading and writing activities, as well as prison education. Some of the accounts suggested that past negative educational experiences led to continuation of fear towards participation in prison education, constituting a barrier to engagement. This confirms the literature which posits that negative early schooling can result in negative responses to education (Maclachlan et al., 2008): participants' accounts indicated that decisions on adult learning in prison were fostered on interpretation and re-interpretation of past experiences, present beliefs and future actions. For example, they described past negative moments in their school experience which led to a shift in how they saw themselves as learners. Their present beliefs emphasised their perceptions of being dyslexic, illustrating characteristics of complexity of emotions and personal influences which shaped their views of self as learners. These women reflected on memories of failure and generated construction of self which perpetuated these

negative beliefs of inability to achieve success in their learning: this reflection had potential to affect future actions.

While each person's account was unique, a commonality was the negative sense of self, perceptions of marginalisation resulting from lack of skills in reading and writing, and the resulting low self-esteem. These echoed Manger et al. (2016) who posited that reading and writing difficulty may have a negative impact on a prisoner's self-beliefs about ability to participate in prison education. Moreover - according to the findings – stigmatisation - which some of the women reported, could be a consequence of being labelled as deficient in reading and writing. Hence, concept of difference was promoted and became a reason for rejection and peer victimisation: this notion is supported within the perspective of the stigma theory, as noted by Goffman (1990). Also, perceptions of lack of belongingness in the learning community have been included as a dispositional factor which creates a barrier to participation in learning (e.g. Cross, 1981). Furthermore, this finding extends knowledge about how dyslexia can result in academic and social disadvantage and marginalisation, depicting a sense of exclusion from the educational system.

Reporting dyslexia as the cause of their difficulties had implications for expectations for future reading and writing activities, with consequences of low levels of persistence and beliefs about personal control. The finding is consistent with Abramson et al. (1978) who acknowledged that attributions guided future expectancies for success or failure. Also, their reflections on the causes of reading and writing success or failures connect to the work of Palmer et al. (1982) who reported that learning disabled students are more likely to attribute failure to ability. Overall, these findings revealed the foundational process of learning identity formation and its potential link to social relationships (this is discussed later).

Furthermore, the women's accounts revealed perceptions of learned helplessness, exacerbating negative self-perceptions as learners, as well as leading to reduced effort, lack of motivation and apathy in engaging in reading and writing based on the belief that behaviour did not lead to desired outcomes. Learned helplessness had been reported in individuals with dyslexia (e.g. Seligman & Maier, 1967; Gordon & Gordon, 2006; Scheleider et al., 2014).

Overall, these accounts created understanding of the contexts, experiences and relational influences, providing insight into the women's attribution for success and failure in reading and writing, as well as decisions on whether to continue in education based on identity which they had developed as readers and writers. In recounting school experiences, some participants reported attending special schools: data from their perceptions, in this context, will be presented and analysed in the next section.

4.1.2 Special school experience

Four participants attended special schools: all of them were considered to have severe literacy difficulties. These individuals mostly reported positive experiences, expressing satisfaction about their time in these educational environments. They reported that their peers in special schools had similar reading and writing difficulties, and this eliminated feelings of difference, isolation and rejection. This was echoed in Riddick (1996), who noted that dyslexic students found working with other pupils with similar difficulties, supportive. Also, Humphrey and Mullins (2002b) reported that dyslexic children who attended special units found that being with friends was a positive experience.

A central theme in their accounts of special school was a sense of belonging with the group, demonstrating the importance of an inclusive learning environment. They made comparisons between special school and mainstream school; special school was viewed favourably.

Star's preference for special school was focused on teaching methods, noting a lack of pressure in classroom instructions. This meant that her difficulties were not constantly highlighted; also, reading and writing were not the centre of her school life. She saw herself as anyone else, and experienced her peers as a source of support and consolation because they shared similar experiences of reading and writing difficulties at school. She seemed resigned to the perception that lack of skills in reading and writing was acceptable. Her account indicated the belief that her reading and writing problems were caused by a factor which she could not control and which was stable over time – ability.

Star
I like it more than normal school because the teachers were not putting us under pressure and let us mess about. We were all the same and the other children were more understanding… I did not feel shame that my reading and spelling were bad. Everyone had the same story.

Similarly, Mak's perception of her position within the class was positive; however, her account was focused on participation in learning because she could answer questions in class, indicating pride in her learning. Although she recognised that her reading and writing skills were not improved, she did not express fears and anxieties about attending a special school. This may have increased her sense of self-worth in other areas of learning, whilst her perception of her scholastic competence in

reading and writing may have decreased. Her reflections on lack of progress in reading and writing suggested that Mak believed that she lacked ability in these areas, focusing on her struggles and not linking her failures with effort. This connects with some of the arguments by Compas et al. (1981), that individuals with learning disability were likely to attribute failure to internal causes.

Mak

It was better than my other school. I felt better about myself but I can't say my reading and writing got better. I still struggled but I felt better because sometimes I could answer questions in class.

Mora (below) was 44 at the time of this interview; she did not obtain any qualifications in school. She scored 75 in the dyslexia screening test, suggesting moderate to severe dyslexia. In recounting her experience in special school, Mora highlighted a favourable classroom environment which catered for individual needs, but unlike Mak and Star, she described good relations with support staff: these provided motivation for engaging in learning. She was focused on the academic advantages of special school, noting the skills she gained, and reflecting memories of learning enjoyment. She indicated the importance of adaptive teaching instructions/style in creating a learning environment which was conducive. Her account is echoed in the literature which emphasises individual learning preferences and that students learn in different ways (Rose, 2009; Morgan & Klein, 2001).

Mora *This school was a lot better. I learned how to tell the time and multiplication table.* *It was more relaxed, more sympathetic – taught me a lot more – classroom had about 15 students – they cared about our individual needs – two more helpers/assistants who would ask – do you need any help? Once I understood what they were teaching, it was easier. There were other kids like me and it felt more normal because we were all struggling. It wasn't too bad when I didn't answer questions in class.*

4.1.2.1 Conclusion – special school experience

Participants who attended special schools reported a positive learning and social experience, and expressed being happier in special school. Their accounts revealed perceptions of being valued and the development of a sense of belonging, making reference to the smaller class sizes in a positive way and how this promoted a conducive learning environment. This links with Dale and Taylor (2001), who noted that students are likely to have a sense of belonging in learning environments where they encounter peers with similar learning problems. Additionally, these women recounted satisfaction with the teaching styles, indicating that their different needs and challenges were attended to. This finding supports the assumption that teaching strategies which are linked to a student's preferred learning style tend to be effective and can improve the learning experience for dyslexic students (Exley, 2003).

Their accounts highlighted the socio-emotional benefits of special school for individuals with dyslexia, noting that they did not feel pressured, and suggesting that they felt better about themselves: they may have felt more capable at attempting specific learning activities. Hence, it appeared that they experienced increased confidence and self-esteem because of their specific learning environment and felt

supported by teachers. This finding adds to the literature on experiences of special schools for this group: Humphrey (2002) reported that dyslexic students in special schools have higher academic self-concept compared to those in mainstream schools. Also the role of teachers as a contributing factor in facilitating a positive learning experience for individuals with dyslexia, and enhancing their self-worth has been noted in the literature (e.g. Gwernan-Jones & Burden, 2010; Kaplan & Owings, 2013).

According to the literature, there are certain disadvantages associated with attending special schools and these include: risks of labelling and stigmatisation (Peters, 2003), lack of opportunities for socialisation within a natural real-world learning environment (Mitchell, 2005) and absence of diversity and acceptance (Fisher et al., 1999). However, findings in this study demonstrate that integration within mainstream school is not for everyone and that there are individuals with dyslexia who thrive when they share the same learning environment with peers who have similar learning difficulties within a special school setting. In the next section, interview responses regarding relationship with peers in the wider school context will be analysed.

Before moving on, it should be added that in discussing the subjects of inclusion, special schools and segregation, I am mindful that questions about education for individuals with learning disabilities raise much discussed challenges and controversies. However, it is not the intention in this study to draw general conclusions about the appropriateness of special schools for students with learning disabilities, or the appropriateness of inclusion for pupils with learning disabilities in mainstream schools. Rather, drawing on the data collected here, I have wanted only

to raise questions about the most suitable learning environments for young people who share the profiles of those included in this study, including whether mainstream schooling is always in their best interests.

4.1.3 Relationship with peers

Relationship with peers was an emergent theme from the interview discussions about educational experiences, and most of the participants viewed it as a constituent component of their experiences, suggesting a link between peer groups, learning identity, attitudes and behaviours. According to the literature, positive peer relationship is linked to a range of formative outcomes, including affection, enhanced self-confidence, and improved engagement and participation in classroom tasks (Libbey, 2004). In placing emphasis on peer associations, participants in the present study indicated that these relationships became a primary source of classroom social support. Consequently, individuals who did not have positive peer relationships were less inclined to experience emotional support in dealing with their learning difficulties. This finding supports the assumption that a person's respect from, and acceptance by peers, respectively, enhances positive learning engagement (e.g. Nelson & Debacker, 2008).

The participants also revealed how experiences of negative peer relationships were often emotionally upsetting: some of them reported being lonely, not having friends and incidents of bullying. These experiences may also be associated with perceptions of their personal control over their classroom performances. For example, the women considered themselves to have little control over both their positive and negative peer relationship experiences, as well as their academic achievement. These demonstrated the emphasis which they placed on relationships

with peers as a source of social support and part of their identity formation.

Although participants reported the negative effects of peer relationships on their well-being, each account revealed the unique way in which these associations interfered with classroom participation. Overall, their descriptions suggested that peer relationships may be linked to their social skills and self-esteem, as well as establishing a sense of belonging in an academic environment. For example, Fig (below) in describing her relationship with her classmates stated:

Fig

They were laughing at me, saying, "you're an idiot", they said "don't talk to me – you're dumb." I felt horrible and it depressed me. Made me feel really dumb…taunted by the others when I didn't read properly and get the answers right.

Fig was 32 years old at the time of the interview. She scored 75 in the dyslexia screening test, which indicated moderate to severe dyslexia. She left school without any qualifications and reported a negative relationship with her peers. She explained that peers laughed at her and called her names, causing emotional and social problems. Her account revealed the development of low self-esteem, and poor self-concept emerging from the negative treatment which she received from her peers, evidencing stigma attached to lack of skills in reading and writing. These experiences may have influenced her learning identity of low intellectual ability, also fostering beliefs that abilities in reading and writing are a metric for intelligence. Fig's account is echoed by Humphrey and Mullins (2002) who posited that individuals with dyslexia may view their reading and writing problems as an indication of low intelligence.

Dew (below) reported unfavourable peer relationships, describing difficulties in developing and sustaining friendships within her peer group. However, unlike Fig, her account was focused on feelings of difference: she reported being excluded from peer groups but seemed to accept the situation, and found being on her own satisfactory. She preferred not to establish relationships. This suggested that she had some control over the state of her relationship with her peers, reporting that she was not 'bothered' and may in fact not have wanted to be part of the group. Her account suggested that she was viewed as less competent by her non-dyslexic peers: that seemed to be central in her comparisons with her peers.

Dew

They kept away from me like I was from a different planet – didn't bother me because I kept to myself. I didn't mix with them. Made my life easier… I wasn't like them… I wasn't learning and my reading was bad.

Mora gave a negative account (below) of peer relationship, which was focused on belongingness: she felt like an outsider, recounting experiences of peer rejection. She attributed these to reading difficulties as well as inability to meet the teacher's expectations. She compared her academic performance with that of her peers and considered herself different, less able and less valued, stating that she could not read like others. This finding is consistent with Glazzard (2010) who reported that comparisons with peers exacerbated perceptions of lack of intelligence. Furthermore, this could suggest negative conceptualisation of incompetence, enhancing experiences of humiliation and failure, especially when she was rebuked publicly by the teacher for inability to answer questions correctly.

Mora

Looked at me like I didn't belong. I felt I didn't belong because my reading and spelling were no good They didn't include me in the things they did and ignored me. Laughed when the teacher told me off for not getting my words right and not reading to the whole class. It was embarrassing. I couldn't read like others.

Cal (below) revealed that her classmates did not understand her reading and writing difficulties; her account was focused on the discomfort which she experienced when she believed her peers were looking at her work. She described being guarded so that others did not see her work: this suggested sensitivity to peer feedback and the expectation of negative responses from peers. Her account extends findings by Singer (2005), who posited that dyslexic students became vulnerable in situations where their reading and writing difficulties were apparent. She expressed the difficulties of lack of acceptance by her peers, including not wishing to be in that environment. She viewed her peers in terms of scholastic competence, having beliefs of being different and lacking ability.

Cal

About peers: They were not helpful and didn't understand my struggles and I felt different. I always looked over my shoulders to see who was looking at my work in case they made fun of my struggles. It was difficult and I didn't want to be there…

Some participants' accounts suggested that the absence of positive peer relationship resulted in a lack of psychological resources, facilitating the adoption of negative coping strategies. This echoed Rassart et al. (2012) who reported that peer associations have implications for how individuals saw themselves as learners, and may impact a person's development of sense of self as noted by Steinbeig and

Morris (2001). Unlike the other participants, Pela was focused on disguising her learning difficulties, as a means to circumventing unfavourable appraisal by her peers.

Pela

They didn't know I was struggling. I pretended because I didn't want the whole class to think I was dumb. I would open a page and pretend I was reading. It was only bad when the teacher asked a question and I couldn't answer… but then I would pretend that I was having a bad day.

Similar to Dew, Pela (above) evaluated her reading and writing ability in terms of how well she did, compared to others. This links with the literature which reports about the significance of making comparisons with peers and how this may facilitate the wish to fit in, enhancing the sense of belonging (e.g. Hill et al., 2007). Additionally, she reported concern about the disclosure of her reading and writing struggles, stating that her peers were not aware of her difficulties. This may be linked to stereotype threats associated with dyslexia, echoing McNulty (2003) who outlined the effects of negative perceptions and assumptions linked with dyslexia. Consequently, Pela felt the need to cover up her difficulties, modelling her classroom behaviour in order to fit in within peer group culture. Her account supports the findings which link peer relationships with identity development (e.g. Nawaz, 2011).

Furthermore, she expressed possible ridicule from her peers, arising from lack of proficiency in reading and writing, going on to adopt strategies which disguised her difficulties. This connects with the work of Riddick (2000) who posited that individuals with dyslexia often express views that disclosing their learning difficulties may cause non-dyslexic people to view them as less intelligent.

Some participants also expressed opinions of feeling judged by their peers because of their reading and writing difficulties, and reported reactionary consequences including withdrawal. According to Tee:

Tee
I didn't speak to many people. Stayed in my corner. I tried to avoid the pain of being judged and rejected. I knew I couldn't do things because I can't read and write properly.

Tee was 36 years old, when she was interviewed, scoring 73 in the dyslexia screening test: an indication of moderate or severe dyslexia. She did not gain any qualifications. In discussing her relationship with her peers, she related adopting a defensive attitude, stating that she did not speak to her peers, preferring to stay in a corner. She presumed that she would be rejected by her peers because of lack of proficiency in reading and writing: fear of being judged seemed to pose a real concern because she made decisions not to get involved. Her account indicated an acceptance that she was powerless over changing the outcomes of her reading and writing performances.

Some participants recalled risks of victimisation by peers because of their poor academic performance. In describing relationship with peers, Bem and Mak recalled:

Bem *They ridiculed me and stared at me when I couldn't answer questions in the class. They made it difficult for me to want to be in the class. They made me feel stupid especially when they saw that I wasn't able to do the work.*
Mak *I was uncomfortable in class and didn't feel accepted. They thought because I struggled with reading and writing, they were better than me... Looked down on me and didn't really care.*

Bem's account revealed that classroom interaction with peers was a basis for the assessment of her own abilities and reinforced beliefs of lack of competence leading to negative self-perception (Humphrey, 2002; Humphrey & Mullins, 2002b). She reported being ridiculed and excluded from class groups resulting in discomfort and low self-perception. Stating that she was unable to do the work and could not answer questions may suggest an external locus of control. These may also have informed attitude to activities in these areas negatively.

Similarly, Mak (above) reported encountering attitudinal barriers, whereby she was stigmatised because of her reading and writing difficulties. She compared herself to her classmates and this possibly led to negative learning identity and low self-image, echoing Hill et al. (2007), who reported that learning identity is linked to comparisons which students make with their peers. Class belongingness may impact motivation to learn, as noted by Anderman and Wolters (2006), and was possibly related to Mak's lack of confidence in interacting with her classmates.

4.1.3.1 Conclusion – Relationship with peers

As presented in the section above, participants' classroom performances, emphasising reading and writing difficulties appeared to play a major role in the nature of their relationships with peers: their narratives demonstrated the impact of peer victimisation and rejection on self-perceptions. This links with findings in other studies; for example, Ingesson (2007) and Singer (2005), who affirmed that difficulties in reading and writing impede the development of relationships in school. Also (as discussed earlier), the women in this study reported experiences of bullying because of the presence of reading and writing difficulties: these experiences appeared to have affected their academic participation and achievement, exacerbating feelings of incompetence and control over success and failure outcome situations.

Additionally, participants' narratives suggested that most of these women were familiar with evaluating their classroom performances against that of their peers, a finding also reported by Singer (2005). Perceptions of being less competent than their peers appeared to have led to causal search for perceived reasons for failures in reading and writing: this could have influenced future behaviour. As Weiner (1985, 1986) noted, perception of failure at a task may lead to a search for an explanation. In this way, it is presumable that participants' subsequent attitude towards reading and writing will be determined by the causes which they associate with their failures also echoing Weiner (1995) who posited that behaviour is guided by the process of attribution.

The participants expressed lack of understanding by their peers: the implication was the absence of reliance on peers for information and help. Beliefs about lack of peer

support were also central to some participants' ability to engage in class activities, and this possibly had indirect impact on their locus of control and sense of competency. This extends the literature which reports that peers might influence students' attitudes and views about school as well as academic success (e.g. Libbey, 2004), also being consistent with the literature which posits that peers tend to influence the classroom environment through the norms and values which they exhibit (e.g. Kinderman, 2007).

In conclusion, unfavourable interactions with peers may have contributed to low self-belief about success in reading and writing. Also there were some - e.g. Cal and Tee - who, being aware that they would be always 'judged and rejected' by their peers preferred not to engage in reading and writing activities and learning in general as the judgement would never be in their favour and finding peer rejection uncomfortable. This finding supports the assumption that peer groups may have significant effect on a person's development of sense of self (Steinbeig & Morris, 2001), also Rassart et al. (2012) noted that favourable peer relationships foster positive self-belief. On the other hand, there was Dew, who appeared in control of how she related to her peers, reporting a preference for being on her own, and not troubled by lack of peer interaction.

4.1.4 Relationship with teachers

The interviews revealed commonalities in the ways in which the participants' relationships with teachers had affected them, suggesting that teachers' attitude towards them was a significant part of their narratives about school experiences, as previous research has suggested (e.g. Morita, 2004). Developing trusting and lasting associations with teachers gives pupils a sense of security in the school

environment, as Goddard et al. (2004) noted, increasing their sense of competence, and enhancing their academic achievement. The accounts of the participants highlighted that as well as engaging in a causal search for reading and writing failures, they were also influenced by the affective prompts from teachers, which provided a basis for establishing attributions; this seemed to have informed subsequent reading and writing attitude. Therefore, an understanding of the interpretations which participants accorded teachers' expectations would provide useful insight into achievement motivation, including behaviour towards learning as suggested by Riley and Ungerleider (2012). These themes extend previous findings, for example, Schunk and Zimmerman (2006), who noted that the actions of others within an academic environment can impact a person's attribution.

Lack of teacher knowledge about and understanding of dyslexia were cited by most participants: these resulted in negative classroom teaching and learning experiences. These were captured in two women's narratives (Tee and Dew):

Tee

They didn't see that I was struggling. They thought I was lazy… they sometimes tried but not that much… they didn't care enough and weren't patient with me… always digging me and my sister up. Kept going on about how bad we were doing and us not spelling and writing good like others – comparing us to others. Made me not want to be there.

Tee (above) recounted teachers' lack of understanding of her learning difficulties, whereby they perceived her as not expending effort in her learning. Being perceived as 'lazy' by her teachers, even though she could not read and write, having been diagnosed with dyslexia, possibly resulted in withdrawal from engaging in these activities, seeing herself as unable to learn. This finding connects with Macdonald

(2012) who posited that lack of teacher support can result in isolation and marginalisation for individuals with dyslexia. Also, teachers' belief that she was lazy was probably a cause for concern because it suggested a lack of effort or not trying hard enough, putting her in an active position of not wanting to engage in learning. It has been noted in the literature that lack of support from teachers has implications for dyslexic students' self-esteem (e.g. Gibson & Kendall, 2010) having negative impact on their socio-emotional well-being (e.g. Macdonald, 2012). Nonetheless, Tee noted that some teachers made attempts to support her; however, this was insufficient. At the same time, she described teachers who neither took interest in her nor treated her with respect, and compared her to classmates, thereby linking her struggles to scholastic incompetence.

Dew

Primary – they thought I didn't want to learn… they left me to myself.

Secondary – I got some help but it wasn't enough. Maybe I should have asked for help but I was afraid that this will make the name calling worse. Couldn't concentrate; put in lots of isolation because I was messing about and didn't bother to understand what the task was.

I went to Youthwise – for people with problems understanding things… slightly different when they think they are naughty. I used to be in isolation a lot. Just because I wasn't concentrating like the rest of class - used to stand and play with my pen/pencil.

Similarly, Dew (above) recalled teachers' perception that she was unwilling to learn, suggesting beliefs that she was not expending effort in her learning, and resulting in the lack of requisite support while she was in primary school. Her narrative indicated that her teachers did not understand the struggles arising from her learning difficulty. This finding supports the assumption that teachers often doubt the commitment of

individuals with dyslexia to their learning (Butkowsky & Willows, 1980). However, she got some help in secondary school: nonetheless, she also described this as inadequate. Her feelings of incompetence and low self-confidence appeared to limit her willingness to ask for help, believing that this action may exacerbate instances of name-calling. This links with Morita (2004) who highlighted the influence of teachers in a learning environment and Humphrey (2002) who posited that the role of teachers is significant in the scholastic journey of dyslexic children.

Similar to Tee and Dew, Bem (below) recalled teachers' negative attitude including name calling; however, her account was focused on teacher violence. According to her:

Bem
They couldn't be bothered with me because they thought I was thick… Ignored me because dyslexia wasn't an issue then. Didn't mind what they thought. No – there wasn't any support at that time 70s and 80s… I wasn't interested in reading and writing and maths. I wasn't good at them and the teachers were not giving any help… She was calling me names – lazy, stupid and said I was better not coming to school because I would never learn. She slapped me first and I slapped her back.

Bem's account revealed that teachers thought that she was thick, indicating negative beliefs and labelling: this had potential to create feelings of discomfort, anxiety and frustration, resulting in low self-esteem and confidence, and leading to withdrawal from learning situations. Also being called stupid by teachers has been noted in the literature (e.g. McNulty, 2003): name-calling may have reinforced her beliefs of incompetence, accepting that she was indeed 'stupid' and 'thick'. Consequently, Bem was likely to attribute her reading and writing failures to lack of ability, which

would have impaired motivation when confronted with failure, and in turn caused sustained low performance at a decreased level. This links with McNulty (2003), who posited that failure experiences in individuals with dyslexia led to low self-esteem. Furthermore, Bem reported being unaffected by her teachers' perception, and was not interested in reading and writing: this may have been a defensive strategy to protect her self-esteem. Furthermore, it is possible that teachers' negative attitude impacted her engagement levels; this finding supports the assumption that negative teacher attitude impacts the achievement of students (Gwernan-Jones & Burden, 2010). Also, she stated that she encountered hostility and violence from a teacher: she retaliated and this resulted in exclusion. This further indicated a negative relationship with her teacher, with risk of psychological and behavioural problems: the emotional consequences of dyslexia have been noted in the literature, for example, Riddick (2010) reported that individuals with dyslexia experience high levels of stress and anxiety.

Conversely, some participants reported the positive impact of one-to-one teacher support. This connects to the study of Murray and Malmgren (2005) who posited that positive relationship with teachers can result in improved engagement and enhanced motivation in school activities. In this regard, Fig stated:

Fig
Primary: they sorted out one-to-one support.
Secondary: one-to-one support and laptop which spelt words. One-to-one brought me back to the alphabets until I understood all of that… I had one teacher who would help me more than other teachers. During detention, she would bring books – nursery books and give you lots of attention… gave us a lot of help.

She received one-to-one support in school and emphasised how the help which she received enabled mastery of the basics: letters of the alphabet. Additionally, she cited a teacher who showed interest in her by bringing in books regularly: this had a positive impact on her sense of wellbeing and coping capacities, and she felt valued. Enhanced self-worth resulting from teacher attitude has been noted in the literature (e.g. Gwernan-Jones & Burden, 2010). Fig's account also indicated that empathy from her teachers promoted a learning environment which was caring, and enabled a favourable learning experience: this was also reported in the study by Campbell et al. (2003). Resultantly, she may have been motivated to engage more in her learning with better learning outcomes, and developing perceptions of having control over her learning outcomes. Also, building a positive student-teacher relationship could have enabled the development of a positive learning identity: this is consistent with the findings by Harrell-Levy and Kerpelman (2010) who posited that role of teachers informs identity formation process of students.

On the other hand, some participants described the absence of effective support for their learning. Unlike Fig, Mak's account was focused on her lack of interest in engaging with the Additional Learning Support teacher.

Mak

I had support with the ALS teacher but I wasn't bothered. Had one-to-one teacher to learn how to read and write. Some class teachers got angry because they thought I didn't want to learn but they didn't understand how I was feeling inside. It was difficult to explain it… Not interested/didn't want the teacher to get angry if they continued to repeat their teaching.

They wanted to speak to me and tried to understand me but I couldn't speak to them because I was embarrassed and didn't want people to think I was crazy when I was explaining that words were moving about.

Mak's account disclosed the absence of effective communication with her teachers who tried to engage with her; consequently, it was challenging for them to understand her academic struggles. She also expressed concern that her teachers held beliefs that she was not interested in engaging in the learning process: this experience may have led her to adopt similar beliefs about her efforts, reinforcing self-doubt about her reading and writing ability. This is consistent with the literature findings which claim that teachers can hold negative perceptions about students with dyslexia (Riddick, 2000). Furthermore, she described feelings of discomfort in explaining the form of her learning difficulties i.e. 'words moving about', being fearful of being perceived as 'crazy'. Her account also revealed that she was not able to articulate her difficulties in a way which enabled teachers to help her. Negative experiences with teachers have been noted in the literature in individuals with dyslexia (e.g. Glazzard, 2010; Dale & Taylor, 2001).

Likewise, Neon described the negative effects of receiving additional support; however, her account was focused on a sense of difference arising from the receipt of one-to-one support. According to her:

Neon
At school, I had a special teacher who came sometimes, but it was no good to me.
I was the only one in the class with this problem and the one-to-one made me stand out which was not good for me. I felt there was something wrong with me.

For Neon, receiving extra classroom support possibly constituted disruptions to participation in class activities with peers, thereby emphasising her learning difficulties. She viewed one-to-one support for her learning as a form of threat to her self-esteem, creating feelings of difference. It was likely that the extra support

exacerbated perceptions of isolation, enhancing a sense of inability to meet reading and writing classroom requirements. Ironically, the one-to-one support became a validation that she was not good enough to be in the same class as her peers. This reinforced the social stigma linked to reading and writing problems, creating notions of 'something wrong with me', echoing Riddick (2010), who posited that difficulties linked with dyslexia, may lead to stigmatisation. Her descriptions suggest the attribution of her reading and writing struggles to ability.

Some participants discussed lack of confidence in holding discussions about their learning needs with their teachers. In describing the relationship which she had with teachers, Cal stated:

Cal

Some teachers were alright but it was me – they tried to discuss with me and then gave up and left me to just sit there. They were too many of us in the class – I mean students – and so no extra support was given to me. I struggled with my reading and writing and nobody could help me. It was difficult to say I wasn't understanding and then I would get help, that will single me out and draw more attention to me, I guess because I needed lots and lots of help. I didn't understand.

Teacher said 'can you read?' and I sat there and didn't do anything. The kids teased me 'yes, you can't read, you can't read. The teacher didn't do anything about this… They took me to another class and this was better. It was a youth club and we did no reading or writing. We did some practical things like PE.

In this account, Cal revealed unwillingness to ask for help, believing that such requests would draw attention to her reading and writing difficulties, as well as lead to ridicule. She stated that teachers made attempts to engage her, but she did not

accept offers of support; resultantly, they made limited contact with her. Rejecting support from teachers may have been a form of coping mechanism, also reported in Heiman and Kariv (2004), and Given and Court (2010), because she wished to avoid conditions in which her reading and writing problems would be revealed or situations which would exacerbate her failure experiences. For example, she described experiences of teasing from peers because of her reading and writing difficulties, noting that teachers did not intervene to stop these negative interactions. This finding links with Dale and Taylor (2001) who noted that unfavourable teacher attitude can be emulated by classmates, resulting in victimisation of dyslexic students by their peers. Cal also expressed a preference of learning environment – the youth club - suggesting increased comfort levels with peers who were experiencing similar difficulties. She explained that her preference was because the class was focused on physical exercise, suggesting positive impact on her self-esteem, and affording her some experience of success in other areas.

In recounting the impact of the attitudes and behaviours of teachers on her experiences of living dyslexia, Pela (below) stated that some of the teachers did not have knowledge of her reading and writing difficulties because her friends completed her homework. This indicated that her teachers did not observe her difficulties, and paid minimal attention to her work in class. She seemed to prefer being sent out of the class for her behaviour. According to her:

Pela

A lot of the teachers thought I could read and write but my friends did most of my homework… The teacher thought that I wasn't trying because I always tried to get out of it. Didn't bother about being sent to the naughty room. The headmaster will phone my mum and my mum will go to the school.

Pela's account indicated that she concealed her problems, this action may be as a result of the embarrassment and shame linked to reading and writing difficulties. This also suggests that she was avoiding the risk of being perceived as unintelligent or accused of being lazy. Her account is consistent with the literature which posits that individuals with dyslexia equate reading ability with intelligence (e.g. Humphrey & Mullins, 2002), being seen as 'thick' (Dale & Taylor, 2001) or perceived as lazy (Gibson & Kendall, 2010). She may have experienced low self-perception and lack of confidence which could have resulted in the adoption of avoidance strategies; for example, she reported that she frequently attempted eschewing reading and writing, relying on others to complete her work. Low self-perception was a possible consequence of beliefs about lack of control in her learning, as well as attributing her reading and writing failures to lack of ability - a stable cause.

Some participants narrated mixed assessments of teachers' support, expressing that some teachers were sensitive to their difficulties, providing requisite assistance, while others were indifferent to their learning needs. For example, Jay described activities and choices which could have impacted her decision to engage in learning:

Jay

Behaviour support – I used to get angry and frustrated and wouldn't listen… individual support teacher to help me to understand the work and help me complete the work.

The teacher didn't give me support. I used to sit down and say I wouldn't read out loud and if you didn't read out loud and you stayed quiet, then they leave you alone. Even when teachers tried to get me to read, I kept quiet so that the other kids didn't laugh at me. The teachers wanted me to read out loud when I couldn't read.

Jay was 28 years old at the time of the interviews. She scored 73 in the dyslexia screening test, an indication of moderate to severe dyslexia. Also, she left school without any qualifications. In describing her relationship with teachers, she recounted the benefits of working with a behaviour support teacher, noting that the sessions enabled engagement in class work, helping to promote a positive sense of self. This is consistent with the literature which reports that encouragement and understanding of students' learning needs by teachers enhances self-worth (Gwernan-Jones & Burden, 2010). At the same time, Jay described lack of understanding from other teachers including insensitivity by asking her to read aloud in class: this seemed to cause discomfort, anxiety and frustration, particularly when there was a possible consequence of name-calling by classmates. Her account extends the work of Dale and Taylor (2001) who posited that dyslexic students have experiences of being ridiculed by their peers. Consequently, stating that she could not read presented the risk of the development of learned helplessness arising from the experience of history of lack of success, and attributions of these failures to ability.

Cee (below) described similar experiences. However, she emphasised teachers' preferential treatments, choosing to work with more able students who did not present teaching and learning challenges. According to her:

Cee
My difficulty with reading and writing made me tired and I was always trying to hide the shame and the way I was feeling - the teacher couldn't get through to me. They didn't really care – they helped the children who were easy to work with and knew what they were doing. I think they were angry with me for not learning like others – I think I made their job difficult.

Cee's account highlighted the value which she placed on the behaviours of, and treatment from teachers. She reported that teachers preferred to work with more able children, ignoring her: she indicated that this treatment was a consequence of her learning difficulties, as they possibly believed that teaching her was more arduous or that she unwilling to work hard. This finding supports the assumption that many teachers hold the negative beliefs that individuals with learning difficulties are less intelligent and lazy; therefore, they are more challenging to engage in the learning process (Lisle & Wade, 2014). Cee attempted to disguise these feelings in order to circumvent the consequences of lack of proficiency in reading and writing, suggesting feelings of shame. This was echoed by Riddick (2000) who noted that teachers often hold negative views about individuals with dyslexia as a result of the stereotypes and stigma linked to learning disabilities. Cee also expressed that she was not learning like her classmates: perceptions of difference can result in low self-confidence.

A common theme which the participants expressed was that although their struggles were apparent, teachers failed to administer requisite support. For example, according to Star:

Star
Where they knew that I was struggling, they could have done more to help me – they waited for me to make a fool of myself before everyone…
Primary: Didn't care. Told off for doing it wrong but wasn't showed the correct way. Had paper put in front of me and asked to do it. Didn't understand what I had to because I couldn't even read it…
Secondary: Teacher was bossy – didn't make you feel confident – sometimes made you feel you weren't worthy of yourself – if you had a bad day and got things mostly wrong (which I did) you got a whip lash… I got some support in secondary school when it came out that I had dyslexia. I went to a different class and there was a teacher who worked with a group of you.

Star stated that although her reading and writing difficulties were apparent, they failed to administer requisite support, instead, allowed her to experience failure. Her experiences of reading and writing failures appeared to have resulted in negative self-belief and low self-esteem. Also, being 'told off for doing it wrong' may have caused her to feel anxious and inferior, culminating in poor academic, emotional and social outcomes. This is consistent with studies which have shown that most educators lack awareness of dyslexia (Hornstra et al., 2010) and that individuals who experience negative relationships with their teachers may develop poor psychosocial well-being and lower self-esteem (Gibson & Kendall, 2010). Furthermore, perceptions of lack of competence suggested attributions to uncontrollable, stable and internal (ability) or uncontrollable, unstable and external (task difficulty) causes

as posited by Weiner (2000). This could lead to low motivation in undertaking future tasks, and negative reading and writing attitude.

Star's descriptions of teacher support in secondary school were mixed. For example, she reported receiving support from some teachers when she was diagnosed with dyslexia: this suggested a supportive relationship, facilitating engagement in positive classroom activities, and promoting a positive sense of worth, sense of belonging and self-acceptance. The finding supports the literature which emphasises the need for early identification and explanation of learning difficulties (e.g. Dale & Taylor, 2001), including how diagnosis may facilitate requisite interventions (Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005), and leading to improved self-perception and increased self-esteem (Burden & Burdett, 2007).

4.1.4.1 Conclusion – Relationship with teachers

In the presentation and discussion of data on participants' relationship with teachers, the women's narratives indicated that relationship with teachers was a significant factor in explaining their approaches to reading and writing: this relationship extended to teaching strategies which did not suit their preferred learning styles, and exacerbated their perceptions of academic incompetence. Most of the women described negative relationships with their teachers, which had resulted in reluctance to engage in learning and possibly affecting learning attitude negatively, and extending into adulthood. This is consistent with studies which report that negative school experiences, encompassing psycho-social problems which dyslexic students encountered in school, continued into adulthood, leading to self-doubt (e.g. McNulty, 2003; Hellendoorn & Ruijssenaars, 2000). As a result, these women developed identity as failures and gained recognition as individuals who were unable to affect

their reading and writing outcomes positively: their accounts echoed studies which posit that learning identity is linked to relationship with teachers (e.g. Harrell-Levy & Kerpelman, 2010).

Furthermore, my findings illustrated that the development of learning identity informed the dominant discourses of education which categorise individuals as intelligent or unintelligent based on their reading and writing abilities. This discourse may mean that not meeting societal expectations of proficiency in reading and writing would be understood as an individual problem, and the results of my interviews suggest that most of the women developed apprehensions in reading and writing situations, suggesting negative attitude in these areas.

Additionally, participants' perceptions were embedded in descriptions which drew upon references to teaching and learning relationships, as well as the emotions surrounding them. For most participants, assumptions made by teachers about reading and writing ability, as well as intelligence, suggested that the presence of dyslexia informed a learning identity which was constructed through academic failures based on an internal, uncontrollable and stable cause – ability. According to Lisle and Wade (2014) some teachers hold the perception that learning disabled people possess a lower level of intelligence than their peers.

Some of the participants who received help from additional learning support teachers described positive experiences which were often motivating, improving self-confidence. These accounts suggest that they held perceptions of a secure environment where they felt valued and respected, enabling them to engage in learning activities. This links with Gwernan-Jones and Burden (2009), who reported that positive relationships with teachers can lead to positive learning experiences.

In summary, the participants' experiences and understandings of their educational experiences and themselves reflected perceptions that academic and social competence was a fixed feature, leading to beliefs that being dyslexic equated to a life time of struggles with reading and writing. Their accounts indicated perceptions of low intellectual ability as well as a sense of uncontrollability over outcomes. It also appeared that some of them held beliefs that there was no reason to change their behaviour because it would not amount to changes in outcome, suggesting a state of learned helplessness. Research has described learned helplessness as a situation where an individual believes that he or she cannot influence the achievement of expected outcomes (Craske, 1988), and therefore would not seek to change their behaviour.

4.2 School experience of being dyslexic

In this section, I will be presenting data about participants' experiences and perceptions in relation to what it means to be dyslexic in school; the themes which emerge are findings from my study. These are analysed in the context of learning identity construction, encompassing the participants' own self-evaluations of their pre-diagnosis experience. The words of the participants are used to illuminate their feelings and the age at which they were diagnosed as dyslexic: their reactions towards dyslexia are also described.

Table Three below provides an overview of participants' responses in the semi-structured interviews, regarding being dyslexic at school, as well as the results of the dyslexia screening and age of diagnosis. Information about dyslexia diagnosis from these interviews is also provided. All participants reported negative experiences of

dyslexia at school with most of them stating that they consistently experienced reading and writing difficulties before they received the dyslexia diagnosis.

Table 3: Age of screening/screening score/ dyslexic experiences

Name of participant	**Dyslexia Screening result**	**Age of diagnosis**	**Dyslexic experience in school**
Tee	73	8/9 35	Difficulty led to truanting. Got into fights and crime
Star	79	12	Did not learn, hence no qualifications
Mak	65	15	Frustrated. Could not learn like others. Disengaged
Cal	80	13/14	Could not read and write. Went to special class
Mora	75	11	Could not read and write. Did not fit in. Did not cope well
Jay	73	25	Struggled to read and write. One-to-one support led to alienation
Bem	80	30	Not able to learn. 'Plodded along'
Fig	75	9	Could not read and write. Was bullied, then became a bully
Pela	75	9/10	Could not do class work. Angry and frustrated
Cee	64	10	Could not read and write. Ignored everyone
Dew	86	15	Could not read and write. Bullied. Shut herself off
Neon	73	10	One-to-one support led to bullying

4.2.1 Pre-diagnosis experience

This section draws on the participants' experiences before their dyslexia diagnosis. It was important to question them about the understanding which they had of their difficulties before the dyslexia assessment, in order to determine their conceptualisation of being dyslexic both in school and prison. All the participants experienced consistent reading and writing difficulties through school and prior to diagnosis, did not understand the reasons: most stated that teachers noticed their difficulties in primary school. They discussed feeling different by drawing comparisons with their peers because their classmates had the competence to complete the class work.

In speaking about the period before her dyslexia diagnosis, Star, who was diagnosed with dyslexia at the age of 12 said:

Star *(age: 40; screening test score: 79, age of diagnosis: 12)* *Didn't know the meaning of the word in primary school until someone said it. I knew something was wrong but I thought that I just didn't understand what I was being taught. I didn't learn like others and so far behind and not to the standard everyone was at. Teachers at primary school knew there was something wrong but didn't test me.*

In the above self-evaluation, Star became aware of her learning difficulty through comparing her academic competence to her peers; this is an inevitable component of schooling experience. Being different was challenging for her, illustrating the development of low self-perception at this point in her academic life whereby she felt that everyone was better than her; this was echoed by Humphrey (2002), whose research reported that many learners with dyslexia experienced low self-esteem. Furthermore, Star's learning identity development was adversely associated to a negative sense of self which was closely linked to poor academic performance, accepting that she '*did not learn like others and was far behind'*. She felt that her learning difficulty should have been detected earlier, expressing frustration towards the teacher. This adds to the literature which posits that lack of timely diagnosis can cause individuals with dyslexia to doubt their aptitude and lose enthusiasm if they have no understanding of their learning difficulty (McNulty, 2003), and may impact self-perception, confidence and adaptation (Gibson & Kendall, 2010).

Perceptions of knowing that something was wrong and teachers noticing the learning difficulties were shared by another participant (Mak). Mak was assessed as being dyslexic at the age of 15, and sharing her reaction to dyslexia assessment, she

reported knowing that there was a problem; unlike Star, Mak detailed the form of the reading difficulty which she experienced. Her anxiety and frustration were illuminated. She stated:

Mak *(age: 19; dyslexia screening score: 65; age of diagnosis: 15)*

I knew something wasn't right. Teachers also knew I had a problem. Difficulties were there since primary school… writing was moving about along the lines and not on the same line. I couldn't break up words. I just wasn't getting it.

Another participant, Pela, (below) discussed her struggles to complete class tasks, noting a lack of academic success. She felt inadequate, resulting in a lack of self-confidence when approaching classroom tasks, particularly because her learning difficulty went undiagnosed for some time. According to Pollack (2005) individuals with dyslexia become frustrated and discouraged when they do not have an explanation for their learning difficulties. Pela reported trying as hard as she could but not succeeding, detailing the implications which this had for her academic achievement at school. This finding is consistent with Pollack (2005) who reported that failure experiences exacerbate expectations of future failures. Pela stated:

Pela (age: 49; dyslexia screening score: 75; age of diagnosis: 9/10)

When I was not learning like others and even though I was trying, I was struggling and was not able to do the work. I was tested … because at this age I still could not read and write at all. Others were reading and writing … I wasn't making progress at all.

4.2.1.1 Conclusion – Pre-diagnosis experience

Overall, participants' accounts emphasised the age of diagnosis as being a factor in early intervention and support in order to make adaptations which would build

foundational skills for reading and writing. Their emotional narratives demonstrated both commonalities and variations in their experiences and predicaments over their course of life following diagnosis. Their accounts indicated that they were formally diagnosed with dyslexia at different stages. 5 participants were diagnosed between ages 8 and 12; another 5 between ages 13 and 15, while 2 were diagnosed between ages 25 and 30. Most of them reported negative experiences following diagnosis because they did not have prior understanding of what dyslexia was, and their accounts suggested that they did not receive support or advice to enable understanding of their learning difficulty.

School days revolve around proficiency in reading and writing, resulting in perceptions that those who are unable to meet this expectation may be 'deficient'; this may have a stigmatising effect, leading to adverse emotional outcomes for individuals with dyslexia (Humphrey & Mullins, 2002b).The participants in my study were aware of their lack of proficiency in these areas, and for some of them, this feeling arose from comparisons with peers and negative sense of self within the educational environment. Some of them expressed identity perceptions of being inadequate in relation to reading and writing, as reinforced by McNulty (2003) who reported that low self-esteem can be a consequence of such perceptions, and in some instances, may become traumatic.

Their narratives revealed a significant link between dyslexia and learning identity because the school environment served as context for the development of sense of self and beliefs about academic abilities. As confirmed by the data from my research, dyslexia can result in feelings of inferiority and lack of confidence in reading and writing abilities, also reported in Hellendoorn and Ruijssenaars, (2000). Crucially,

individuals with dyslexia who experience academic failure experience poor sense of self, echoing Dale and Taylor (2001), thereby re-establishing generic feelings of intellectual inferiority that lead to acceptance of negative labels. In order to gain insight into participants' dyslexic experiences, data relating to their reaction to the dyslexia diagnosis will be examined in the next section.

4.2.2 Reaction to dyslexia diagnosis

Following a diagnosis for dyslexia, most of the participants acknowledged already being aware that 'something was wrong', and as noted above in their pre-diagnosis experiences, this derived from comparisons from peers. As a result, most of them reported that they were not surprised with their diagnosis. In some cases, testing gave a name to their struggles, proffering a reason for their reading and writing failures: this was echoed by Gibson and Kendall (2010) who reported that dyslexia diagnosis enabled understanding of the cause of a person's learning problems. Although diagnosis provided some comfort, some of them continued to question their academic abilities to varying degrees, experiencing lack of confidence, and losing motivation because of ensuing emotions of failure and confusion relating to their diagnosis.

All participants attributed their reading and writing failures to dyslexia, a stable, internal and uncontrollable factor: this attribution presented a range of psychological and behavioural outcomes as noted by Weiner (1985). Data from the study suggested that some of the women seemed to accept the view that dyslexia impeded their abilities in reading and writing. This appeared to result in acquisition of hopelessness disposition and negative self-perception, connecting with the literature which notes associations between attributional beliefs, learned helplessness and low

self-esteem (Butkowsky & Willows, 1980; Humphrey & Mullins, 2002a). The women's stories demonstrated a learning identity constructed from their negative educational experiences before diagnosis, centred on their reading and writing failures.

Cee stated:

Cee (age: 25; dyslexia screening score:64; age of diagnosis: 10)

I knew there was something wrong because others could do the work and I couldn't. I didn't know what the problem was called. When they tested me and said I have dyslexia, I felt free… I always felt a burden about the problems with reading and spelling. It weighed me down and I felt it was my fault. The dyslexia test showed that it was not my fault and I was born that way.

For Cee, who was diagnosed with dyslexia at the age of 10, diagnosis provided a sense of freedom, and she found it liberating. Although her response showed an acceptance of her learning difficulty, it did not indicate that she came to terms with the technical reality of dyslexia. She was focused on apportioning the blame for her reading and writing difficulties as this action would have provided a positive coping strategy, for example, emotional compensation. Consequently, she may not have addressed the long-term negative emotional impacts of her diagnosis, but expressed that it was a burden. Stating that she was 'born that way' indicated an attribution to ability for her failure as well as an acceptance that she lacked control over her success, echoing Humphrey and Mullins (2002a) who posited that individuals with dyslexia do not have internal locus of control because of their perceptions of inadequacies.

Likewise Dew (below) was not surprised with her diagnosis and spoke of her relief in identifying the reasons for her struggles: she was diagnosed at the age of 15. This is consistent with report findings by Riddick (1996), positing that diagnosis provided an understanding of the cause of the learning difficulty. Dew expressed a lack of control over her learning problems: this resulted in a state of apathy, whereby the diagnosis did not present opportunities for resolving or developing a solution on how to deal with the difficulties. She accepted being powerless, thereby demonstrating an external locus of control.

Dew *(age: 34; dyslexia screening score: 86; age of diagnosis: 15)*

I wasn't surprised. It answered a lot of questions for me. Like I wasn't up to everyone's standards – around reading and writing. They had high grades and mine wasn't. I wasn't imagining it. Now I know for sure that I don't have any power over my problems.

Neon's experiences of being dyslexic influenced her definition of self: she was diagnosed at the age of 10. Her narrative (below) also demonstrated a state of indifference, emphasising how struggles with reading and writing led to a loss in a sense of purpose in learning: this echoed Ingesson (2007), who reported that dyslexic students felt inferior to their non-dyslexic peers. As a result of her dyslexic experiences, she identified herself as lacking the capability to succeed in her learning, and framing her self-evaluation in the context of not being expected to succeed like 'others' in reading and writing. She reinforced a negative learning identity, accepting that she was still who she was – 'struggling with reading and writing'. Her narrative offered insight into her feelings about these experiences:

Neon *(age: 30; dyslexia screening score: 73; age of diagnosis: 10)*

I didn't know anything different, so no reaction. I was still me, struggling with reading and writing and different from others. It made no sense at the time. It's good to say I've been tested and not expected to be as good as others in reading and spelling. I don't have to hide in shame because I can't read and write but I feel angry about it.

For some participants, the diagnosis resulted in mixed emotions. For Star (below), diagnosis enabled her to be more accepting of herself and provided a good defence for lack of proficiency since reading and writing were a critical part of schooling. Conversely, comparing herself to her peers affected self-esteem negatively, particularly as her sense of failure was strong, echoing Burden (2008). Star's diagnosis promoted relief, although her account suggested diminished emotional security associated with her low intellectual ability when she adopted the mind-set that success was unachievable because of dyslexia.

Additionally, she felt that spending extra time with the teacher highlighted her low academic ability in relation to her peers, and led to contention with other students: this supported a negative identity construction whereby her weakness led to ridicule and stigmatisation.

Star *(age: 40; dyslexia screening score: 79; age of diagnosis: 12)*

I wasn't surprised because I knew I couldn't come to speed like others. Knew something was wrong. When I was told about dyslexia, I was happy because it wasn't down to me. People take the piss because you can't read or write and you are kept behind in class… if the teacher spent extra time with you because others want to move on with work. Now I have a good reason for my problems and I was happy.

When asked about her dyslexia diagnosis, Fig (below) was upset because she did not have any understanding of dyslexia: she was diagnosed at the age of 9. The acknowledgement that her reading and writing difficulties were caused by factors outside her control supported a positive sense of self because she felt vindicated. This extends findings by McNulty (2003) who reported that an absence of diagnosis can result in lack of motivation as well as self-doubt about one's intelligence because of unexplained learning difficulties. Also, her description supported the belief that she was not in control of her learning outcomes because the cause was linked to ability.

Fig *(age: 32; dyslexia screening score: 75; age of diagnosis: 9)*

I felt better because I thought I was thick but I feel better because now I know that there was something holding me back. I was upset because being so young I didn't know what dyslexia was. They explained it all to me. When they explained it well enough I felt a lot better knowing.

Conversely, for some of the participants, dyslexia diagnosis resulted in an improved self-belief and a determination to succeed in reading and writing. This reflected a construction of an improved sense of resilience. For Bem (below), discovering the reasons for her difficulties resulted in enhanced motivation. She viewed her diagnosis, which happened at the age of 30 favourably because she received support for her learning. This is consistent with literature reports that diagnosis will indicate the cause of the learning difficulty (Gibson & Kendall, 2010), as well as eliminate assumptions of laziness or lack of intelligence (Riddick, 2010). Although she accepted that dyslexia was the sole reason for her struggle, suggesting powerlessness over her learning situation, nonetheless, she expressed feelings of relief that others would also understand the cause of her difficulties:

Bem *(age: 55; dyslexia screening score: 80; age of diagnosis: 30)*

It was a good one because people know I am not stupid and people can understand why I struggle. I was able to get help especially in college.

Some accounts revealed feelings of anger with the diagnosis because of failure in reading and writing. However, in contrast to the experience of hopelessness, Cal (below) demonstrated some positive attitude and determination towards learning. She was diagnosed at the age of 13 or 14. She acknowledged and accepted her dyslexia diagnosis, recognising that although it had impacted her learning, she could make progress through perseverance and requisite support. It was also a source of empowerment, instilling some self-worth and hopefulness. Her account is consistent with Spekman et al. (1993), who noted that resilience may ameliorate the negative effects of reading disability. Nonetheless, her account revealed an awareness of her inadequacies, encompassing the inability to work to a set of academic standards in reading and writing.

Cal *(age: 50; dyslexia screening score: 80; age of diagnosis: 13/14)*

I felt lighter because I knew there was a problem anyway. I wasn't like the others. I was more upset because I couldn't read and write. I cannot spell and knowing that it was because of dyslexia which made me feel that maybe I can get better if I get help. I had hope that it wouldn't be the end of the road for me… that my reading and writing will get better.

It made me think at least they have a name for why I'm struggling in school and not like the others. It took a long time for it to sink in. I couldn't even say the word at first.

Likewise, Jay whose account revealed the view that she felt that something was wrong, also adopted defiance as a coping strategy for her experiences: she received

a diagnosis for dyslexia at the age of 25. She detailed some problems with letters, accepting that she had continued to face difficulties associated with dyslexia as an adult. However, her diagnosis facilitated resilience and the development of positive sense of self where she wished to put in more effort, supporting literature reports that determination may facilitate success in adulthood (Hellendoorn & Ruijssenaars, 2000) for individuals with dyslexia. This was her account:

Jay *(age: 28; dyslexia screening score: 73; age of diagnosis: 25)* *I already knew that there was something wrong. Giving it a name meant that people knew about it and I wasn't alone. I was reassured that it wasn't only me. I always confused 'b' and 'd'. I have 'd' in my name but still get this wrong. If I'm writing words, I have to think about 'b' and 'd'. I felt that now I know why I had those problems in school. I couldn't help that I struggle with reading and my spelling. It made me want to try harder but it's still a struggle because I have to keep telling myself to keep trying.*

Although diagnosis provided a reason for their difficulties, some participants recounted that they were given very little explanation about dyslexia and the nature of their difficulties at the time of their assessment. The test failed to answer their questions relating to feelings of being different, neither was the test revealed in a positive manner. The limited understanding of their learning difficulties seemed to have implications for their identity and self-belief in both childhood and adulthood.

Mora (below) was one of the women who stated that diagnosis did not lead to an improved understanding of dyslexia: her dyslexia assessment took place at the age of 11. Her narrative demonstrated how her experiences became solidified to learning identity. For example, stating feeling 'trapped' and 'didn't bother to ask', demonstrated an inability to adapt, as well as lack of control over her dyslexia: this

links to McNulty (2003), who argued that lack of information, following dyslexia assessment, may lead to negative psychosocial outcomes. Mora became less confident after her diagnosis, revealing feelings of failure and confusion. Diagnosis provided some understanding of why she had difficulties with certain tasks; nonetheless becoming 'confused' would have been the source of anxiety and frustration because of her struggles. This was her narrative regarding her diagnosis:

Mora (age: 44; dyslexia screening score: 75; age of diagnosis: 11)

I thought, "What do they mean"? I didn't know what they meant. Bit confused but I was like – I didn't know what it meant and didn't bother to ask – only knew I had reading and writing problems. I feel trapped because my problems have made it difficult to read and write. Yes, I can say it's all because of dyslexia and people may understand a bit but that's just it…Because I was already confused. I never heard the word and it was a strange word. In my mind I thought it meant problems with reading and writing.

Likewise, Mak (below) described her experience of struggling to understand her diagnosis, which she received at the age of 15. She provided an example of how diagnosis can lead to stress and anxiety because of a lack of understanding of the disorder and the symptoms. She expressed anger at the assessor. Her account adds to findings by Farmer et al. (2002) who noted that some students struggle to make emotional adjustment to a dyslexia diagnosis. Although she did not have a full understanding of the term 'dyslexia', ascribing a label to her difficulties was a positive experience, eliminating the perceived lack of intelligence and making the diagnosis process a vital part of identity development.

Mak (age: 19; dyslexia screening score: 65; age of diagnosis: 15)

I found it difficult because I didn't understand what she meant so she had to explain it over and over again. I felt angry because I didn't understand what she was saying. I was stressed. She showed me a video about what it's about … but words were moving about… video helped me to understand. Then I felt better because there is a reason for my difficulties not because I'm stupid.

Although Tee (below) was similarly angry with her diagnosis, her account demonstrated that unlike some participants, her consternation was as a result of her struggle to complete tasks requiring skills in writing. She was first diagnosed at the age of 8 or 9 and again when she was 35 years old. She described feelings of disappointment leading to negative reading and writing attitude, for example, disengagement and reluctance to continue in an activity which perpetuated the sense of being a failure. Her diagnosis did not lead to a resolution or formulation of a solution to her learning difficulties. Her account also revealed feelings of inadequacy as well as reluctance to disclose her learning difficulty, indicating that the dyslexia label was unhelpful as it led to fear of being ridiculed, also noted by Riddick (1996). Her response to diagnosis reflected the desire for individuals to 'fit in', fostering a negative learning identity of being a failure. Below is Tee's narrative:

Tee *(age: 36; dyslexia screening score: 73; age of diagnosis: 8/9 and 35)*

Let down – I felt like a failure – will never be of any good. It will never end and it's for life. It makes me angry when I try to write a letter and I just can't do it because I tried hard. Then I give up. I can't go about telling my mates I have dyslexia. Some of them won't know what I'm talking about.

4.2.2.1 Conclusion: Reaction to dyslexia diagnosis

The narratives analysed in the above section offered insight into the women's feelings about their dyslexia diagnosis and about themselves. For some of them, diagnosis led to the re-forming of their understanding of themselves as being dyslexic, whereby it provided new ways in which they could describe the reasons for their difficulties; for example, diagnosis provided relief for most of these individuals. However, some of them were not surprised, and expressed that they already noted a difference in their reading and writing abilities in comparison to their peers. The label provided revalidation that the reading and writing difficulties which they experienced were not their fault, as was also reported by Hellendoorn and Ruijssennaars (2000).

Diagnosis facilitated an understanding of reasons for their perceptions on the resultant stigmatising characteristic of being academic failures, thereby emphasising it as a critical part of learning identity development (e.g. Gibson & Kendall, 2010; Glazzard, 2010), and highlighting the importance of early detection. Furthermore, diagnosis led all the women to believe that dyslexia was the cause of their lifelong reading and writing difficulties. Most of them expressed helplessness towards developing reading and writing skills, suggesting that ability was a stable, internal and uncontrollable factor. However, for some of these women, diagnosis resulted in the determination to accomplish success in reading and writing.

4.2.3 Understanding of dyslexia

How the participants understood dyslexia indicated the long lasting negative effects which this had on their sense of self, demonstrating the role which the learning difficulty played in the construction of learning identity as a consequence of earlier experiences. Most of the participants noted that dyslexia created significant stress

during early educational lives, similar to the literature where negative impact of dyslexia is postulated (e.g. Riddick et al., 1999; Terry & Burns, 2001; Humphrey & Mullins, 2002B). Also, their accounts indicated that dyslexia had secondary consequences, leading to a range of negative experiences over a life course, echoing Stampoltzis and Polychronopoulou (2009) who posited that negative feelings about school experiences of failures re-emerged in adulthood when dyslexia is revealed.

Consistent with the wider literature, the evidence in this study suggested that participants' knowledge of dyslexia is mainly based on behavioural descriptors – difficulties with reading and writing as well as socioemotional problems: the participants narrated the long term impacts of dyslexia, extending into their current situations in prison. This was how Cee and Dew described dyslexia:

Cee *Not being able to read and write. People can sit down to read a book and you can't or when the teacher asks you to read something and you can't and others can. As a child, it doesn't matter much but as an adult it's upsetting… Frustration because not being able to do things you want to but you can't. For example, I'd like to sit down and write a story but I can't.*
Dew *Having difficulties with reading and writing – explaining and understanding things. Can't read and write. Trouble understanding things and putting things (completing tasks in class) properly… Something not nice to have – makes others better than you – you're never as good as the others – affects your whole life because if you're not good at reading and writing people will not respect you and you will never do well where people think you have made something of* yourself.

Cee and Dew (above) reflected on an understanding focused on the feeling of exclusion and perceptions of wanting to be like others, further describing the limiting effects of dyslexia, particularly when they compared themselves to others: this made them feel different. This finding connects with Riddick (2010) who posited that dyslexic individuals have reported perceptions of difference, including being viewed less favourably by others. Both women – Cee and Dew - felt unable to understand their literacy struggles and how to overcome them, indicating a lack of control over dyslexia which had continued into adulthood. Cee revealed negative reading and writing attitude arising from frustration at not being able to accomplish her wishes because of her learning difficulty. Dew's understanding of dyslexia shifted to description of her challenges, and both women emphasised the long-term impact of dyslexia. They indicated the stigma associated with lack of proficiency in reading and writing, making a link with McNulty (2003) who posited that stereotypes are associated with dyslexia. Overall, these accounts demonstrate that learning identities, which dyslexic individuals constructed early in life through challenging schooling experiences, often followed them into adulthood.

Similarly, Mora and Mak expressed experiences of struggles with reading and writing, emphasising the length of time and extra effort they had to put into reading. Mak presented an interesting contrast to other participants' descriptions of their dyslexia: her description focused on her deficits, and she made a direct reference to her symptoms. For example, although she made active decisions to read, she faced the challenge of words moving about, resulting in anger and frustration because she was not getting anywhere with her reading. Her understanding of dyslexia indicated resultant negative reading and writing attitude, perpetuating her historic struggle through school, and into adulthood.

Mak

Words moving about whenever I read and write – this gets me angry. Reading is worse if on white paper; words move about and this gets me angry so much. But when it's coloured paper like yellow, it helps me and red is alright. Pink doesn't help that much. Struggling with how to stop the words from moving. For writing - white paper doesn't bother me. Sometimes that makes me not want to read or write because it makes them hard to do…

Just like a machine- it moves paper about everywhere and I can't control it. Machine with lots of words moving about everywhere. It's as if someone is playing a prank on you and mixing up the words.

Mora (below), on the other hand, focused on the concept of difference, and she provided an example of how the early negative dyslexic experiences raised the question of how these individuals navigate current situations requiring reading and writing skills. Her accounts also showed that previously held beliefs about reading and writing continued through her life, highlighting association between the development of negative reading and writing attitude, and early learning identity. She emphasised the feeling of hopelessness and apathy centred on her reading and writing difficulties, as well as perception of not being like 'normal people'.

Mora

Not being able to read and write like 'normal people'.

Quite annoying – I read but I don't understand what it means and when I write it's different from what I'm thinking in my head… It becomes a day to day challenge and if I sound something out it wouldn't sound like it's pronounced. If I can't read a word, I have to ask someone or skip the word. That means that reading doesn't make sense. It's very challenging, confusing words and it makes understanding the book difficult and I can't sound the words – it's quite annoying…

Difficulties in reading and writing and not knowing from your left to right. It stops you from reading and writing like 'normal' people. I'm thinking I'm not normal because I'm not like others. It doesn't bother me so much now but it makes me feel I can't be like others but I just get on.

Neon's understanding of dyslexia (below) centred on frustration as a main source of stress and anxiety because of lack of control over a condition which she could not change: this suggested attribution to ability for her failures. Unlike other participants, she expressed an understanding that dyslexia made her imperfect - a stigmatising trait - demonstrating a mind-set which facilitates learning identity formed on negative academic experiences. Similar to some of the participants, she expressed fear of rejection arising from lack of acceptance by others: Neon talked explicitly about wanting to be accepted in spite of her learning difficulties. Unlike other participants, she acknowledged the need for adjustment in order to build resilience: this indicated understanding that success can be attributed to effort: a controllable, unstable and internal factor.

Neon *Frustrating complicated disorder/learning difficulty to have. It can make you feel that there is something wrong with you but it's that you're late in life with learning. I felt that there was definitely something wrong and that I wasn't going to be accepted for who I was. This made life scary for me. You want people to accept you after-all it is not my fault – I was born that way…* *Brick wall – that's got tears, cracks – you can go through it but getting through it is really hard. You have to be strong to do well.*

4.2.3.1 Conclusion: Understanding of dyslexia

In the above section, data on participants' understanding of dyslexia was analysed: the women provided a range of explanations for what it was like to have dyslexia, they all understood it as impacting their reading and writing attitude. Their accounts demonstrated links between the construction of learning identity and school experiences, influencing current decisions about engaging in reading and writing activities. The narratives also highlighted that one of the main ways in which early academic experiences impacted sense of self was through characteristics which are perceived as valuable in schools and communities. This links with McEwen (2003) who argued that a person's sense of self and perspectives in relation to normative constructs are informed through relations within social contexts which uphold those dominant values and practices. In the next section, the women's accounts and analysis of data on being dyslexic in adulthood are presented, encompassing their time in prison.

4.3 Being dyslexic as an adult

In this section, the descriptions which participants give to being dyslexic in adulthood are presented. It is recognised in the literature that dyslexia has a lifelong impact. The participants' accounts of how their dyslexic experiences have been assimilated through their lives, including in prison are discussed. The aim is to provide insight into how the learning identity which was developed in school may link to their approaches and reaction to reading and writing demands in prison.

4.3.1 What is it like to have dyslexia in adulthood?

The participants gave varying descriptions of what it was like to have dyslexia both in early life and in prison. In recounting their experiences, they provided insights into how perceptions of success or failure in reading and writing were associated to their current attitude to activities requiring skills in these areas, linking this to their identities as readers and writers.

A common feature, in spite of the diversity in experiences, was a very fragile or negative sense of themselves as individuals with dyslexia: all of the women's lives in adulthood were characterised by individualised struggles to integrate the emotional experiences related to their histories of reading and writing difficulties. Another commonality amongst them were perceptions of a sense of self which were framed around the history of reading and writing failures and struggles, as well as direct experiences of sadness, stress and hopelessness. The narratives which the participants shared indicated negative reading and writing attitude, manifesting the development of learned helplessness.

An example of this phenomenon was reflected in Dew's narrative (below), and her experience was focused on feelings of loneliness. She reported perceptions of being positioned as a failure by being judged on the basis of being dyslexic, and devalued because of reading and writing problems. This possibly led to expectation of failure in future performances, as she began to question her ability to ever do well in reading and writing, stating: "*I can't do things like reading and writing properly*". Her perception of failure in reading and writing, led to the belief that development of skills in these areas was out of her control, suggesting an external locus of control: this links with Humphrey and Mullins (2002a) who posited that students with dyslexia exhibit external locus of control.

Additionally, she described being a 'nobody', demonstrating a personalisation of failure, indicating the construction of a negative identity. Her self-representation showed that she recognised the societal value of reading and writing, but did not feel confident about improving her skills in these.

Dew
It's not nice, sad, odd one out because I can't do things like reading and writing letters properly. Lonely. Worried that I may not be able to read and write properly. Not confident and thinking everyone is better than me – I'm nobody. People look down on you when you can't read and write.

Meanwhile, Tee (below) described how the inability to meet classroom academic demands relating to reading and writing led to feelings of frustration, anger and social isolation. Her perceived lack of control over her repeated failure in these areas became a static condition which led to feelings of helplessness in attempting reading and writing tasks, as well as the belief that '*I can't do it*'. Her account confirmed the

view that no matter what she did, failure was inevitable: this demonstrated the belief that her actions could not affect outcome, which could lead to apathy. The result supports the assumption that individuals with specific learning disabilities consistently displayed characteristics of learned helplessness (Dweck & Peppucci, 1973). Also, her descriptions suggested that her failure experiences, as with most of the other participants, led to the development of negative reading and writing attitude.

Tee

Makes me angry – because I can't do what I want to – I can't read, write and spell. You feel that you're the dumbest in the class and everyone is better than you. Everyone treats you like you're stupid: the teachers, and other kids in school. You feel out of place in a class where others can read and write. Even now you have to not show your struggles because the other women will look down on you.

On the other hand, Mak (below) described disengagement from reading and writing when she encountered difficulties, although she recognised the value of having skills in these areas, particularly for the purpose of gaining employment. She explained that being dyslexic limited her job choices. Nonetheless, her perception indicated a lack of control over her achievement outcomes in reading and writing which became a fixed state and she felt that there was 'no way out': similar to Dew and Tee, her account indicated learned helplessness disposition, a finding similar to Gordon and Gordon (2006), who posited that students with learning disabilities were more likely to develop learned helplessness because of perceptions of lack of control over a situation. Mak's experiences of failure reinforced the belief that success was unattainable, suggesting that she attributed her lack of success to factors beyond her

control, hereby exhibiting external locus of control. In this way, her reading and writing failures led to expectations of unfavourable outcomes, having the potential to foster the formation of negative reading and writing attitude.

Mak

Annoying-uncomfortable. Gets you angry with papers and books. It makes you not want to work – is depressing. My eyes hurt and I don't want to get angry so I stop paper work or reading. I don't mind doing a cleaning job because dyslexia doesn't affect it. It limits your job choices and there's no way out.

Unlike Mak and Cee, Cal (below) emphasised the self-perception of being ineffectual and inept in her spelling which in turn impacted her writing negatively. Similar to some of the participants, she expressed feeling inferior to other prison inmates. She attributed her failures in reading and writing to lack of ability. This finding links with Humphrey and Mullins (2002a) who found that individuals with dyslexia believed that success outcomes were beyond their control. In sharing her history of struggle, she gave descriptions which suggested a learned helplessness disposition.

Cal

It's not good. You always feel that there's something wrong with you. I can't pick up a book and read. It limits my writing because I only use the same words – words I can spell and there is not much. The rest, I just spell the way they sound. I know they're not right but I just hope whoever reads it understands. You feel less than other people even in prison.

Conversely, Bem (below) related dyslexia to how her brain worked, indicating a difference and an internalisation of being '*inadequate*' because '*dyslexia will always knock me down'*. She portrayed herself as being less perfect than others. This

description suggested that she exhibited an external locus of control, accepting that events relating to her reading and writing were controlled by external factors which she could not change – ability level and task difficulty, echoing Humphrey and Mullins (2002a). Similar to other participants, her narrative further reflected the construction of negative identity which defined her failures and struggles with reading and writing spanning through a lifetime. This acceptance revealed a state of learned helplessness: 'I feel I can't get it right', believing that her responses would be unrelated to resulting outcome. In discussing what it was like to have dyslexia, Bem stated:

Bem
Without telling people – embarrassment in class; feeling inadequate - if a teacher is telling me something and I always struggle – I ask the teacher to repeat themselves. The way my brain works is different and can't get my spelling right or remember how to spell words. I've lived with this all my life and believe that dyslexia will always knock me down; I feel that I can't get it right - reading and writing like I should.

Some of the women reported being humiliated and feeling ashamed because of the nature of difficulties which they were struggling with and this fed into fears of inadequacy as parents. According to Cee (below), dyslexia had continued to cause her severe distress into adulthood. For example, she described experiencing a sense of guilt because of her inability to help her children, having the belief that this will become worse when her children get older. Her account revealed the view that she would be failing her children, thereby exacerbating the sense of being a failure, firstly as a dyslexic student and secondly as a parent.

Cee

Depressing, upsetting – it's okay now that my children are young but when they get older, and I can't help them, it'll upset me or knowing that they can read better than me when I was younger. You feel judged because you're not able to read like others.

Although all the participants had mainly negative perceptions about being dyslexic, two of them - Neon and Star - (below) came to terms with their condition and challenged some of the negative academic discourses which have regulated their reading and writing expectations and actions. They expressed hope that requisite support will ameliorate the effects of their reading and writing difficulties, indicating that in spite of the presence of dyslexia, they had constructed understanding from their discourses, placing value on these skills.

Although Neon's accounts suggested low self-esteem, recognising that dyslexia is a lifelong condition, she expressed hope that support could provide a way out. Nonetheless, her experience of repeated failure was reflected in the formation of her perceptions of ability.

Neon

It's very stressful and always at the back of your mind even when you're not thinking about it. Quite upsetting on some days. Pressure on everyday life and will never go away when I can't do everyday stuff like read books. I want to read or spell words. I always asked, 'is there a cure?' and told 'no' and this means that there's no hope. It's not great and can't be cured. With support, life can be better.

Conversely, Star highlighted initial negative experiences of her learning difficulty which had adverse consequences for her reading and writing in adult life. Her

account revealed perceptions of low self-worth, shame and lesser value, reflecting an internalisation of a sense of powerlessness and negative self-perception. Although her experiences of frustration, stress and anxiety persisted, she, similar to Neon, emphasised the importance of support, stating that this would enable improvements in her reading and writing skills. She demonstrated resilience in addressing her learning difficulties, recognising conditions which would foster engagement in reading and writing.

Star
Frustrating because you can't do the things everyone else does. I know that once I get help and better understanding I can do better and get more confidence. Break out in sweats when I have to write a letter or complete an app. Feeling shame when others are showing off about their certificates. Can't work with noise – agitating, annoying. I work better on my own.

4.3.1.1 Conclusion: What is it like to have dyslexia in adulthood?

In conclusion, participants' accounts of what it is like to have dyslexia in adulthood have emphasised the implied societal expectation that all people should be able to read and write, forming the basis of the narratives on their experiences of dyslexia. Their accounts revealed that repeated failure reflected on their perceptions of ability in these areas, and having the potential to lead to negative reading and writing attitude. This finding extends knowledge on how early reading experiences can inform subsequent attitude and success in reading, suggesting that experiences of initial failure could lead to negative reading and writing attitude based on the belief that efforts could not yield desired outcomes when the cause of failure is a learning difficulty. The women's reflections on failure and perceptions of ability connect to the work of Polychroni et al. (2006) who reported that dyslexic individuals have

unfavourable attitude towards reading because of perceptions of lack of proficiency and experiences of failure.

Participants' reading and writing attitude was linked to their attributions for their failures, expressing that dyslexia was the cause of their lack of proficiency. In this way, their experiences of prolonged failures in reading and writing led to the devaluation of their own abilities, leading them to doubt that they could do anything to overcome the difficulties, and reinforcing feelings of being helpless; as Dickhauser et al. (2011) noted, learned helplessness is characterised by apathy in academic work which individuals view as challenging.

Also, most of the participants revealed that control for the outcome of events was beyond their power, demonstrating an external locus of control, and indicating low personal agency. Following from their beliefs on what it is like to have dyslexia, it was important to gain understanding of how they explained their current situation as individuals with dyslexia in a prison environment. How they used language to describe being dyslexic is presented and discussed in the next section.

4.3.2 Self-denigration resulting from dyslexia

In this section, my analysis will be focused on how participants used language to represent a way of reflecting on their learning difficulties and the emphasis was particularly on their use of self-denigrating descriptors, creating their own discourse of the characteristics of dyslexia. They all developed the negative notion of self from being diagnosed with dyslexia, acknowledging the normative constituents of competency in reading and writing: this finding supports the assumption that individuals with dyslexia are inclined to link reading and writing skills to ability, and

this can lead to perception of lack of intelligence (McNulty, 2003). Consequently, there was commonality in the incorporation of their learning disability into self-identification and self-ascribed definitions as: ‘dumb’, ‘stupid’, ‘my dyslexia’ etc. Some examples of how some of the participants described themselves as individuals with dyslexia are presented below:

Cee
Dumb – can’t read and write, spell. Very clever because I know how to survive but with my reading and writing – they are crap. I just don’t get it - I must be dumb… Stupid, up to no good. My mind was blank and I thought I have to be funny otherwise no one would want to be around someone like me.

Cee’s narrative (above) demonstrated that she was simultaneously self-critical about her reading and writing, as well as confident in her ability to adopt survival strategies as a way of protecting herself from ridicule in a classroom setting. Although she felt inadequate in reading and writing, she experienced fulfilment in performing the salient function of making others laugh. In this way, any emotional distress which she experienced as a result of being at academic variance with others would be ameliorated by positive emotions resulting from pride in other social behaviours. Her learning identity dissuaded her from believing that she could succeed in reading and writing, using ascriptions such as ‘I must be dumb’ and ‘I just don’t get it’, instead, she shifted her focus to investing in social relationships.

Dew (below) also provided examples of the negative terminology which individuals with dyslexia may use to describe themselves. However, she described her learning identity as being a ‘slow learner’: she self-consciously noted that she was not as ‘intelligent as others’. Her emotions were reflected in her explanation of the effect of

time limits on cognitive processing, especially the difficulties which she encountered when completing reading and writing tasks.

Dew

Slow learner – find it hard to understand instructions, questions. I have to ask several times for explanation especially when learning something new. Reading and writing are hard. Even familiar topics are difficult. My dyslexia slows me down and I'm not intelligent like others.

For Tee (below), identifying that she was being looked down upon presented a threat to her learning identity, challenging her perceptions of self-worth. The comparisons which she made weakened a positive sense of self in an academic environment. Her account revealed that she was stigmatised by others because of her reading and writing difficulties, leading to an acceptance of the negative academic normative beliefs and a devalued concept of self. This narrative suggests that individuals with dyslexia may internalise their difficulties as reflecting low ability, attributing their reading and writing failures to dyslexia: this echoed Humphrey and Mullins (2002) who noted that experiences of failure may lead to judgements about literacy skills.

Tee

People kept looking down on me because I was dumb … it was embarrassing when we were not doing well like others. I must be dumb because I can't read and write

Furthermore, there were participants who struggled to maintain a sense of control; their self-denigration led to an erosion of self-confidence and created emotions of insecurity in completing reading and writing tasks. Accordingly, negative learning identity, constructed within the premise of cognitive problems, may have acted as a self-fulfilling prophecy and played a vital role in determining whether their process of

learning would be a success or failure. Star and Neon's accounts are presented below:

Star *I wish I could do more and be able to know more and how to do it. But my brain can't take it and I don't like the feeling – disappointed, thinking I'm dumb.*
Neon *Not confident. Had learning issues, learning difficulty, dyslexia, not able to learn like others, felt like the odd one out…Felt like an idiot…Felt stupid, frustrated and angry.*

Unlike Star and Neon, Cal (below), reported that she did not connect with other academic subjects, leading to isolation in order to avoid embarrassment. The experience was negative and exacerbated feelings of failure in her education, resulting in self-doubt. This is consistent with the literature which highlights that adolescents with dyslexia experience hopelessness, low academic self-efficacy, becoming demotivated, and these culminate in fear of maintaining a cycle of failure, also discussed in (McNulty, 2003; Hellendoorn & Ruijssenaars, 2000). Additionally, she encountered difficulties when other areas of her academic work required reading and writing skills, this generated negative self-perception. She talked about lack of agency in making improvements to her learning, suggesting the development of learned helplessness disposition.

Cal

Unhappy, wanted to make myself better but didn't know how. Dyslexia made me feel stupid and I kept away to avoid embarrassing myself… Didn't understand geography or history – didn't read or write and didn't understand anything because of that. May be thick? Didn't know how to help myself. Was thick in the head. I hated science, history, geography, maths, English - when you cannot read and write or spell you become bad in other subjects.

Similar to Cal's narrative, Bem (below) stated that she struggled in reading and writing; however, her narrative was focused on a sense of self-awareness, sensitivity and concern about how others perceived her struggles. She was frustrated, recounting that others perceived her as 'stupid': this fostered a negative sense of self. Furthermore, she exhibited feelings relating to shame of failure as well as her inadequacy; for example, reading aloud in class put her in position of further humiliation. She also expressed anger that her dyslexia was not identified earlier, regretting that she did not receive requisite support. Like some of the participants, she experienced low self-perception and self-confidence when she compared her performance to her classmates': this was revealed in the narratives which I presented earlier on participants' relationships with teachers and peers.

Bem

Maths and English – I couldn't understand what they were trying to tell me. I think I was stupid and the teachers and other children thought I was stupid. If dyslexia was found, I know I would have been a successful person. Other girls read out loud and I didn't enjoy reading out loud. I mumbled a lot, always felt stupid… and think about how stupid I am and why I can't do the work, 'self-pity'. When I don't understand I feel embarrassed… I was shy to speak in class unless I was spoken to… I was afraid to look stupid because everyone thought I was stupid and this will confirm what they're thinking.

Jay shared a similar experience; however, she described her experience in terms of emotions which she associated with difficulties in completing reading and writing tasks, for example: ‘embarrassed’, ‘angry’ and ‘start to cry’. She also used descriptors centred around negative self-esteem, for example: ‘I can’t do it’ and ‘I hit a brick wall’; these may have led to hopelessness and helplessness, indicating a negative learning identity – ‘I’m not good’, Jay recounted:

Jay

I think I’m thick and stupid. I’m hard on myself. I give up and get angry, start to cry and believe I can’t do it and that I have hit a brick wall. I need to learn to take baby steps…I’m not good. Especially if I think I know the answer and I get it wrong, I get embarrassed and feel stupid.

On the other hand, two of the participants described their willingness to engage in learning. However, they accepted that the development of skills in reading and writing was challenging, whereby their learning disability became a self-fulfilling prophesy of failure, reinforcing the perception that they did not have control over dyslexia. An example of these descriptions is presented below:

Mora

Inquisitive – I love to learn but my struggles to read and spell always put me off. Funny, bubbly and I’m not shy of making a fool of myself – it makes it better because I can disguise how I really feel. Like being the class clown and making everyone laugh.

For Mora (above), being the class clown was a good defence mechanism, being linked to an identity construction developed on the awareness that even though she ‘loved to learn’, she could not read and write as well as her classmates. Her narrative suggested that making others laugh was a strategy which enabled her to avoid

classwork and gain approval from her classmates to support this avoidance. This participant's feelings about reading and writing determined the focus of her attention, for example making people laugh may have served utility in distracting other students from the embarrassment of her academic difficulties. It was also a reinforcement of 'dumb' status so she owned it and perhaps got some recognition from her classmates in the absence of academic success, enabling her to disguise her true feelings. This indicated a re-evaluation of a sense of self as not being able to read and write – a negative learning identity - which was reinforced by her history of failure.

In contrast, Pela (below) reported a different disposition, revealing a desire to succeed in her learning but acknowledging that dyslexia was a barrier to the achievement of success. Her comments were indicative of a change in self-belief by stating that she was a 'trier'. Her attitude to reading and writing was positive but when she struggled, her confidence was reduced and her attitude became negative whereby she would give up, an indication of the emotional problems arising from dyslexia. This was reiterated by McNulty (2003), who posited that poor self-concept had an adverse impact on ability and motivation: for example, Pela's account revealed perceptions that experiences of failure led to negative reading and writing attitude.

Pela

I wanted to learn but something was stopping me and it's only now that I know that dyslexia can stop someone from learning but that I could have had help. I'm a trier but when it continues to be difficult, I give up.

4.3.2.1 Conclusion: Self-denigration resulting from dyslexia

Overall, participants' accounts indicated that experiences of reading and writing difficulties influenced the definitions which they ascribed to themselves, using negative terminologies in self-descriptions. This extends literature reports that individuals with dyslexia feel 'lazy, stupid or thick' (McNulty, 2003; Humphrey & Mullins, 2002b) as most of the participants in this study did, and their sustained experiences of failure led to a belief that they were not intelligent.

In describing their dyslexic experiences, participants revealed the process through which they constructed their learning identity, typified in the use of negative self-descriptive terminologies. All the women in this study perceived their reading and writing failures as stable, indicating a belief that the same outcome would be achieved in future endeavours. Their accounts suggested a learned helplessness disposition, including the acceptance that they could not control the failure factors – an external locus of control.

Some participants disclosed the inability to maintain a self-image of a competent person because of lack of proficiency in reading and writing, a factor which decreased self-esteem. This is a finding which links with literature on the emotional effects of dyslexia, for example feelings of inferiority (McNulty, 2003), unintelligence (Humphrey & Mullins, 2002), and lower academic self-esteem (Ingesson, 2007), limiting their confidence to succeed, and exacerbating failure and motivation to engage in classwork (Burden, 2008).

The participants engaged in self-examination, involving self-criticism which led to self-denigration, and a possible loss of self-respect as learners. In their discussions, some of the women referenced issues of learning in relation to the normative value

which is placed on abilities in reading and writing, establishing learning identity position as a poor reader. Consequently, self-denigration starting in school reinforced the lifelong concept of self as a failing person, being detrimental to the construction of a learning identity as a successful individual.

My findings illustrate that with a history of failure in reading and writing as well as perceptions of dyslexia, many of the women had emotional 'baggage' (Pollack, 2005), which played out negatively in their reading and writing attitude. The participants' accounts demonstrated that challenges when engaging in reading and writing tasks and their self-perception, especially in relation to their self-esteem was a critical issue: most of them noted that dyslexia will always be part of them.

Overall, all participants discussed the implications of dyslexia for their learning at school and held perceptions of dyslexia as being part of their identity as adults, framed within early learning experiences linking to Pollack (2005). There were expressions of anger and frustration towards teachers, peers and schools for different reasons, for example, lateness in testing, being ridiculed and lack of support. Additionally, their accounts reflected the feelings and behaviours which contributed to self-doubt and lack of confidence, resulting from an established pattern of failure as well as an inability to identify areas of personal strength. Some of them expressed the desire to fit in.

4.3.3 Being dyslexic in prison

The prison environment imposed limitations on the extent to which individuals could reveal or conceal their reading and writing difficulties; for example, the women in this study described feelings of anxiety over disclosing their learning difficulties. This

finding is consistent with the literature which reports that memories of behavioural and emotional difficulties associated with dyslexia can have extensive consequences in adulthood (e.g. Ingesson, 2007; Riddick, 2010), including the stress caused by hiding associated problems in reading and writing. For example, most of the women expressed the belief that disclosure would lead to ridicule and embarrassment: some of them encountered issues of isolation in prison where it became significantly important for them to hide their reading and writing difficulties from other prisoners.

Additionally, participants' narratives provided details which demonstrated that learning identity which they developed early in life through negative school experiences became evident in their lives as adults in prison. For example, taking up identity as being different from others was further manifested in their use of comparative terms to describe understanding of self in relation to dyslexia. This exacerbated feelings of discomfort in revealing their learning difficulties. Mak and Bem provided examples of these findings:

Mak (below) commented on the apprehension which she had about disclosing dyslexia to other women in prison, fearing that disclosure would result in a negative response with the possibility of stigmatisation. Her decision over disclosure seemed to protect her self-perception and self-esteem: this has been discussed in the literature (e.g. Hogg & Vaughan, 2002) hence she avoided situations which threatened her self-image. Accordingly, she was selective about what she disclosed and to whom about her dyslexia, believing that her learning disability may incur labelling from the other inmates. This adds to the literature which notes that disclosing dyslexia will result in being thought less of by others (Riddick, 2010). Therefore, having control over disclosure of her difficulties was important to her.

Mak

I don't go to them. I only tell people I trust and you don't know who will talk behind your back. They will call me names and embarrass me … I can't tell them that I can't read and write.

Similarly, Bem emphasised perceptions of stigma associated with disclosure and her account revealed emotional insecurity which could be associated with lifelong struggles with negative self-perception and low self-confidence. She expressed fear because she may be judged to be 'dumb' and unable to read and write, as a consequence of the stigma attached to dyslexia.

Bem

I don't tell them I have issues with learning... they will start saying she's dumb and cannot read and write. It's scary, not something I will ever do. Everyone will begin to talk about it.

In relation to disclosing their learning difficulty in prison, some of the women linked it to survival, where such revelation would make them vulnerable or lead to being treated less favourably. This perpetuated the feeling of 'not fitting in', disrupting the sense of self by presenting barriers which strengthened normative predilections and fostered acceptance of 'other'. Also, some participants believed that disclosure of their reading and writing difficulties would lead to bullying. Neon (below), associated disclosure of dyslexia with the risk of harassment, victimisation and social exclusion.

Neon

About telling others: No. That way no one can make your life harder and think you are also dumb. If they see me as stupid they may tease and bully me – just like school days. You have to seem able and not stupid so they don't ridicule you.

Similarly, Pela (below) felt that disclosure would make her a target for coercion and some of the inmates may hold power over her, exchanging any reading and writing support with products from her weekly shopping.

Pela
No – because I don't ask them for help. Too embarrassing – they may see me as stupid and take advantage... Some may want to bully you and start taking things from you - your canteen.

Unlike other participants, Jay (below) discussed her coping strategy for dealing with matters of disclosure, preferring to disguise those in different forms. Her fear of ridicule and shame imposed the use of strategies of avoidance: '*you have to go with the flow and pretend you're fine'.* Her account revealed the perception that disclosure can lead to devaluation, and be interpreted as a sign of weakness which can result in bullying and being taken advantage of. It also demonstrated the risks of social interactions, for example - isolation - because of dyslexia. She disclosed internalised feelings of insecurity and doubt about being dyslexic, suggesting concerns about belongingness which may be related to early learning identity.

Jay
I don't discuss my problems, only talk to friends. You can't discuss issues like that with other women … You have to go with the flow and pretend you're fine otherwise they will want to show they are better and bully you… Yes, they will tell other girls and there will be a gang-up.

Unlike most of the other participants, Star (below) discussed the feeling of difference in the context of interactions which she had with others. By employing a neutralised

notion of difference she displayed a sense of self which emphasised sameness with peers. Identifying with other prisoners provided a lens through which she perceived and understood her reading and writing difficulties. She came to understand herself, not just as an individual but as a part of a larger collective - “we” - being in the same boat. This possibly enhanced her self-esteem, providing a sense of belonging as well as a sense of purpose. Additionally, Star’s self-efficacy may have been determined by seeing others whom she identified with, causing her to feel good about herself; hence she did not see the utility in disclosing her dyslexia to the other inmates who compared favourably with her.

Star
We were the same and they could not help me. We were in the same boat and this made me feel I’m not the only one.

4.3.3.1 Conclusion: being dyslexic in prison

In the above section, participants accounts of being dyslexic in prison was discussed: this emphasised the personal coping strategies which they adopted in attending to the demands for reading and writing skills in order to function effectively within the prison context. Generally, most of the participants’ accounts centred around protecting themselves in prison from the consequences of disclosure as well as shame of being dyslexic.

All the women negotiated their sense of identity against assumptions of deficit attached to the dyslexia label, which was a defining aspect of them. When a participant chose to disclose, it was mainly to those whom they felt confident would not hurt their sense of self. Overall, the women’s feelings of self-worth and sense of vulnerability were dominant features in decisions about disclosing their dyslexia in

prison: it was a very personal process which was linked to previous experiences, self-perceptions and normative expectations of skills in reading and writing.

In discussing overall experiences of being dyslexic in prison, these women gave accounts which suggested that disclosure presented negative consequences, which linked with shame, being misunderstood and judged. Accordingly, most of them chose silence over disclosure and this enabled them to maintain control over the circulation of knowledge amongst other inmates about their dyslexia. This finding shows the unique challenges faced by female prisoners regarding disclosure or concealment of their dyslexic difficulties within a prison environment. It highlights this group of participants as a particularly vulnerable population who are faced with making complex decisions relating to their reading and writing difficulties as part of their daily lives in prison. These decisions are guided by the uniqueness of their environment: prisons are a characteristically hostile environment where any form of weakness can lead to intimidation, bullying and violence (Ireland, 2000; Sabo et al., 2001). Since most of these women had little experience of success in learning, having mostly negative experiences of schooling, there were held back by fear that their reading and writing difficulties would be viewed as a source of shame and embarrassment, which could lead to negative consequences: their decisions were shaped not only by their sense of self, but also by their prison experiences.

Conversely, some women made decisions to disclose their dyslexic difficulties in order to receive support in completing reading and writing tasks. They were more inclined to ask other prisoners, particularly their roommates due to their constant proximity to them. The need to ask for help was especially pertinent in prison situations because of the urgency and immediacy in dealing with reading and writing tasks, for example, filling out an application (app), understanding information in legal

letters, and the need to know contents of a letter from or writing a letter to family and friends.

As dyslexic women in prison, the actions which were available to them with regards to who they could ask for help were limited. For example, some of the women asked prison staff for support to complete reading and writing tasks. While their requests provided the benefit of participation, it carried its own risks: a fundamental prison culture is being labelled a 'snitch' if a prisoner is seen interacting with an officer (Sykes & Messinger, 1960). Hence, this study identifies the specific ways in which female prisoners with dyslexia react to the conditions and situations of prison life, emphasising different internal and external constraints which lead to limited control over their choices in relation to reading and writing. The situation is unique because they must learn to adapt to varying problems, linked with their learning difficulties, which they encounter in the confined spaces of the prison. How the participants adapted to the divergent problems arising from their dyslexia will be discussed in the context of their reading and writing attitude in the next section.

4.4 Reading and writing attitude

In this section, data on participants' reading and writing attitude will be presented and discussed. In the interviews, attitude was discussed in terms of participants' emotions, beliefs and behaviour towards reading and writing. Consequently, they were asked about their reading and writing experiences both earlier in their lives and at the present time, in order to determine any associations which these may have with the evaluations which they make, as reflected in their attitude. Although each participant expressed a unique account, their explanations reflected some common themes which extended the existing research literature; for example, their accounts

revealed that their perceptions provided the lens for evaluations, resulting in positive or negative emotions (e.g. Oppenheim, 1992), and informing decisions on subsequent behaviour (e.g. Maio & Olson, 2000) towards reading and writing. Confirming the literature, participants' reading and writing attitude had potential to guide feelings relating to previous experiences (e.g. Smith, 1990), which could have extended into adulthood (e.g. Kush et al., 2005), becoming stable (e.g. Spira et al., 2005) over time.

Table Four (below) summarises participants' accounts of their experiences in reading and writing at school, their approach to completing tasks both at school and in prison, and their reading and writing attitude. Most of them reported negative experiences which impacted their reading and writing attitude as well as their approach to reading and writing in prison. All the women reported negative experiences of reading and writing in school. In prison, most of them relied on others when completing reading and writing tasks, and showed negative reading and writing attitude.

Table 4: Reading and Writing Attitude

Name of participant	**Dyslexia Screening result**	**Age**	**Reading and Writing at school**	**Approach to reading and writing In prison**	**Reading and Writing attitude**
Tee	73	36	Lack of engagement. Help from special teacher	Phoned instead and writing; reliance on other	Negative
Star	79	40	Difficulty with learning, not much Reading & Writing	Reliance on others	Negative
Mak	65	19	Hated Reading & Writing. Disruptive. Embarrassed	Reliance on others	Believed support form teachers will enable achievement
Cal	80	50	Hated reading & writing	Reliance on others	Negative
Mora	75	44	Did not enjoy reading & writing	Tried to read certain words, breaks them up	Believes reading and writing skills will lead to employment
Jay	73	28	Found reading & writing very difficult. Not interested in support	Requires teacher support	Negative
Bem	80	55	Lack of interest in reading & writing. Blamed teachers	Frustrated, lost interest. Reliance on others	Wants to make effort
Fig	75	32	Lacked motivation, disguised difficulties	Lacked confidence, reliance on others	Negative
Pela	75	49	Struggled with reading & writing, did not engage	Learned to read & write in prison, Lack of interest	I try if I get the first one right but if I get it wrong I give up
Cee	64	25	Did not enjoy reading & writing, lost interest. Became anxious if asked to read	Not keen to ask for support – may be seen as 'dumb'	Negative
Dew	86	34	Never concentrated, didn't understand what teacher was saying. Embarrassed to ask	Gave up if unsuccessful. Started Toe by Toe (it's helping)	Negative
Neon	73	30	Frustrating. Could not read & write. Hated reading out in class	Would like to improve but it may be late to learn	I leave it for a few days, I go back to it more determined to try again

4.4.1 Development of reading and writing attitude

The women in this study described feelings about reading and writing: the words used in their descriptions offered insight into their current reading and writing attitude (please see table 4). Although their expressed negative experiences varied, they all tended to revolve around failures which they attributed to dyslexia.

As I had discussed, they remembered school as a place where they experienced failures in reading and writing, culminating in perceptions of threat, lowering their self-image and damaging their self-perception as a learner. These findings add to the literature which reports a link between failure experiences and poor emotional well-being (e.g. Humphrey & Mullins, 2002; Ingesson, 2007). This study extends knowledge on how early educational experiences were interconnected with reflections on reading and writing attitude in prison. For example, these women consistently expressed that early reading and writing experiences were a factor in lifelong habits of avoiding completion of tasks in these areas. Additionally, their interviews revealed affective components as a factor which may have guided behaviour following evaluation of a reading and writing situation, whereby failure outcomes produced negative emotions, for instance, anger, fear, frustration, anxiety: these mostly led to withdrawal from further engagement. This was illustrated by Stanovich (1996) as the Matthew effect, indicating that experiences of reading failure led to disengagement and low achievement experiences.

Bem's narrative (below) represented some of the ways in which participants discussed the relationship between early negative experiences, and current reading and writing attitudes. According to Bem:

Bem In school: *Didn't do much reading and writing as well. Wasn't good at them and gave up. Didn't think that I could do them. The teachers weren't there to help. I was embarrassed to say that I wasn't getting it. I sit in a corner and pretend I'm reading… When I'm asked to read, I tell them I don't want to. It's like my blood gets hot/boiled and I get agitated. I say I don't want to. I don't like it especially in groups.* *In prison:* *I know that I have to try. I need to write letters to my children and I don't want the spelling to be wrong. When I can't spell a word, I ask other girls. They usually help me. I don't like this because it makes me feel stupid and the girls may also think I'm stupid even though I'm the one they always talk to when they have problems and I help them… It makes me feel sad that because of my dyslexia I'll always struggle with my reading and writing – I don't want to give up and I always try.*

Bem (above) experienced extreme fear of failure especially in relation to reading aloud in class, echoing findings in Singer (2005), and eschewed class activities which she perceived would expose her learning difficulties. She developed a disguise coping strategy in the form of, 'pretending to read'. In this way, she tried to hide her difficulties in order to escape the shame, humiliation and stigmatisation which are linked to lack of proficiency in reading and writing. She attributed her failure to lack of help from teachers (an external, unstable and uncontrollable factor)

as well as other uncontrollable factors such as low ability and low self-efficacy, increasing her feelings of powerlessness, echoing Valas (2001).

In describing her current experience, Bem expressed being under pressure to spell words accurately when she wrote letters to her children. She sought help from other prisoners in spelling new words, but believed that this led to social devaluation: it is noted in the literature that normative values are placed on skills in reading and writing (e.g. Anstey & Bull, 2018). Also, she perceived that receiving support from other prisoners presented a threat to her self-esteem, making her vulnerable because it indicated that she was inadequate and not capable of completing certain reading and writing tasks. Nonetheless, when she described her problem-solving ability, Bem seemed to be quite proud and perceived it as an area where she could help other women.

Fig (below), narrated antecedent factors which led to perceptions of and expectations for current reading and writing performances. She reported feelings of aggravation about reading and writing as well as lack of confidence in her ability to perform tasks in these areas successfully. Unlike Bem who used a disguise coping strategy, Fig described a defensive escape-avoidance coping strategy (truanting) in school, indicating lack of motivation: her account supports the assumption that individuals with dyslexia encounter low motivation when required to complete literacy tasks because of extensive academic failure (e.g. McGrady et al., 2001). Also, linking with Polychroni et al. (2006), Fig's consistent academic failure presented risks to her self-view, and resulted in her switching off and escaping, a reaction which provided less damage to her self-esteem. Similar to Bem, she made attributions to dyslexia (uncontrollable and stable cause) for her failures, resulting in feelings of low

self-esteem, hopelessness and reduced expectancy for success, in line with assumptions made by Weiner (1986).

Fig

Aggravates me and knocks my confidence because I can't write what's in my mind.

I wouldn't want to do anymore. I used to truant when I had a spelling test. Because even nursery book – I couldn't read it. When I get confident that I can do something and I'm not able to do it, it would turn me off for a couple of days…

I couldn't read - dyslexia it makes everything difficult.

Below, Dew attributed her failure outcomes to lack of ability. Her account suggested the development of negative reading and writing attitude whereby she expressed anxiety and dread when required to complete activities requiring skills in these areas. She described feeling scared and emphasised her previous failure experiences because of dyslexia: this may have led to lack of hope, echoing Weiner (1985). It is possible that her ascription of failure to stable and uncontrollable factors translated to low motivation and expectancy of failure outcomes in the future, connecting with Eccles and Wigfield (2002). Ultimately, she reported on-going anxiety as an outcome of inability to complete reading and writing tasks.

Dew

Scared, I always feel it will be difficult for me to complete. Scared to do it because I feel like I'm going to fail. I never get it right… don't know how to go about it… I wouldn't do it because I wouldn't understand the questions/instructions… Dyslexia. It messes my mind… I may try but I wouldn't be able to complete it… I still get anxious about reading and writing. I dread the task of doing it.

Some of the participants remembered emotions of anger and powerlessness which they continued to experience when they encountered situations necessitating skills in reading and writing in prison. In discussing her feelings and attitude to reading and writing, Tee (below) stated:

Tee
Angry and it winds me up – because I know that when I'm trying to write a letter, I can't spell or write certain words – can't read properly. I say to myself - dyslexia causes these problems and I get upset…
Reading and writing wind me up and make me really angry. The difficulties have stopped me from doing work – I don't care… don't have time for it. I can't keep failing because that is what it's about - do it and get it all wrong…
I sit there and give up. I feel upset and punish myself by being angry and give up.

Tee recorded emotions of frustration and anger; these resulted from feelings of lack of achievement, and inability to read and write. Her account suggested experiences of low self-confidence, leading to reduced motivation in challenging her reading and writing difficulties. She also acquired negative ways to cope with these frustrations; for example, she stated: 'punish myself by being angry and give up'. Attributing failures to dyslexia suggested that she would have similar experiences in the future. For example, she made expressions which indicated both avoidance and displacement as coping behaviours which were associated with her inability to deal with experiences of failure: use of avoidance strategies has been noted in the literature (e.g. Heiman & Kariv, 2014; Givon & Court, 2010).

For most participants, personal characteristics - including learning identity - were a significant part of their descriptions of feelings as well as reading and writing attitude.

These may account for perceptions of incompetence, and also a cause for their reluctance to engage in reading and writing. For example, Mak, (below) was frustrated and described the cognitive consequences of her learning difficulty. She also used negative emotive language to describe her perception of the impact of dyslexia in relation to her current reading and writing attitude.

Mak

I don't feel good because when I read my brain gets tired so I stop reading. I will start talking about something different. Because I always struggled with reading I hate reading books. My difficulty with reading and spelling puts me off.

These experiences put me off. I will curse – I want to read more… I have to force myself because I need to read and write in my life... Even though I have dyslexia, I need to keep pushing.

The negative feelings about reading and writing, which Mak described, indicated another way by which these experiences might have been associated to the development of unfavourable attitude. Her account emphasised the perception that reading and writing are important lifelong skills. Although she expressed positive views about engaging in reading and writing activities, her delineation was still cautious and her attitude was indeterminate. Also, like the other women, Mak focused on internal sources (ability) as reasons for her difficulties; nonetheless, she showed some resilience in improving reading and writing skills, stating that she needed to 'keep pushing'. This resilience may have come from the acknowledgment that reading and writing comprise important life skills, placing value on the need to acquire competence in these areas. Nonetheless, she acknowledged that

maintaining resilience possibly required hard work, echoing reports in Hellendoorn and Ruijssenaars (2000).

Jay's narrative (below) revealed the impact of feelings of fear and anxiety related to reading and writing experiences. Her account showed how reading and writing made her feel, namely: 'nervous' and 'scared', and indicated perception of inability to do what was expected within a classroom environment. Although she revealed some willingness to attempt reading and writing activities, signalling determination, this feeling was overwhelmed by a fear of failure, leading her to abandon making efforts. Also, she had come to believe that her behaviour would not have any effect on outcomes, suggesting a sense of helplessness. She used expressions such as 'weakness', 'scared', etc. in her descriptions; these may have resulted in the adoption of avoidance techniques which exacerbated repeated failures in reading and writing as well as unwillingness to search for solutions. On this basis, she possibly made a responsibility judgement (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002), determining that the reason for her difficulty was internal, stable and uncontrollable, and that she lacked control in changing the outcomes.

Jay

Writing: I get nervous because first I think I can't do it because it's hard. But then I try…

Reading: I want to dissolve into the chair because I get scared. They're always words I can't break down and can't read or understand them. I get scared because I may do it wrong and it shows my weaknesses…

I want to try. Sometimes, I feel like I can't be bothered and get angry because I think that it will always be hard. Dyslexia will not go away.

For most of the participants, attribution of failure to lack of ability resulted in lack of motivation because expectancies based on their perceptions of control impacted persistence and motivation (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). This was demonstrated in Pela's narrative on her current feelings about reading and writing:

Pela

I feel that I have been able to do without good reading and writing up to now and I ask myself whether I really want to put myself through all that again. That was why I stopped going to English. If I get stuck, I can always find someone who will help me. I know I should better myself because of my children but it causes me stress because it doesn't come to me as easy as it is for others without dyslexia…

I think I can't do it – tried to do it because it may come out wrong – don't care – but then I try if I get the first one right, I try more but if I get it wrong I give up.

Unlike most of the other participants, Pela (above) believed that she had been able to survive without skills in reading and writing, suggesting a belief that these are not vital for her everyday life. Consequently, this belief may have negatively affected her motivation to improve skills in these areas hence her disengagement from the English course in prison. She also expressed reliance on others as a compensatory strategy leading to avoidance of reading and writing activities. Furthermore, her narrative suggested that her assessment of control was based on perceptions of lack of competence and ability, resulting in low self-worth. Her account supports research findings which associate dyslexia with negative consequences (e.g. Humphrey & Mullins, 2002; McNulty, 2003).

Some participants reported beliefs related to early learning identity which intensified and emerged in adulthood. For example, in describing her attitude to reading and

writing, Cee (below) stated that she was not confident, experiencing shame and fear which stretched to her time at school.

Cee
Not being able to do work in school, I don't like to do reading and writing because I can't do it. Even in prison where I have to do it, I still don't like it because even when I try I still can't do it. It scares me that I will show myself up and the shame.

This account suggested that she viewed completing reading and writing tasks with apprehension, and similar to Pela, reported that early failures in these areas may have affected motivations and consequently her interest. She also stated that she did not like reading and writing, indicating a negative perception which could lead to negative reading and writing attitude. Also, her behaviour was characteristic of learned helplessness, diminished performance and reduced persistence on reading and writing activities following failure situations. This outcome connects with the literature which has shown that individuals with dyslexia are at risk of developing learned helplessness.

Some participants expressed frustration and anger arising from low academic performances, resulting in low self-esteem and anxiety, and supporting findings by Burden (2008). Mora explained:

Mora
I get frustrated and angry – it doesn't make me feel good about myself. I keep trying and then I give up because dyslexia will always be in my way. *Now, I'm beginning to read books and go to library – it's difficult. Quite difficult to write letters, but I only use words I know but sometimes it doesn't come across the way I want it. Writing is challenging, something I avoid … I do them because I have to and not because I want to. I have to improve my reading and writing if I want to get work otherwise I will be jobless and then homeless.*

Mora (above) was self-focused and listed some uncontrollable factors. Unlike other participants, she reported the consequences of lack of reading and writing proficiency, stating that these skills are instrumental to getting into employment and securing a home. Her account revealed her perception on how reading and writing difficulties are related to life choices: this emphasised normative expectations relating to these skills as noted in Anstey and Bull (2014). She also described other negative experiences related to her learning disability, indicating low self-confidence, and accepting that her failures were a consequence of uncontrollable factors, example - lack of ability. Within the present context, this participant's perceived utility in reading and writing, as well as the status ascribed to skills in these areas, may have played a part in the development of attitudes as well as motivation to engage in tasks in these areas. For example, her narratives revealed low levels of effort in improving reading skills: conversely, she reported perceptions that her difficulties in

completing reading and writing tasks were beyond her control, suggesting an external locus of control, echoing Williams and Burden (1997).

A major determinant factor which was linked to participants' reading and writing attitude was disengagement. Star's descriptions (below) offered good examples of this tendency:

Star
My reading and writing are not where they should be…I understand that I have to try harder because I need them but don't have the will… Nervous – just in case I do something wrong. Writing can be scruffy and if I take things slower then it will be a lot better; need to concentrate… I just do it half-heartedly. I wish I could do more and be able to know more and how to do it. But my brain can't take it and I don't like the feeling – disappointed, thinking I'm dumb.

Star suggested that reading and writing were difficult and as a result, not enjoyable activities. Similar to Mora, she also indicated a belief that these are important basic skills, necessitating consistent effort to facilitate engagement; however, she indicated a lack of desire to complete tasks in these areas: her attitude seemed negative. Her narratives suggested that locus of control was related to perceptions of ability: this connects with the finding by Shepherd et al. (2006) who reported a link between locus of control and beliefs about success in relation to academic success or failure. Star's perceptions of accountability for success or failure in these areas were reduced and this may have been because of her perceived inability to effect any changes in her reading and writing competencies: this supports the literature e.g. Rotter (1966). Also, in prison this individual did not have an improved sense of ability

to control outcomes in reading and writing endeavours, attending to them 'half-heartedly'.

4.4.1.1 Conclusion: Development of reading and writing attitude

In conclusion, the narratives of the female dyslexic offenders who were interviewed provide evidence of negative reading and writing attitude; this directed their behaviour, and could be linked to the belief that they lacked competency in reading and writing, suggesting an externality and belief that they had no control (Rotter, 1966). This finding supports Ajzen (2001) who described attitude as a form of evaluation which individuals make of people and things, and which informs human behaviour.

Participants' accounts demonstrated that negative reading and writing attitude began early in school: success or failure experiences in school relating to reading and writing became crucial because they constituted a precedent which may have informed future attitude. This connects with Allport (1935) who defined attitude as "a mental or neural state of readiness, organised through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individuals' response to all objects and situations with which it is related." (p.810). Additionally, their narratives presented implications for the development of their sense of self as well as capabilities, whereby negative self-perception may have perpetuated low levels of academic performance. For example, success experiences in reading and writing tend to result in pride and a sense of accomplishment, while failure experiences would have led to self-doubt and low self-worth (Weiner, 1995).

Additionally, long-term reading and writing failure which seemed to have caused a loss of trust in the educational process (already discussed) resulted in the belief that

engaging in learning was purposeless. Accordingly, some participants self-referred as a ‘failure’, a finding also reported in Dale and Taylor (2001). This term was used according to interpretations given to educational and social disengagement, exacerbating feelings of distrust, and resulting in detachment from learning, as well as decreased motivation to engage in literacy activities.

Feelings about the extent to which these women believed that their success or failure was within their personal control, related mostly to external factors – this had implications for their engagement in reading and writing, linking with Finn and Rock (1997). Also, the women in this study made ascriptions of failure experiences to dyslexia, indicating perceptions that ability is fixed while its level is critical for success. This finding provides support for Weiner’s (1974) attribution theory assumption that a person’s attributions for past success and failure have important influences on successive achievement outcomes. Therefore, I make assumptions that participants’ belief in lack of ability to complete reading and writing tasks led to expectations of future failures, consequently resulting in unwillingness to attend to activities in these areas: this in turn affected their attitude negatively.

A major theme arising from this study is that reading and writing difficulties were central in the life experiences of these women before their involvement with the criminal justice system. Reflections on their externalised behaviours resulting from these difficulties suggested that adoption of avoidance strategies detracted from completion of reading and writing tasks, and became a way of staying in control. In the next section, reading and writing in prison will be explored.

4.4.2 Reading and writing in prison

Within this section, I will focus on the embodied experience of the women within the prison, taking into account the actual restrictions which dyslexia caused in this environment and how it was related to their reading and writing attitude. In attempting to understand dyslexia within female dyslexic offenders, the analysis will highlight the process of identity construction, linking it to their attributions for reading and writing successes and failures.

Participants' perceptions of reading and writing challenges, as well as failures were fundamental to how all they constructed their experiences of the impact of dyslexia in prison, echoing Eccles and Wigfield (2002), who suggested the centrality of perceptions in forming behaviours. Although these experiences varied, there were commonalities in their expressions. Some of their narratives were immersed in discourses which suggested associations between intelligence, and reading and writing success. In this way, ability in reading and writing was emphasised as a valuable tool which would have facilitated participations in prison activities, enabling a sense of inclusion. Conversely, lack of proficiency in these areas may have presented unequal power relations, creating avenues for bullying and exclusion, and impacting their identity and sense of self negatively.

Accordingly, inability to access the paper-based request form system, write to family and friends, and read letters from solicitors were the main themes in this study. Completion of request forms was required in cases where prisoners wished to arrange visits, book an appointment for medical reasons, make a complaint, attend education and manage their purchases from the prison canteen. This practice suggests a normative expectation that all prisoners would have skills in reading and

writing. Also, prisoners complete intensive and often, mandated offender behaviour programmes or rehabilitation interventions: these are mainly paper-based. Lack of proficiency in reading and writing had potential to present a barrier for participants in this study because they were unable to cope with written information. Also, responding to written communication, for example, attending to legal documents, may have proved elusive.

Furthermore, the participants discussed problems arising from dyslexia which they encountered in prison. All participants met with difficulties in reading and writing, noting how these interfered with daily prison activities requiring skills in these areas. Some of them were overwhelmed by negative feelings and worries about their difficulties, often to the degree which impaired their ability to engage in prison everyday reading and writing activities.

In reflecting on the problems caused by dyslexia in prison, Cal (below) stated:

Cal
I can't read my letters and fill the forms. I wanted to be a rep on the wings but because I can't read and write I didn't have the confidence to apply. I felt that the job will show me up because I won't only talk but help the girls to complete forms. That was a no-no for me. I'm limited in what I can do… I can't do these forms – my roommate does it for me. I had an Avon form last night and my roommate filled it out for me. Story of my life, it's all negative with my reading and writing … it gets to me and gets me very angry. It's embarrassing and shameful.

Cal described an inability to complete application forms and read her letters, and also outlined a range of emotional responses: anger, shame and embarrassment relating to the inability to perform reading and writing tasks. Her account supports

findings which associate dyslexia with socioemotional problems (e.g. Burden, 2008; McNulty, 2003; Stampoltzis & Polychronopoulou, 2009). These possibly created negative reading and writing attitude; consequently, she did not believe that she could make the effort to improve reading and writing skills. Also, the consequence of not being able to read and write was reported from a practical perspective, for example, asking her roommate to complete a catalogue form for her. Eschewing completion of these tasks possibly enabled her to avoid experiencing the realities of repeated failures, facilitating the suppression of shame and embarrassment of not being in control. What was apparent in Cal's account was the perception that dyslexia played a central role in limiting her employment and life chances in prison.

Another participant, Mora, described a similar experience in reporting the problems caused by dyslexia in prison, revealing that she encountered a lot of challenges. She described her difficulties as:

Mora
Quite a lot… in writing I can't spell and in reading, I can't read the words and skip lines. Then it doesn't make sense. I get my friends to read my letters. I have to because I can't do it properly. Even though I don't want them to know my business. My life hasn't changed from school days. I have difficulties with reading and writing and understanding. It makes me not want to do it because I never get it right.

Mora's previous learning experiences may have impacted the way she coped with situations requiring skills in reading and writing in prison; for example, her lack of motivation may have been a normalised reaction to repeated failures, adding to findings by Pearl et al. (1980). Consequently, her difficulties in completing reading and writing tasks in prison resulted in low self-esteem, causing her to view her

repeated failures as proof of lack of ability: this in turn informed her reading and writing attitude negatively. Furthermore, her descriptions suggest the presence of learned helplessness, whereby she gave up trying; this links with Craske (1988) who posited that a situation of learned helplessness occurs when a person holds the belief that he or she cannot influence the achievement of a desired outcome.

Unlike Cal and Mora, Star's narrative revealed a willingness to read:

Star

I can't read as much as I would like to because I get stuck with words I can't read and then it doesn't make sense and I give up. When I write, my words are limited because I can't use bigger words because I can't spell. I would like to do GCSEs but I don't think I'm good enough to do it… If I can't spell I ask someone - girls in my room and staff help me. Sometimes, it's hard to ask someone because they may think I'm stupid and I should know it. I wrote to the judge and my roommate wrote it for me. This made her know everything about my crime. She later told other people and they started bullying me. I had to be moved.

Star's description demonstrated a good understanding of the impact of dyslexia on her reading and writing, and she expressed disappointment when she was unable to achieve her expectations. Although this resulted in lack of perseverance, she also expressed her hope of doing her GCSEs. Unlike Mora, she recounted making efforts to complete tasks, only asking for help in spelling new words; nonetheless, she described the adverse consequences of securing help from other prisoners, including the disclosure of her crime, bullying and being moved. She also expressed concern that seeking help may cause others to view her as incompetent. These further highlighted the power dynamics which could emanate from lack of proficiency in reading and writing in prison situations.

Fig outlined the limitations which she experienced, expressing negative feelings which may have created discouragement in her performance of reading and writing tasks:

Fig

Yes – I'm doing Shannon Trust Reading Plan. I've done it for six months and I'm only on the second book. For years it set me back – I have to put it to the back of my mind that I don't need to read and write - but now I want to read and write. It can dishearten you a lot…

It's embarrassing – can't read solicitor's letter/family letters and then there are stuff you don't want others to read. I did the TSB programme because it's part of my sentence plan, but I only went twice because you have to read your work in front of others, I didn't continue.

Fig expressed frustration with reading and writing and recalled becoming discouraged, feeling ashamed about her dyslexia. She described perceptions of her difficulties which were strongly influenced by fear, inhibition about performing in the presence of, and being judged by others. These led to the adoption of avoidance behaviour, such as actively getting out of reading and writing situations, worrying about public embarrassment. This finding extends reports by Hellendoorn and Ruijssenaars (2000) that individuals with dyslexia avoid situations which would expose their difficulties. Accordingly, she encountered diminished interest and motivation in completing requisite offender programmes, experiencing poor sense of belonging within group situations where skills in reading and writing were emphasised. Her experiences seemed to have impacted her reading and writing attitude negatively because she failed to complete the training programme which was mandated in her sentence plan. Conversely, her account indicated resilience, but lacking in confidence that she would succeed in reading and writing tasks: this

suggested that she did not seem convinced that trying hard was the best strategy to achieve success. Furthermore, attributing failure internally (dyslexia) had potential to foster negative self-perceptions and low self-esteem, and its stability element would affect motivation, reinforcing beliefs that effort would not produce desired outcomes.

4.4.2.1 Conclusion: Reading and writing in prison

Overall, these accounts demonstrated the ways that these women experienced their reading and writing deficits, and revealed the barriers which they faced in accessing the form-based prison system as well as maintaining correspondences with family, friends and lawyers. The participants' accounts revealed that their lives were mainly shaped by processes of exclusion arising from dyslexia. Some of these women were forced into harmful social relationships in order to receive support for meeting their reading and writing needs: this created a culture of dependency which was based on unequal power relations with other prisoners who could read and write, exacerbating their vulnerabilities.

In discussing the problems caused by their learning difficulty, the participants mostly made internal personal attributions – ability - an indication that they had strong beliefs about the lack of control which they had over their reading and writing outcomes. This is consistent with the literature which suggests that individuals with dyslexia do not believe that they can control academic failure (Rogers & Saklofske, 1985). Their accounts suggested feelings of powerlessness in improving their reading and writing position, creating a need for help, and laying the foundation for low self-esteem, anxiety and poor self-worth in an environment which is characterised as a symbol of punishment and deprivation – also noted by Garland

(2010). This in turn created the condition where success became less likely as being dyslexic was frequently cited as a reason for inclusion or exclusion in engaging in reading and writing practices in prison. In the next section, what it means to be dyslexic in prison will be described in the context of the women's coping strategies.

4.4.3 Coping strategies for reading and writing difficulties in prison

The women's accounts revealed experiences of difficulties in participating in prison activities and services because of dyslexia. Hence the ways in which they came to understand and interpret their reading and writing difficulties within the context of coping strategies were explored.

Adoption of coping strategies was stated by all participants as being crucial in overcoming difficulties presented by dyslexia in adulthood, echoing claims made by Riddick (2003): they described defensive behavioural styles, for example: asking for help, giving up and avoidance. All the women interviewed in this study viewed reading and writing difficulties as challenging and stressful, and judged that the adoption of alternative actions was required in other to deal with and cope with the situation in prison. Their accounts highlighted the role of social support as a bridge for participation in prison activities and services.

Participants' accounts revealed that an initial appraisal of the consequences of their dyslexia was an important part of how they chose to deal with it: the strategy of asking other inmates for help was one of the common ways of coping and this seemed to be effective most of the time. Although it was problem-focused, their personal resources could not keep up with the reading and writing demands within the prison; it connoted a dependency on others.

In explaining how she dealt with reading and writing difficulties in prison, Tee stated:

Tee
Sometimes, I try to do it myself but it's the same story. So I phone (family and friends) instead of writing but when I don't have money, I get people to help me to write my letters (inmates/officers). It makes me sad that I have to rely on people to do this for me and very angry – because I can't do it myself… I mean reading and spelling have always been difficult for me. Never did well in school because I couldn't read and write.

According to the above account, Tee became despondent in failure situations. This impacted her motivation and may have resulted in a learned helplessness disposition. She was also self-conscious about her learning difficulties, consequently preferring to speak over the phone to her friends and family instead of writing to them. Her account suggested perceptions of reading and writing difficulties as part of her self-image, making relations with her school experience, and blaming academic difficulties on inability to read and write. This possibly had an impact on her self-confidence, and she felt unable to complete reading and writing tasks in prison. Her account adds to knowledge about psycho-social problems encountered by female dyslexic offenders, including low-self-esteem. Additionally, Tee was unable to sustain persistence because she relied on others to complete reading and writing tasks: this connects with the literature which reports that individuals with dyslexia adopt negative strategies for dealing with their difficulties (e.g. Humphrey, 2002; Hellendoorn & Ruijssenaars, 2000). Her perceptions appeared to have led to negative reading and writing attitude.

In discussing her coping strategies, Fig stated:

Fig
If I have good relationship with another roommate, I get her to complete my app or I get officers to help. Prisoners may tell others if they get to read your letters for you so for my letters, I will wait until I'm able to get an officer to help. The girls help me to fill in the apps. I don't feel good about asking them to do it for me but I have to because I can't do it myself.

Similar to Tee, Fig reported that others (i.e. roommates) completed her reading and writing tasks. However, unlike Tee, she reported being cautious because of the possibility that the contents of her letters may be made known to other prisoners. Consequently, she adjusted her strategy by seeking help from only officers on matters which she considered to be confidential. Within her narrative, her concern was related to exposing the content of her letters as opposed to the stigmatisation linked to lack of competency in reading and writing; nonetheless, she appeared uncomfortable with being evaluated by other prisoners. Also, her account revealed some of the consequences relating to lack of ability in reading and writing in a prison setting.

Dew (below) outlined some of her coping strategies; however some of them were different from Tee's and Fig's. According to her:

Dew
Talk about the problems to my mum - I get help from my roommates to write to my mum. I just shut off and watch TV, don't do anything involving reading and writing. Pretend I'm reading so that the women will not look down on me.

In addition to asking her roommate for help, speaking to her mum was also Dew's coping strategy: it would seem that this provided emotional comfort. Also, she made decisions which suggested a change in behaviour, reflecting her environment by negotiating the reading and writing demands within the prison; for example, 'pretending to read' in order to avoid stigmatisation associated with learning disability. She believed that she did not have the capability to complete reading and writing tasks, making internal, stable and uncontrollable attribution (ability), and experiencing lack of persistence when faced with such challenges, adopting a defeatist disposition.

Similarly, in reflecting on coping strategies in relation to the problems caused by dyslexia in prison, Mak (below) noted emotions of frustration which led to feelings of wanting to walk away from classes.

Mak

Sometimes, I want to walk away from the class because of the dyslexia… It feels like school and I don't want to make a fool of myself…I don't want to remember the pains of school. My writing is very bad. When I write to my family they say I don't make sense because of my spelling. I get staff to help me fill forms. I only read with overlay. I had glasses that helped. The girls help me to read my letters from family, legal or apps and writing letters.

She highlighted her family context in relation to her reading and writing difficulties, expressing feedback from them that her letters lacked coherence. Her early experiences of school featured in discussions about the problems which dyslexia caused in prison, indicating that these memories influenced her perception of prison education. She narrated a negative approach to learning as well as lack of confidence, while her school encounters with reading and writing were a source of

anxiety and frustration, informing low assessment of her abilities. These findings support the assumption that women in prison, typically, suffer from low self-esteem as a result of experiences before imprisonment (Kalemi et al., 2019); this is often exacerbated by negative environmental factors within the prison (Smith, 2000). Also, Mak's account reveals the unique challenges of being a learner in prison. For example, while education in prison is designed to raise these women's self-worth through advancement of skills and knowledge, the negative environmental factors, inherent in prison settings, may negate the development of positive self-image, leading to lack of engagement in education. Also her account highlights the importance of pedagogy in prison contexts, which responds to the learning interests of dyslexic prisoners, catering to their individual needs, as well as social values.

Some participants reported that they received support for their reading and writing: this constituted a coping strategy. Their accounts suggested that the prison provided a scope to seek support from prison officials for reading and writing difficulties, albeit on an informal basis. In these situations, the dyslexic label was a welcome relief because it facilitated receipt of degrees of support. In reporting the support which she received, Pela stated:

Pela
When I first came to prison, I couldn't read and write. Now I struggle but I ask for help or use a dictionary. Toe by Toe helped and now I can do some parts of app … I ask for help when I struggle from friends, officers, teachers, boss at my prison work. *… Toe by Toe, education – friends, officers. They help with spelling and writing correctly, they write it down for me and then I copy it.*

Pela's narrative (as above) indicated that resilience (as a way of coping with her

difficulties) and helplessness (as an outcome of her difficulties) were closely linked and were both present in the same person simultaneously. This suggested that resilient dyslexic female offenders were also helpless dyslexic female offenders. This supports the literature which posits that levels of resilience change through different periods and conditions (e.g. Werner, 1992, Glazzard, 2010). Toe by Toe, which is a peer-support prison reading programme, has potential to alleviate the negative emotional impact of imprisonment as well as reduce stress and anxiety. The positive effect of peer support programmes in prison for female offenders has been noted in the literature, for example, as source of empowerment (e.g. Syed & Blanchett, 2000).

Similarly, Bem (below), in recounting how she coped with reading and writing difficulties in prison cited support from teachers and programme tutors. According to her:

Bem
Received support from: the teachers in education and the programmes tutors. The officers help me also to fill in apps and other forms…also they help me with my letters. They know about my dyslexia… I don't mind telling them that my reading and writing are no good then they know that I really need help. My probation officers help to read the court letters from my lawyers… I couldn't cope without support. If there's no support, I wouldn't be getting involved and just dismiss it.

Bem's account indicated that disclosing her learning difficulty to prison officials was deemed acceptable and did not incur stigmatisation, suggesting utility in the dyslexia label. Also, she had favourable interaction with her teachers and other prison officials, suggesting effectiveness of this strategy. She expressed low self-efficacy in the absence of support, emphasising that perceptions about low ability possibly

increased reliance on others, fostering learned helplessness disposition.

Mak (below) also described the support which she received for reading and writing in prison as well as outside of prison. Although, support may have lessened the threat of failure and increased motivation, connecting with Humphrey and Mullins (2002a), this, nonetheless, increased reliance on others. Support enhanced her self-confidence, as well as expectations and beliefs that she will be successful, having a positive impact on her reading and writing attitude. According to her:

Mak
In prison - my sycamore tree tutor and Salvation Army worker help me and my teachers in education sit down with me and explain it to me and help to teach me to spell.
Outside: I had one-to-one with a lady who goes with me to the doctors and other places because of my reading and writing difficulties.

4.4.3.1 Conclusion: Coping strategies for reading and writing difficulties in prison

As shown in the above section, participants expressed being stressed at the prospect of completing reading and writing activities in prison; however, most of them developed compensatory strategies in order to manage the reading and writing requirements. Their perceptions of control and the actual completion of reading and writing tasks determined the coping strategy which most of them adopted. Some of these were effective in ameliorating the effects of difficulties in reading and writing; for example, most of the participants relied on other prisoners and officers to complete their reading and writing tasks. Also, experiences of frustration, shame and embarrassment meant that they adopted negative coping strategies, for example,

avoiding situations necessitating skills in reading and writing: echoing Herman and Kariv (2004) who reported avoidance as a coping strategy for individuals with learning disabilities.

One of the major themes around coping with reading and writing difficulties within the structure of prison regime was the expectation placed upon these women to take responsibility for managing their daily lives. This expectation assumes a normative nature because the same standard is applied to all inmates, irrespective of their personal needs. Some of the women's accounts have shown that these expectations have potential to impact the lives of female dyslexic prisoners negatively. For example, these women experienced difficulty with the paper-based request form system which the prison operates. Prisoners are required to complete forms to arrange a visit, for medical care, to attend education, and manage their finances through purchasing permitted items from the prison canteen. Lack of skills in reading and writing made completion of these forms frustrating and inaccessible. The implication is that the prison regime placed these individuals at higher risk of alienation from participation in its processes.

Furthermore, participants highlighted the benefits of informal support which some of the women received from peers and prison staff, providing an understanding of the impact of support on belongingness and self-esteem: receipt of support has been cited in the literature as an outcome of social relationships in prisons (Cohen, 2004). However, the social world of prisoners is quite limited; inmates have knowledge of what is happening in each other's lives. Therefore, by asking other inmates for help with writing letters to and reading letters from family and friends or lawyers, these women risked exposing their personal matters, including their crimes, to a wider prisoner audience: trust has been posited as a cause for concern for female

prisoners (Greer, 2002). In this way, these women's reading and writing difficulties were highlighted in daily prison tasks, placing them at further risk of harassment, victimisation and social exclusion from other inmates. Nonetheless, some of these women exercised some agency in selecting who they could ask for help.

Additionally, the findings also revealed that reading and writing difficulties can lead to alienation within a system which is marked by compliance and control. Dependence on others for completion of reading and writing tasks had the potential to result in marginalisation and limitation in many areas of their daily lives, with the consequence of being exposed as being dependent or incapable. This research has indicated the specific ways in which female dyslexic prisoners experience demands of reading and writing in prison, revealing how dyslexia affected their sense of self and self-worth. A commonality in their accounts was a sense of disempowerment and exclusion when they were forced into unequal power relations with other prison inmates who could read and write. Overall, being treated as vulnerable was an acceptable outcome for the women who received support with reading and writing; however, others found it disempowering.

Overall, the women's account of their coping strategies in prison revealed the lasting impact which dyslexia had on their confidence, similar to reports in the literature (e.g. Burden, 2005; McNulty, 2003). Although the prison provided schemes for improving reading and writing skills - for example, Turning Pages - there was low-level engagement by the participants. This reluctance to engage can be traced to their negative experiences, mostly at school and without support for reading and writing, most of these women risked being socially excluded in prison: this impact can be internalised and may constitute a risk factor to full participation in prison life.

4.5 Attributions

This section is focused on participants' perceptions of the causes of their success and failure in reading and writing, in the semi-structured interviews. Looking at the interpretations which they gave to the reasons for the outcomes of their reading and writing events was significant as these could be linked to future actions (Weiner, 1986, 2000). Most of the themes generated from the semi-structured interviews are consistent with existing literature on attribution theory. However, these were demonstrated in different ways in each of the narratives, finding consistency with results in other studies where it was posited that people make infinite attributions which may vary amongst individuals (e.g. Humphrey & Mullins, 2002a).

Table Five below outlines Attributions for success or failure; behaviour of helplessness and resilience. Most of the women attributed their success to external, stable and uncontrollable causes and attributed failure to both internal and external factors – lack of ability and task difficulty. Some of the behaviours, which they discussed, were as a consequence of their dyslexic experiences (learned helplessness) or mechanism for coping with these experiences (resilience).

Table 5: Attributions for success or failure; behaviour of helplessness and resilience

Name of participant	**Dyslexia Screening result**	**Age**	**Attributions for success**	**Attributions for failure**	**Behaviour of helplessness or resilience**
Tee	73	36	Teachers' help	Lack of ability	Evidence of learned helplessness
Star	79	40	Teacher explained it and I worked hard at it	Lack of understanding or got distracted or my dyslexia	Evidence of learned helplessness
Mak	65	19	Listening and learning, forced myself to do it, help from others	Didn't concentrate, task difficulty	LD will always present difficulties, evidence of learned helplessness
Cal	80	50	Somebody helped me or I copied from someone	Lack of ability	Evidence of learned helplessness
Mora	75	44	Help from others, looked at other people's work	Task difficulty, lack of attention, lack of ability	Evidence of learned helplessness
Jay	73	28	Teacher support, ease of task	Lack of support, lack of ability	Some resilience but scared to try because of fear of failure
Bem	80	55	Teacher support	Not understood what the teacher said, task difficulty	Resilient, willing to work hard at reading and writing
Fig	75	32	Help from someone	Lack of ability	Some resilience, can do it with support
Pela	75	49	Help from someone, effort	Didn't understand what teacher said, lack of support, lack of ability	Evidence of learned helplessness
Cee	64	25	Help from someone, effort	Lack of support, lack of ability	Evidence of learned helplessness.
Dew	86	34	Help from someone	Lack of support, lack of ability	Evidence of learned helplessness.
Neon	73	30	Effort	Lack of ability, task difficulty	Some resilience, not letting it keep her down, made effort

Weiner (1979) posited that causes mostly attributed to success and failure achievement situations are: ability, effort, task difficulty and luck. The attributions which were reported reflected the taxonomies derived from Weiner (1979); however, in this study, use of open-ended questions revealed additional causes. For example, some of the women made attributions to lack of support from teachers, with others stating that the teaching styles were not suited to their way of learning. Thus, this

finding extends the literature on the range of attributions which can be made for success or failure.

4.5.1 Attributions for success

Evidence from the interviews suggested that the women's reading and writing experiences, as well as explanations for success were linked to their perception of control for outcomes. Most of the women attributed their success performances in reading and writing to external, stable and uncontrollable causes: this supports the findings in Humphrey and Mullins (2002a), who reported that individuals with dyslexia felt that their achievement of success in learning was beyond their control, because of their learning disability. The most frequent attribution which the women made for success was help from teachers/others, and the second one was ease of task arising from familiarity with the completion process: both are external, stable and uncontrollable causes.

In narrating the causes for their success, Cal and Pela stated that help from others, including teachers, enabled their achievement. According to Cal:

Cal: *(Attribution for success: external, uncontrollable; evidence of learned helplessness). Achieved success: Because somebody in the class helped me or I copied from the person sitting next to me. Although it wasn't my own work, I didn't care because I didn't look so dumb to everybody... Someone helped me. I can never do it by myself… it all comes out wrong so it's best if someone helps me.*

Cal (above) ascribed her success externally, stating that she was not able to complete reading and writing independently. This revealed a reliance on others as well as a sense of helplessness, echoing Humphrey and Mullins (2002a), believing

that personal effort would be futile. Her response also suggested lack of personal pride in her outcomes, as noted in Weiner (1986), being more concerned about feelings of shame or dissatisfactions which could be associated to lack of ability, and disclosing that she did not want to be perceived as incompetent by others. Furthermore, it was likely that levels of self-belief were linked to her attributions, encompassing low self-confidence in being able to achieve success in reading and writing tasks through personal ability and effort, as posited by Weiner (1986). A possible outcome was lack of motivation, as well as unwillingness to assume any responsibility for her success.

In explaining why she succeeded at reading or writing tasks, Pela stated:

Pela: (Attribution for success: internal, external, stable, unstable, controllable, uncontrollable; evidence of learned helplessness).

Attribution for success: I took a chance and it's paid off…if the teacher explains the questions, I will understand it better and I can answer it correctly. I struggle with reading and I can't break down words. I memorise the words and they stay there. If I get asked the same questions I will be happy because I already memorised the words but if I haven't done it before, I won't get it right…

Because someone helped me. I tell the teachers about my dyslexia and they help me with my work…

Similar to Cal, Pela (above) made external attributions for her success, for example, help from teachers, suggesting that she did not own her success. However, unlike Cal, Pela recounted some strategies which enabled success; for example, memorising certain words and using these in similar tasks. Her chosen strategy indicated recognition of her inadequacies and an acknowledgment of the function of

effort. Also, her strategy demonstrated some self-awareness, suggesting the presence of resilience because, although she faced uncertainty in achieving success, she was prepared to challenge herself by taking these chances. This connects with studies in which it was reported that resilience is a factor in achievements for individuals with dyslexia in further education (e.g. Corkett et al., 2008; Litner et al., 2005). However, she noted that she was unable to complete unfamiliar tasks without support. Asking for help from teachers further demonstrated some understanding of her difficulties, and a determination to improve her reading and writing skills.

Some participants explained their attributions in the context of motivation, recounting the positive impact of support from others. In explaining plausible causes which determined her reading and writing success, Bem (below) said:

Bem: (Attribution for success: external, uncontrollable; evidence of resilience).

If the teachers give me a chance and help me, then I can try even harder. Because the teachers have taken time to teach me and they see my potential and give me a chance. It takes a long time for me to complete reading and writing so I wish the teachers can help me so that I can do it well and pass.

I asked someone to spell some of the words – I write only the words I know how to spell.

Although Bem attributed her success to teachers' help, unlike Cal and Pela, her account was focused on the motivation which arose from opportunities which teachers provided, encouraging participation. Support from teachers is an external, stable and uncontrollable cause (Weiner, 1985) which seemed to have led to affective reactions, for example, lack of pride in her achievement. Nonetheless, Bem viewed teacher's support as a source of motivation suggesting that she looked to

teachers to find justification for engaging in reading and writing activities. Her account revealed willingness to read and write as well as a desire to achieve success, suggesting motivation: this connects with Pintrich and Schunk (2002) who posited that motivation relates to beliefs about accomplishments as well as perception of control over an outcome. However, it appeared that in the absence of this support, she may not have been able to demonstrate autonomy in the completion of reading and writing tasks. Having low expectations of favourable outcomes suggests an external locus of control.

Jay also made success attributions in the context of motivation: her reflection on how this impacted her interpretation of success was different. In explaining her reasons for her reading and writing achievements, Jay (below) stated:

Jay (Attribution for success: external, uncontrollable; evidence of resilience).

Because teachers sit down with me and support me. Not giving up. If I've done the work before, then I know it and when I have to do it again then I get it right.

If the words make sense, I've done them before and understand them; if the teacher takes time to explain to me the work then I will know that she is interested and will not want to let her down. Understanding the work and getting help to complete the work. If the teacher takes interest, it makes you want to work hard. It's good to get praised by the teacher if you are making the effort.

Jay offered several attributions for her reading and writing success. First, it was teachers' support; second, it was about retaining what she had been taught, making it easy for her to understand the task (ease of task); third, it was that her success was based on the psychological impact of teachers' interest and not wanting to let teachers down; fourth was effort, arising from teacher's praise. These accounts

suggest that teachers' support brought about the other factors which led to success. Attributing success to teacher support indicates a lack of personal control over her outcome: this may impact self-perception negatively. Conversely, making reference to understanding the work and wanting to work hard as factors in achieving successful outcomes allowed for some perception of control in completing future tasks. This claim potentially led to feelings of pride and increased self-esteem, echoing Weiner (1985). This, in turn, may have enhanced motivation, engagement and expectations for future success in similar tasks, as noted by Weiner (1985), particularly, if her efforts were acknowledged by the teacher.

Additionally, her narrative revealed that expenditure of effort was dependent on support from teachers. Explaining her achievement in terms of reliance on others may have developed from her low self-belief and perception about lack of proficiency in reading and writing. Overall, she made success attributions to both internal and external factors, possibly arising from uncertainty relating to the reasons for her success.

Mak in explaining her perceptions and causes for success in reading and writing, stated:

Mak *(Attribution for success: external, uncontrollable; evidence of learned helplessness).*

Listening and learning and not kicking off. Force myself to do it because I need to learn to read and write because it's important in life. Facebook also helped me because my writing was bad and people on Facebook told me to go back to school and then come back and make sense. I do know how to swear but I can't spell. People say you can swear but you can't spell. I couldn't do it by myself … Somebody must have helped me. Learned it before or know the answers beforehand… Teacher helped me or I copied from somebody.

Mak acknowledged behaviour which led to success in reading and writing, for example, '… listening and learning and not kicking off', making links with the importance of skills in these areas. Similar to other participants, Mak credited others for successes; i.e. teachers' help and copying somebody's work (external, stable and uncontrollable factors). Her attributions connect with the literature which reports that individuals with LD attribute success to external factors (e.g. Humphrey & Mullins, 2002a; Jacobsen et al., 1986). However, unlike other participants', she was self-critical and self-deprecating, indicating a negative judgement of ability arising from past experiences of reading and writing tasks. She gave a specific example of the negative reaction which her reading and writing difficulties attracted on social media. This may have exacerbated feelings of low self-concept, resulting in an unwillingness to attribute success to internal causes (ability or effort). Consequently, she demonstrated an inclination to reject the assumption of control for her reading and writing achievement, reinforcing this in statements such as "couldn't do it myself", and suggesting that she did not take personal credit for her success.

A few participants commented on the role of resilience, For example, Neon stated:

Neon: *(Attribution for success: internal, stable, controllable; evidence of resilience).*

When I finish a book, I feel really good and believe I can really do it. It's an achievement. Feel like I am ready for another book…Shocked – how did I do it…I've always struggled… Because I didn't give up on me. If I enjoy the book I will keep trying to finish it… because I want to say to myself – see you finished the book! If it's reading it has to be a simple book and I read it over and over again and take my time. If the words were big words, someone helped me to break down the words so I understand them. If it's an app, someone helped, if I have filled it before, I try to remember how I filled it and do the same again. Or if I don't remember, I may leave it because it's sometimes embarrassing to keep asking for help.

Neon (above) attributed her success to resilience, indicating internal attributions of control, and adoption of techniques to enable completion of reading tasks: this may have had a positive impact on long-term success and engagement. She did not let her learning difficulty influence persistence in completing books which she enjoyed reading. Consequently, it would seem that a sense of resilience also led her to seek help when she encountered reading and writing difficulties: this links with Luthar et al. (2000), who described resilience as practice of adjustment in the event of challenges. Resilience has been postulated as a protective factor in academic difficulties (Stack-Cutler et al., 2014). Also, stating that she wanted to see herself finish the book indicated a focus on achieving goals which she perceived as challenging in the first instance, also suggesting motivation based on the value which she placed on reading: this finding is consistent with Logan et al. (2011), who linked reading motivation to performance and sense of achievement.

Furthermore, her account revealed the importance which she placed on interactions with teachers, demonstrating perceptions of value for emotional, academic and personal development. Although there was emphasis on the impact of teachers' support, she also noted personal effort which was demonstrated by listening to the teacher or looking at other people's work. These seemed to have had a positive impact on her self-confidence and self-esteem, outcomes which have been noted in Weiner (1986).

She also attributed her success to help from others, suggesting a belief that reading and writing tasks exceeded her level of ability. This is consistent with studies where it has been reported that individuals with dyslexia tend to explain their success in terms of external factors for example, significant others (e.g. Humphrey & Mullins, 2002a; Jacobsen et al., 1986)).

4.5.2 Attributions for failure

Data from the semi-structured interviews revealed that the participants made attributions of lack of ability, task difficulty and lack of teacher support for their reading and writing failures: this appeared to have implications for their expectations and future reading and writing attitude. The finding is consistent with the literature which claims that causal explanations which individuals give for outcomes inform subsequent behaviour (Printrich & Schunk, 2002).

Participants' accounts revealed that not understanding classroom teaching instructions was a factor in reading and writing failure. In describing her failure attributions, Mora stated:

Mora: *(Attribution for failure: stable, uncontrollable; evidence of learned helplessness).*

Didn't get what the teacher was saying, difficult to understand what is said; wasn't listening to the teacher; not making enough sense of what was being taught; I'm dumb and just can't get it. I can't spell and when I'm reading I don't know the words so it doesn't make sense.

***Reading**: dyslexia. It stops me from learning. Guess teachers have to teach me a different way. When my teacher is good like in Foundation English, then it urges me to work better. I'm encouraged to keep going on.*

***Writing**: I only use words I can spell and this makes my writing messy and you can't understand what I'm trying to say. It really gets to me that I have to work this hard when others have it easy.*

Mora attributed failure to a lack of ability, thereby interpreting her failing to a factor which is unchangeable, stable and uncontrollable: this seemed to result from preconceived notions about lack of aptitude in reading and writing, arising from dyslexia. She also attributed her failures to lack of understanding of teaching

instructions, a factor which is stable and uncontrollable. Hence, her learning difficulty may have caused her to misinterpret reading and writing teaching instructions, leading to ineffective employment of appropriate strategies in completing tasks in these areas.

She also used self-deprecating terms for example, 'dumb' in her descriptions, also stating, 'just can't get it'. These further emphasised beliefs that the causes of her failure were out of her control, possibly exacerbating lack of expectation of future success. Her attribution is consistent with Kistner et al. (1988) and Palmer et al. (1982), who reported that individuals with learning disability are less inclined to consider effort as a factor in their failures, and more likely to believe that they failed because of lack of ability.

Some participants narrated that task difficulty was a factor in their failure outcomes. Their responses indicated that this attribution may have had implications for their resilience in failure situations. In making attributions for failures, Dew (below) stated:

Dew: *(attributions for failure: stable, uncontrollable; evidence of learned helplessness).*

I haven't understood properly, I struggle to understand what the teacher is saying. I haven't had the help to do it so I won't do it well. I give up because I can't do it on my own and the teachers don't help me… I feel embarrassed when it comes out wrong… Because I don't know how to read and write – don't forget that I have difficulties - I need help to read and write like others because I don't know how to do the work the right way – I may do some on my own if I have done them before but it takes a lot of time to finish the work. I always find the work difficult… and give up when I can't do it properly.

Attributing failure to lack of ability, which is uncontrollable, suggests that she set lower goals for future tasks, and found it challenging to achieve them. Also, her account revealed that she experienced shame, arising from embarrassment because of her inability to complete reading and writing tasks successfully, also being a possible consequence of her prolonged failure experiences. This is consistent with literature positing that attributions are linked to emotional responses (e.g. Weiner, 1985, 1985). Also, feelings of shame are likely to lead to helplessness when she is faced with future reading and writing tasks, with reduced expectations for success: this finding adds to reports by Abramson et al. (1978) who posited that a person's causal attribution to failure can inform their performance.

Dew's account also suggested that she held the perception that reading and writing were difficult, indicating lack of motivation: according to the literature, motivation includes beliefs about ability, as well as desire to accomplish a goal (e.g. Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). Furthermore, her evaluation of difficulty in reading and writing led to reliance on teachers for achievement of success, suggesting acceptance that she did not have the ability or skills to cope with the difficulty of these tasks. This perception further reinforced feelings of learned helplessness, echoing the literature reports which link past failure experiences to beliefs that a person cannot influence the achievement of a desired outcome (Craske, 1988; Diener & Dweck, 1980).

Some participants made self-evaluations through comparisons with others, linking these to the reasons for their reading and writing failures, thereby reinforcing beliefs of low self-perception. For example, in making failure attributions, Jay (below) described herself as 'not being at the same level with others...'

Jay: *(Attribution for failure: internal, external, uncontrollable; resilience).*

Because some things don't make sense to me. Long words or difficult worksheets… it goes over my head. When the teachers haven't helped me to understand the question… My spelling is always bad because of dyslexia. I feel bad… and think that there's no point in doing it. I will always write it wrong… Because my reading and writing are not good. I'm not at the level with others of my age. Because of dyslexia, you spell differently from others and can't say some words. My learning difficulty means that I won't be like others. I accept that.

Like most of the other participants, Jay attributed her failure to lack of ability. In sharing her perceptions of reasons for failure, she also reported a reliance on teachers for learning support. Her account revealed a belief that her effort will not produce any changes in desired outcomes, with possible consequence of giving up quickly, particularly in the context of her history of failure. This account supports Craske (1988) and Diener and Dweck (1980) who reported links between attributions and learned helplessness. Also, fear of failure may have enabled the development of learned helplessness by fostering avoidance, whereby she might not attempt reading and writing tasks as a way of defending her low ability perceptions.

Additionally, she expressed task difficulty as a reason for her failure; it is possible that when she compared herself to others, she would observe that her peers did not encounter difficulty in completing similar tasks. This appeared to have strengthened the belief that lack of ability caused her failures; resultantly, she felt shame and embarrassment.

Most accounts suggested that effort was reduced, and curtailed persistence when failure was perceived as a threat. In making failure attributions, Neon (below) stated:

Neon *(Attribution for failure: stable, uncontrollable; resilience)*

Because it's happened so many times I feel it's just another negative because I always get it wrong anyway because I can't read and understand what I'm reading.

Reading: dyslexia. I didn't get the help I needed as a child and I missed out. Now it's harder because I have other things on my mind – it's not easy to learn – it's more difficult.

Writing: … it's about reading and writing. When I spell the way it sounds to me, I get it wrong - it's confusing. There are words I can never spell like 'friend' – I never know where to place the i and r.

In addition to lack of ability, Neon (above) used task difficulty to explain failures in reading and writing. Her perceptions of difficulty, reflecting her views on her chances of being successful, could be based on the relationship which she had with reading and writing tasks, including: previous experiences of failure, comparison with others, and perceptions of lack of ability to complete tasks and control the outcomes of her performances. Her account revealed negative self-perception of ability: this seemed to have implications for her performance, effort and persistence, and appeared to influence her reading and writing attitude negatively. Furthermore, Neon's account indicated a belief that she was powerless to influence her reading and writing outcomes, possibly interfering with her efforts to maintain a positive self-esteem.

Also, the dyslexia label appeared to have a negative impact on her self-concept through the process of self-fulfilling prophecy, resulting in low self-confidence in completing reading and writing tasks successfully. She did not view effort as being related to her achievement in reading and writing, reinforcing the conclusion that she had no control over these events. Similar to Anderman and Wolters (2006), her

accounts suggested that interpretations which she gave to her current situation informed her future reading and writing attitude.

In some of the accounts, asking for extra learning support was linked to participants' attributions to internal and external factors; for example, when attributions were made to inadequate teaching methods. In making her failure attributions, Pela (below) stated:

Pela: *(attribution for failure: internal, external, stable, uncontrollable; evidence of learned helplessness.*

Reason for failure: Because I don't understand what it's about. Because of my learning difficulty, it's a struggle to understand what I have to do unless the teacher takes time to explain it to me one-to-one. I have to learn the words over and over before I get it. But I will forget again next time that I have to do it.

Reading: Because I wasn't taught to read and write in school. The teacher didn't take time to find out my problems and I didn't ask for help because I didn't want to seem dumb. Mum took me out of school knowing there was a problem but it was too late.

Writing: Same. My teachers didn't really care even though they know I wasn't doing work… I wanted to learn and tried but no one cared. If I don't get help now, I won't do it properly.

Pela attributed her failure to poor teaching: this possibly enabled the avoidance of esteem-damaging consequences of her poor performance, eschewing responsibility for this outcome, as well as avoiding the embarrassment of reading and writing failures. Also, her account, which revealed a link between her anticipated outcome and actual outcome, suggested attribution to a stable cause. Similar to most of the participants, she also made attributions to task difficulty, an uncontrollable factor. The implication was that perceptions about control over her learning outcomes

appeared to impact the effort which she expended in engaging in these activities as well as the length of persistence in this expenditure (Weiner et al., 1979). Furthermore, her account revealed that internal attribution for failure led to use of self-deprecating terminologies, resulting in anxiety arising from fear of failure and negative self-belief.

Additionally, her perception of failure in reading and writing seemed to contribute to a lower sense of achievement, reducing feelings of confidence and capability: these possibly resulted in negative attitude in these areas. Her accounts revealed a belief that commitment and hard work do not contribute to reading and writing achievement because of her beliefs that environmental factors (teachers and peers) contributed to her failure in the learning environment.

4.5.3 Findings from the attributions questionnaire

Results from participants' responses to the questionnaire indicated that the women attributed reasons, according to Weiner's attribution theory, for their successes in reading and writing: these are shown in Table Six below. The scores represent the number of times the women made attributions to each of the four main causes of success and failure (ease of task, luck, effort and ability); the highest frequency numbers are in red.

Table 6: Attributions for success and failure – attribution questionnaire, absolute numbers based on the questionnaire

Name	**Success attributions**					**Failure attributions**			
	Ease of task	**Luck**	**Effort**	**Ability**		**Task difficulty**	**Lack of ability**	**Effort**	**Luck**
Tee	6					2	2	2	
Star	3	2	1			5	1		
Mak	3	3				5			1
Cal		5					4	2	1
Mora		1	3	2		4	1	1	
Jay	5					1	5	1	
Bem	3	3				4	2		
Fig	5		1			4	1	1	
Pela		6				3	1	1	1
Cee	2		3				7		
Dew		1	4	1		2	1	2	1
Neon	2	2	2			5	1		
Total	**29**	23	14	3		**35**	26	10	4

According to the findings, the women chose ease of task/task difficulty as the most important reason for both success and failure - an external, stable and uncontrollable factor. Assessing reading and writing tasks as being easy could lead to higher levels of interest and increased motivation, compared to the expectation that the task will be difficult. Conversely, holding the perception that tasks in reading and writing were difficult could have detrimental consequences for these women, as they could have been less motivated to complete future tasks, further lowering their expectations for success.

The second most important attribution for success was luck - an external, unstable and uncontrollable factor, suggesting the perception that they did not have much input towards this result, discounting any action which led to the outcome. If they believed that their success may have been underserved, they would not take credit for it, thereby reinforcing their negative self-evaluation. On the other hand, in failure situations, the second highest attribution was ability - an internal, stable and uncontrollable factor. Attributing failure to lack of ability suggested negative self-perception and could lead to loss of expectation of future success. Other possible outcomes for making internal and uncontrollable attribution for failure are low self-esteem, despair and learned helplessness.

The third in rank for attribution for both success and failure was effort - an internal, unstable and controllable factor. Coming in third place suggests that these women did not believe that effort was very effective in their success or failure, instead ranking factors which are uncontrollable i.e. ease of task/task difficulty, luck and ability, higher. Weiner (1974; 1986) noted that attributing results to uncontrollable factors hinders achievement by diminishing levels of effort.

The least attributed cause for success was ability: an internal, stable and uncontrollable factor, suggesting that these women did not hold strong views about their reading and writing ability. According to the literature, perceptions of lack of ability may present low expectations for future success, which can culminate in learned helplessness. However, the least attributed cause for failure was luck: an external, unstable and uncontrollable factor, suggesting that these women did not believe that luck was an important factor in their failure.

4.5.4 Attributions questionnaire vs semi-structured interviews

In this concluding section, I will be combining the summary of responses which are specific to attribution theory in both the attribution questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews, noting any convergence or divergence in the overall findings. These will be discussed within the context of the most salient determinants of success and failure: ability, effort, task-difficulty and luck (Weiner, 1979; 1974). The rationale for this classification will be considered along the dimensions of causality, stability and controllability (Weiner, 1979; 1974).

The findings in this study showed a good level of convergence between participants' responses in the semi-structured interviews and attribution questionnaire responses. Most of their attributions for success and failure were external, stable and uncontrollable or internal, stable and uncontrollable, respectively. Results from the semi-structured interviews showed that the most common attributions of success were: help from teachers/others and the second attribution for success was ease of task: both of these are external, stable and uncontrollable. Similarly, responses in the attribution questionnaire showed that the most important factors for success were external and uncontrollable i.e. ease of task and luck. This finding adds to other studies reported in the literature, which posited that low performing students tended to attribute their success outcomes to external and uncontrollable factors (e.g. Weiner, 1986; Weiner et al., 1979; Humphrey & Mullins, 2002a) and make less internal attribution for success (e.g. Pearl et al., 1980; Jacobsen et al., 1986).

In failure situations, participants' responses in the attribution questionnaire showed that the most important factors for failure were task difficulty (stable) and luck (unstable); these are both external and uncontrollable factors. Responses in the

semi-structured interviews indicated that these women attributed their failures mainly to: lack of ability (internal), task difficulty (external) and lack of teacher support (external): these are a combination of internal and external factors; however, they are all stable and uncontrollable factors. This result adds to studies reported in the literature that failing students make attribution to uncontrollable factors (Weiner et al., 1979; Humphrey & Mullins, 2002a). What is common in these results is the dimension of controllability: the findings revealed that the women held mostly perceptions of lack of control over their reading and writing outcomes. Their attribution pattern indicates a poor opinion of their reading and writing performances encompassing negative self-perceptions, low self-efficacy and lack of self-confidence. These reports also indicate the presence of negative emotions which perpetuate self-defeating behaviours, for example, lack of effort. According to Weiner (1979; 1986), explanations which individuals provide for success or failure are major determinants of the effort which they put into their work.

4.6 Bringing it all together: common characteristics

Analysing participants' common characteristics, as shown in Table Seven below, was used as the final step to synthesis the findings in the interview data from the semi-structured interviews and attribution questionnaire, establishing links between female dyslexic offenders' dyslexic experiences, reading and writing attitude, and attribution for success or failure. This analysis illustrated how dyslexic experiences and attributions for success or failures were related to reading and writing attitude.

Table 7: Participants' common characteristics

Types	Categories	Descriptive terms
Type 1	Resilient	'Even though I struggle, I am willing to make the effort.'
Type 2	Reliance on others	'I succeeded because someone helped me.'
Type 3	Resigned	'Dyslexia will always be there; why bother?'
Type 4	Perception of control	'Can I change my reading and writing outcome?
Type 5	Apathy	'What purpose do reading and writing serve?'
Type 6	Accept or reject support	'Everyone is watching.'

Identifying common characteristics of concepts, representing participants' attributions for success or failure in reading and writing was central to my study. I have previously explained my initial findings in the analysis sections, contextualising my results within the literature and theory. Consequently, in order to avoid repetition in this section, I categorised participants' divergent perceptions on attributions, attitudes, and dyslexic experiences into purposeful dimensions. The aim of this analysis was to identify some common attributes of several individual sorts. These data sources were interpreted in the context of my research questions, and guided decisions on the selections for categorisation of commonalities among the participants. Several individual perceptions of my study participants were condensed to a limited number of factors which represented commonalities in their viewpoints and there were different numbers of participants in each type. I will discuss each of the types below.

Type 1: Resilient: 'Even though I struggle, I am willing to make the effort'

Participants within this category indicated resilience as a coping mechanism following their dyslexia diagnosis, and some confidence in pursuing success in

reading and writing: they demonstrated motivation in improving skills in these areas. The finding supports the assumption that determination is a factor in academic achievement for individuals with learning difficulties (e.g. Corkett et al., 2008; Litner et al., 2005). For these women, the presence of dyslexia placed them at risk of negative experiences, and they were particularly vulnerable to stress and anxiety as a result of their reading and writing difficulties. However, they showed evidence of positive reaction to their dyslexia, despite the adversity which they had encountered: echoing Hellendorn and Ruijssenaars (2000), who reported a willingness to work hard in individuals with dyslexia.

According to their accounts, diagnosis provided self-understanding and an acceptance which may have enabled the determination to accomplish goals in reading and writing. Speaking in this discourse provided new insight into how some of the women coped with dyslexia, contributing a clearer and deeper understanding of how they used capacity for bouncing back in a positive way, also noted in Hellendoorn and Ruijssenaars (2000). Furthermore, the concept of resilience was unique in comparison to the relative weaknesses which were reported as a consequence of dyslexia. The interview accounts revealed that these participants demonstrated resilience because they developed an understanding of dyslexia which was based on accepting the condition as being one aspect of who they were. This was an indication that at different points in their lives, they had better understanding of their dyslexic experiences and responded in constructive ways, linking to Friborg et al. (2003) who reported that self-belief promotes individual achievement.

Examples:

I know I have to do my reading and writing… I have to keep trying … when I fall, I get up. (Mora)

Read and write: it's so hard but I'm trying… if I get the first one right, I try more. (Pela)

Want to do reading and writing: Since I understand that I have learning difficulty and that's why I don't understand things like others, it makes me want to do it more… I don't want to give up and I always try. (Bem)

Now I know why I had those problems in school … it made me want to try harder … I have to keep telling myself to keep trying. (Jay)

I struggled and pushed myself to do it… though I had learning difficulty, I was making effort and not letting it keep me down. (Neon)

Type 2: Reliance on others: 'I succeeded because someone helped me'

Within this category, participants recorded successes in reading and writing, however, their account suggested the belief that they only succeeded because of support from others: support from others has been identified as a protective factor for self-perception in individuals with learning disability (e.g. Werner, 1993). Participants within this classification were able to actively engage with learning support and in this way influenced the narratives about their dyslexia. Findings in this study suggest that participants' diagnosis brought some awareness of the reasons for their reading and writing difficulties and presented the opportunity to access support in order to improve their learning experience.

For some of the women, understanding of their difficulties meant that they took control of their situation, seeking out ways of completing reading and writing,

including asking for help from others. Their narratives echo Werner (1993) who posited that assistance from significant others constituted a protective factor in ameliorating some of the negative consequences of reading difficulties. Seeking assistance from others becomes even more relevant because it could have a range of implications for these women within the prison context, ranging from favourable to unfavourable: hence this study makes contribution to the literature on how securing support for reading and writing can affect dyslexic women in prison.

For others within this type, their dyslexic experiences led to beliefs that success was possible only if they received support, connecting to Lackaye and Margalit (2006) who postulated that early experiences of learning difficulty had the potential to inform a person's understanding of current issues, and which may influence their attitude. Hence, the dependence factor demonstrated that the women within this category did not make a connection between the expenditure of effort and accomplishments. Dependence on others could be a consequence of lack of belief in personal ability: hence, these individuals may only have put in requisite effort if support was assured, suggesting negative self-perception. For example, some participants relied on teachers and peers for completing reading and writing tasks, and while in prison, continued to rely on the support from others. Consequently, although they recorded successes, they may not have achieved independence in developing skills in these areas, emphasising the risk of low self-esteem, also noted in McNulty (2003) and Burden (2008).

Participants' accounts highlight the importance of adopting pedagogical approaches within prison education, which would encourage independence in this group of learners, fostering the development of a positive independent learner identity, and promoting learner agency.

Examples:

…the girls help me to fill in the apps … can't do it myself. Key workers will help read letters … and write solicitors letters. (Fig)
I will succeed if I have help… it's hard but with help, I can do it. (Dew)
Someone in the class helped me … I always have people helping me… someone has to write for me. (Cal)
Unless someone helps me, I won't be able to do it –… it's a struggle unless teacher takes time to explain to me - one-to-one… If I get help, then I get motivated. I will ask someone to read/explain it to me, then I would try. (Pela)
I couldn't do it myself, I will need help. Somebody must have helped me. (Mak)
I try harder because someone is taking interest … I want to try hard for them because of their effort. (Star)

Type 3: Resigned: 'Dyslexia will always be there; why bother'?

Within this category, participants believed that development of reading and writing skills was beyond them, understanding dyslexia as a condition which was stable over time: this connects with literature reports that individuals with dyslexia hold beliefs that success in learning was unattainable because of their learning disability (e.g. Humphrey & Mullins, 2002a). Specifically, I determined three components which provided insight into these individuals' views of dyslexia as: reading and writing identity, attribution for success or failure in reading and writing, and approach to reading and writing. Their accounts revealed a sense of resignation that failure was inevitable: this perception may have resulted from attributing failure to low ability. There were negative consequences for their affective reactions to reading and writing failure outcomes, suggesting that they did not view effort as a factor in their

lack of achievement, also reported in the literature (e.g. Pearl et al., 1980; Jacobsen et al., 1986).

I found that the resigned discourse provided a way of understanding the influence of the attributions which these individuals made for their success or failure, fostering self-doubt and impacting their approaches to reading and writing negatively: attributions have been used to explain behaviours regarding future conducts (Weiner, 1974, 1986, 2000). Additionally, these participants' learning identity, which was informed by prior educational experiences and acceptance of their dyslexia, resulted in an understanding of self as being unable to achieve positive outcomes in reading and writing. The women's perceptions link with Hall (2012) who posited that reading identity is developed on the basis of past educational experiences.

Examples:

I have dyslexia… no matter what I do, I won't be a very good reader... dyslexia will never go away. (Fig)

Even if I listened, I would've found it hard… I blame dyslexia. (Dew)

I keep trying and then I give up because dyslexia will always be in my way. (Mora)

Dyslexia stopped me from learning. (Cal)

If I didn't have dyslexia… I will do well in school… dyslexia stops me from moving forward. (Tee)

I think it (reading and writing) will always be hard. Dyslexia will not go away. (Jay)

I don't know if I will ever be able to get my spelling to be normal. (Star)

Type 4: Perception of control: ‘Can I change my reading and writing outcome?

I have adopted the term ‘perception of control’ to explain how participants viewed control over their reading and writing performances, for example, whether it was internal or external to them. I found that within this category, participants’ assumptions and views about the responsibility for their success or failure offered a tool in understanding how they viewed themselves with regards to their difficulties, echoing Burden (2005) who posited that locus of control can provide valuable insights into how individuals with dyslexia understand their dyslexic experiences. Participants within this category mainly exhibited external locus of control, confirming Humphrey and Mullins (2002b) who reported that dyslexic pupils exhibit external locus of control. Accounts of women in this present study indicated that they held beliefs that the responsibility for success or failure was outside of themselves, viewing success in reading and writing more of an issue of luck and ease of task while failure is construed as an issue of lack of ability and difficulty of task.

I extended the concept of control to examine their perceptions of competence and their narrative suggested feelings of inadequacy. Specifically, I found that the women’s self-definitions using the terms ‘dumb’, ‘stupid’ ‘dumbo’ helped to explain their decisions about engaging in reading and writing tasks, and their ensuing attitude. I also found that their conceptualisations of these terms: ‘dumb’, ‘stupid’ and ‘dumbo’ had links with their reading and writing identity, promulgating self-views as unintelligent, with possible consequence for the positions which they took up when they had to complete reading and writing tasks. This finding is supported in the literature; for example, Humphrey and Mullins (2002b), who postulated that individuals with dyslexia frequently related reading and writing ability with intelligence.

Furthermore, their recollections of negative school experiences suggested an acceptance that control over achievement in reading and writing was minimal, resulting in limited expectations of success, low self-esteem and lack of motivation: these connect with findings in other studies (e.g. Burden, 2008; Humphrey & Mullins, 2002b; McNulty, 2003). Participants reported less engagement, suggesting negative reading and writing attitude because they believed that achieving success was unattainable, attributing failure to lack of ability, as postulated by Weiner (1974).

Examples:

Worried that I may not be able to read and write properly… I'm nobody… people judge you when you can't read and write. (Dew)

Reading and writing – I won't be able to it even if I try. I'm not like others. (Cal)

I don't want to do it… I don't care… I can't keep failing because that's what it's about – do it and get it all wrong… I don't think I'm able to improve my reading and writing … will never get better. (Tee)

Type 5: Apathy: 'what purpose do reading and writing serve?'

Within this category, I considered that participants' outcome expectations, relating to the value which they attached to reading and writing, guided their decisions and approaches to completing tasks in these areas. I make the assumption that expectations in this context encompassed: a) how women in this study judged their performance in reading and writing (attributions), b) what they hoped to gain from developing skills in reading and writing, and c) how they expected their lives to be influenced by pursuing these goals. Data in the present study showed that individuals in this category had reduced expectations of success, low self-perception, lacking sense of accomplishment: the negative impact of dyslexia has been noted in

the literature (e.g. McNulty, 2003; Humphrey & Mullins, 2002; Pollack, 2005). Consequently, I conceptualised that expectation was linked to their past experiences and pervaded their reading and writing identity. Furthermore, I found that participants' reading and writing attitude was related to the combination of their purpose for engaging in reading and writing, outcome expectations from this engagement and self-perception as readers and writers. For example, low expectations resulting from negative experiences of lack of progress and non-achievement possibly led to lack of motivation: this extends the finding in Day and Bamford (2000) who posited that reading attitude may develop from previous experiences, encompassing success or failure in reading. Consequently, participants in this category preferred to eschew activities requiring skills in these areas because they wished to protect themselves from further experiences of failure. This finding suggests that attitude may be linked to a person's self-perception as a reader or writer, echoing Ajzen (2001). Also, the importance which these women placed on reading and writing, including whether they saw skills in these areas as a pathway to opportunities in life, could be associated with engagement and performance outcomes.

Examples:

At the back of my mind, I feel it's too late to start learning. (Cal)

I feel that I've been able to do without reading and writing… ask myself whether I really want to put myself through all that again. (Pela)

I will like to improve my reading and writing but I think it's late... it's getting more difficult to learn when you're older. (Tee)

I understand that I have to try harder because I need them (reading and writing) but don't have the will. (Star)

Type 6: Accept or reject support: ‘Everyone is watching’

The reasons why participants in this category rejected learning support and their perceptions about receiving support was integral to their reading and writing attitude. They were reluctant to accept classroom support for their dyslexia, noting that being taken out of class for this intervention or receiving specialist help resulted in unwarranted attention: rejection of support has been posited as a negative coping strategy (e.g. Heiman & Kariv, 2004; Givon & Court, 2010). Hence, I make the assumption that factors which influenced their decision about accepting learning support were self-perception (e.g. Humphrey & Mullins, 2002b); prior experience (e.g. Stampoltzis & Polychronopoulou, 2009; McNulty, 2003); assessment of outcome expectations (e.g. Pollack, 2005) and level of acceptance or denial of need for support, motivation and goals. Furthermore, I contend that these women’s feelings about receiving support were linked to their perceptions of ‘difference’: these were also based on comparisons which they made with their peers who were not dyslexic. These comparisons were likely to have resulted in negative impact on their self-esteem, echoing Humphrey (2002) and Glazzard (2010). Their perceptions suggested that reading and writing support was an ineffective endeavour because participants viewed it as a cause of alienation. Participants’ narratives indicated difficulties and anxiety which individuals with dyslexia may experience when they resign themselves to needing support, although this simultaneously conflicted with their self-perceptions as learners who had learning difficulties. I make the assumption that experiences relating to situations where their weaknesses were highlighted led to the internalisation of those differences which underlined decisions on whether to accept or reject support: this connects with Humphrey and Mullins

(2002b) who noted that individuals with dyslexia suffered discomfort when exposed to situations which made their learning difficulties apparent.

Examples:

I don't want to embarrass myself and ask because then everyone will start staring at me. Had support teacher which made others look at me like I'm not normal. (Jay)

Teachers wanted to speak to me... couldn't speak to them because I was embarrassed … didn't want people to think I was crazy. (Mak)

Singled out from the rest of the class and that was emotional stress which affected my mental health. I was the only one in the class with this problem … one-to-one made me stand out which wasn't good for me. I felt there was something wrong with me. (Neon)

Findings in this study show that providing in-class support for this group of learners is complex, calling into question the suitability of intervention for them within the mainstream education model. What this study has shown is that for these women, receiving special attention in the same classroom as their peers reduced levels of integration, leading to negative learning experiences, and resulted in perceptions of being marked as different. Hence, they were unable to cope effectively in mainstream school: this presented a barrier to full participation, becoming a basis for accepting or rejecting in-class support for reading and writing. This finding also provides insight into the impact of receiving support within the prison environment.

The prison is a closed environment where inmates live in close proximity: the consequence is that it is often not possible to provide reading and writing support without drawing the attention of other inmates. Hence, women who do not wish to share their dyslexic status have little room in which to navigate this decision. The women's accounts demonstrate the importance of the support environment and how

negative perceptions of intervention climate can lead to higher levels of loneliness and low self-perception. Overall, what is clear from the data is that specialist support within a mainstream learning environment or prison setting is not likely to be effective for everyone; thus emphasising the importance of placing dyslexic individuals in learning or support environments which are specifically planned and resourced to meet their particular needs.

4.6.1 Conclusion: Bringing it all together: common characteristics

In identifying the women's common characteristics, it was necessary to establish broad categories, from which I developed smaller classifications. These emerged from the data from the semi-structured interviews and attribution questionnaire, and were grouped together, using descriptive labels which aimed to capture the intended interpretations of the participants. Additionally, the descriptions which informed the identification of each of the six categories were supported by previous studies. However, some distinct features emerged from this study, allowing theoretical connections which linked to participants' responses. Furthermore, these categories were based on predefined characteristics as presented in literature on Weiner's attribution theory, reading and writing attitude, and learning identity: they each represented aspects of my study participants.

In summary, the classifications which I created were based on interpretations across my dataset. However, these may not be the only ones which can be developed from the perceptions and experiences which the participants shared. I recognise that commonalities amongst the women's accounts are not exhaustive and other categories are possible because other researchers may construct dissimilar or other

categories regarding the same phenomenon, depending on their context and world view.

Summary: Chapter Four

This research on female dyslexic offenders is aimed at understanding their reading and writing attitude, how they describe their dyslexic experiences, and the reasons they give for success or failure in reading and writing. In this chapter, I describe the analysis of the data from the semi-structured interviews using quotes from participants' responses to create a narrative for my findings. The process of analysing the data from the attribution questionnaire is also presented. The results of the semi-structured interviews and attribution questionnaire are set out, identifying patterns, relationships and commonalities. My data are analysed into generative themes and I engaged in a critical discussion of the findings, linking them to existing literature, research, theories and concepts in order to determine whether these new data support, contribute or contradict existing knowledge. The data analysis tools which I employed - thematic and numerical analysis - are described to enable understanding of my research methods, as well as to provide insights into the phenomenon of study. I presented the common characteristics which I identified in the women's accounts, using this method to further identify patterns, links and relationships.

Chapter Five: Conclusions and Implications

In this final chapter, I draw the study together by revisiting my research questions, discussing the main findings and presenting the limitations of this study. The implications of the study are outlined by highlighting its contribution to policy and practice. The chapter will conclude with an acknowledgement of and offering thoughts on the potential for further research.

5.1 Revisiting the research questions

This study looked at dyslexia in the lives of adult female prisoners, exploring their experiences and accounts of dyslexia both when in prison and at other times in their educational lives. The principal area of interest was their reading and writing attitude, how this was related to, or otherwise affected by their experiences of living with dyslexia, reading and writing identity and the reasons they gave for their success or failure at reading and writing. The main points which answer my research questions are presented.

How do female dyslexic offenders understand and make sense of their educational experiences of reading and writing?

A major finding in this study was the link between these women's educational experiences and psycho-emotional issues relating to reading and writing difficulties which continued into adulthood. Participants' narratives made it clear that their lives were shaped by feelings of exclusion which culminated in perceptions of being left out, not fitting in or becoming alienated within several social domains in school. These informed their understanding of societal responses to their dyslexic needs,

perpetuating feelings of helplessness and social disadvantage because of lack of skills in reading and writing. Their narratives showed that school became an environment where they interpreted messages about sense of self as readers and writers, including beliefs about competency and who they could become as individuals with dyslexia.

This study found that most of the participants explained dyslexic difficulties as a reason for low level of education, problematic behaviour and lack of acceptance by peers. The school context was particularly important in how they understood lack of skills in reading and writing as it was influenced by discrimination, characterised by social isolation from their peers, unfavourable teacher attitude and lack of appropriate learning support. They detailed negative experiences such as poor self-evaluations, comparisons with peers and low self-esteem. Consequently, most of them did not bond with the school systems.

How the women understood their educational experiences of reading and writing was linked to their diagnosis and interpretations of dyslexia. A significant finding was that diagnosis of dyslexia as well as understanding of their dyslexic difficulties led to resilience, facilitating motivation to achieve success in reading and writing for some of the women. This discourse suggested a conceptualisation of dyslexia in ways which potentially facilitated the development of positive self-perception. This finding provided insight into participants' perceptions of future performances in reading and writing, including links which they made between their dyslexia and their success or failure outcomes. Resilience has been reported in the literature as constituting a protective factor for individuals with dyslexia in the context of their learning difficulties (e.g. Stack-Cutler et al., 2014; Spekman et al., 1993). However, my study results revealed that the development of positive self-belief and determination – resiliency

characteristics - were linked to participants' assumption of the dyslexia label, resulting in the motivation to achieve success in reading and writing.

Findings in this study emphasise the importance of early assessment of dyslexia as a basis for gaining understanding of reading and writing difficulties, building on the work surrounding the relevance of the timing for dyslexia diagnosis (e.g. Ingesson, 2007; Burden, 2008; McNulty, 2003). Participants described being aware of their reading and writing difficulties through self-comparisons with peers, reporting that diagnosis revealed the reason for the problem. Their diagnosis brought relief that they were not to be blamed for these difficulties. Many pieces of research (e.g. Rowan, 2014; Glazzard, 2010; Morgan & Klein, 2001; Ingesson, 2007) showed the significance of early diagnosis as a protective factor.

This study makes an important finding on female dyslexic offenders' characteristics, linking their poor school experiences to responses to literacy provisions in prison. Their narratives, which were centred on their reading and writing experiences, suggested that failure in school became a barrier to engagement in prison education and offender programmes: most of them did not wish to re-experience failure in reading and writing as adults in prison. Their position on the matter of receiving or rejecting support was linked to the prison setting where dyslexia was stigmatised with potential to incur intimidation and bullying.

This research highlights the important role played by educators in the educational and developmental experience of students with dyslexia, both in early schooling and prison: it makes a significant contribution to the literature on the role of early educational experiences in shaping how a person understands reading and writing difficulties in adulthood. In reporting the role played by educational institutions, this

study found that most of the women did not feel supported by their teachers in school and some of them stated that education in prison reminded them of school, with one of them reporting a lack of support from prison education teachers. These reports support research findings which indicate that teachers may hold prejudiced views about dyslexic students, which may impact teaching styles and ultimately learning outcomes (e.g. Alvidrez & Weinsten, 1999; Paterson, 2007). However, there were some participants who recorded the utility served by the support which they received for their learning, echoing Murray and Malmgren (2005) who reported that support from teachers led to improved participation and enhanced motivation.

Additionally, the women's accounts revealed the impact of peer relationships as a constituent part of their educational experience as dyslexic students, linking this to their time in prison. Most of them reported negative associations including being bullied and judged because of their inability to read and write like others both in school and prison, reinforcing the significance of developing skills in these areas. My results build on research findings which show that many dyslexic students encounter negative relationships with peers, encompassing issues of bullying and name-calling (e.g. Humphrey, 2002; Glazzard, 2010). However, some of the women received help with their reading and writing from fellow inmates, demonstrating positive peer relationships.

Interpretations which they ascribed to their educational reading and writing experiences became more relevant within the prison environment because these women were subjected to normative expectations of attending to demands of everyday life based on assumptions about literacy skills. Overall, understanding of their educational experiences informed their dyslexic identity and impacted decisions about engaging in reading and writing activities in prison.

What are the relationships between their experiences of being dyslexic and their learning attribution beliefs?

Findings in this study showed that female dyslexic offenders explained success or failure in reading and writing in the context of their dyslexic experiences. Using Weiner's attribution theory to frame a detailed examination of potential links between dyslexic experiences, and reading and writing attitude, this study offers insights into how female dyslexic offenders attend to demands for reading and writing within the prison system. The study found that participants were more inclined to credit their success to external and uncontrollable factors such as good luck and ease of task, as opposed to internal factors, resulting from their perceptions of lack of ability arising from dyslexia. Research has indicated that individuals with dyslexia are more likely to attribute their success externally, failing to recognise personal effort, instead emphasising factors beyond their control (e.g. Humphrey & Mullins, 2002a; Jacobsen et al., 1986; Pearl et al., 1980). In situations of failure, the study participants mostly made attributions to uncontrollable and stable factors: lack of ability and task difficulty; there are research findings which showed that individuals with dyslexia were predisposed to attribute failure to internal factors i.e. lack of ability (Humphrey & Mullins, 2002b; Palmer et al., 1982).

What this study has shown is that all the women had a history of failure which they attributed to dyslexia. The consequence was that most of them developed feelings of low self-efficacy, believing that their reading and writing difficulties would always be present, while the permanence of dyslexia would never allow them to develop skills to counter these difficulties. These perceptions had an impact on their engagement in prison education or other reading and writing schemes, believing that improving skills in these areas was beyond their control, and demonstrating negative reading

and writing attitude. This finding builds on the literature which indicates that a person's belief in having personal control over an outcome, guides decisions which they make regarding engagement in academic tasks (e.g. Burden, 2005; April et al., 2012; Rotter, 1966). Perceptions of lack of control over both success and failure outcomes became precursor to the development of learned helplessness. The link between attribution for success or failure, and learned helplessness has been reported in the literature (e.g. Burden, 2005; Diener & Dweck, 1980).

The women's dyslexic experiences as well as being in prison were linked to a learned helplessness disposition because it led to dependence on other prisoners for completion of tasks requiring skills in reading and writing. Hence, a significant finding in this study was how these women made decisions on disclosing or concealing their dyslexia in prison as an outcome of their reliance on other prisoners for support. For example, for some of the women, disclosure led to receipt of support for their dyslexic difficulties from other prisoners: this enabled social involvement, inclusion and sense of community. Conversely, for others, disclosure imported risk of victimisation or extortion arising from the harmful relationships which they were forced to enter into in order to meet normative expectations of ability in reading and writing, in order to complete requisite tasks. Such negative social relationships potentially eroded their sense of self-worth and self-belief, and could have made adaptation to prison especially difficult. Hence, this finding adds to knowledge about forms of support networks within prisons (Pollock, 2002) as well as prisoner-to-prisoner victimisation (Wolff et al., 2009) and "relational violence" (Trammel, 2009) which take place in female prison establishments.

Overall, these women made attributions for their reading or writing failures which contributed to the internalising of feelings of inadequacy or resilience. Their attributions interacted with the formation of reading and writing identity which was disengaged, self-critical and discouraged in most of the women while a few of them demonstrated resilience. My study contributes a deeper understanding to how their dyslexic experiences related to beliefs of competency in reading and writing and underpinned a sense of success or failure as a reader or a writer, as well as decision-making about engagement in reading and writing.

How do these relationships relate to their reading and writing attitude from early schooling to their time in prison?

An important finding in this study was that most of the participants exhibited negative reading and writing attitude. In their narratives, participants reported that the decision to engage in reading and writing was related to the combination of a lifetime of difficulties in these areas and an acceptance that development of these skills was beyond them. This builds on previous findings that reading attitude (e.g. Day & Bamford, 2000) and writing attitude (e.g. Leki & Carson, 1997; Victori, 1999) derive from previous experiences, suggesting links to success or failure, as well as readiness or reluctance to read or write.

Also, this study provides significant insight into how interpretations which individuals give to the prison informal social system contribute to their reading and writing attitude, including engagement levels in prison education, reading and writing programmes, as well as offender rehabilitation courses. Some of the women concealed their dyslexic difficulties, adopting avoidance coping strategies because of the prison culture where any form of vulnerability is viewed as a weakness which

may incur adverse consequences. This suggests that although the wishes of inmates play a role in how they attend to reading and writing, the highly regulated nature of prisons and the immediate purposes were also contributory to the normalisation of these women's behaviour towards reading and writing.

Participants' descriptions of their relationship with reading and writing were encapsulated within three factors: emotions towards reading and writing, beliefs about reading and writing and perceived competence in reading and writing. Interaction between these dimensions was highlighted as a factor in the development of attitude towards reading and writing. My findings add to the literature which reports that reading attitude is defined as a person's feelings toward reading (e.g. Schiefele et al., 2012) and writing attitude as an affective state, relating to feelings about writing, varying between happy to unhappy (e.g. Graham et al., 2005).

The women in this study detailed some of the ways in which dyslexia imposed challenges on everyday prison life, revealing perceptions of the prison as physically and symbolically excluding and divisive: this had potential to exacerbate their sense of inequality in comparison to prisoners without dyslexia. Hence, they expressed stress and anxiety when required to complete reading and writing tasks in prison, believing that they lacked ability in completing these tasks.

Overall, most of the participants showed lack of enthusiasm, low self-efficacy, perception of lack of ability and expectations of failure: these resulted in low levels of engagement and the absence of building of skills, contributing to the development of negative reading and writing attitude. The findings suggested low self-confidence in completing reading and writing tasks, which is in line with Humphrey and Mullins (2002b) who reported a significant link between self-confidence and a person's

ability to achieve success in reading and writing. The studies of McNulty (2003) and Pollack (2005) also support this finding, reporting that individuals with dyslexia questioned their intelligence, resulting in negative self-perception and low self-esteem.

The next section will discuss these main findings further in relation to the literature reviewed in chapter two.

5.2 Discussion of the main findings

In this section, findings will be discussed in relation to the literature which is most relevant to the focus and findings of this study.

Link between dyslexic difficulties and educational experiences:

Findings in this study revealed that perceptions and expectancies relating to dyslexia, based on past educational experiences of failure, impacted self-esteem and self-perception, and led to feelings of inadequacy and incompetence when required to complete reading and writing tasks in prison. According to the literature, dyslexic adults report problems in achieving success in reading and writing tasks, recalling unpleasant school experiences (e.g. Gibson & Kendall, 2010; Humphrey & Mullins, 2002a, 2002b), lack of support (e.g. Glazzard, 2010; Riddick, 1996), feelings of inadequacy (McNulty, 2003) and poor peer-relationships (e.g. Glazzard, 2010; Riddick, 1996; Singer, 2005). These women were reluctant to engage in reading and writing tasks, believing that no matter how hard they tried, failure was inevitable: prior negative learning experiences has been noted as a barrier to engagement in learning activities (e.g. Cross, 1981). What this study has shown is that educational settings constitute either a protective or risk factor in the link between emotional

experiences of dyslexia and reading and writing attitude. The women in this study reported that mainstream school environment served as a risk factor for the development of negative emotional experiences with dyslexia. Those women who attended special school reported positive experiences which included favourable peer interactions and supportive teachers, leading to comfort and an improved sense of self.

Resiliency characteristics:

Some participants reflected elements of resilience through self-determination and drive to achieve success in reading and writing following their dyslexia diagnosis: resilience has been reported as a protective factor in academic difficulties (e.g. Stack-Cutler et al., 2014). Participants' accounts showed that early diagnosis can have positive impact on self-esteem, raising levels of resilience. These women spoke actively about the determination to succeed and not let their dyslexic difficulties present as a barrier in the development of skills in reading and writing. This finding offers insight into how individual factors such as resilience can potentially mediate the negative impact of dyslexic difficulties. Resilience has been noted in the literature as a contributing factor to success in academic work (e.g. Firth, 2010) and plays a key role in influencing success or failure in school (e.g. Corkett et al., 2008; Hellendoorn & Ruijssenaars, 2000).

Negotiating distinct barriers to full social participation in prison:

Findings were presented which revealed that these women were exposed to structural deprivation through a requirement to comply with the paper-based request system as well as attend to the completion of other tasks requiring skills in reading and writing, including exchanging letters with family and friends. Keeping in contact

with family becomes even more relevant for these participants because separation from children has been identified as a major cause of distress for women in prison (Luke, 2002). As a result, these women, irrespective of personal characteristics, had to adopt a range of coping mechanisms and adaptation methods in response to the prison environment, as dictated by their reading and writing difficulties in addition to navigating the stringent structural and psychological demands of imprisonment.

Sensitivity around disclosing or concealing dyslexia:

This study reported findings which suggested that these women became institutionally deficient because of their reading and writing difficulties. Consequently, full participation in the prison regime became automatically more challenging, potentially leading to isolation; report by the Prison Reform Trust notes that prisoners with learning disabilities experienced extensive barriers to adjustment to prison life because of their literacy difficulties (Talbot, 2008). Consequently, they had to make decisions about revealing or concealing their dyslexia in order to receive support for reading and writing. Some of them revealed their reading and writing difficulties because it enabled them to access support, although they had to make decisions about who they could trust with this information: it is noted in the literature that prisoners are influenced by informal arrangements of prisons (e.g. Leech & Cheney, 2002). Also, according to the literature, women form social relationships as a coping tool and adjustment to imprisonment (e.g. Cohen, 2004; Trammel, 2009). Some of these women encountered adverse consequences directly from this revelation: prisoners with learning disabilities have reported experiences of bullying (Talbot, 2008). However, others made decisions to conceal their dyslexia because they believed that any form of weakness made them vulnerable to victimisation – a key feature of prison culture. Also, bullying has been highlighted as a serious concern for

women in prison (e.g. Ireland & Archer, 1996) and this group of prisoners experience forms of victimisation (e.g. Wooldredge & Steiner, 2016) because prisons impose compromised social status (Prison Reform Trust, 2020) which can impact prisoners' decisions. There were others who disengaged completely from reading and writing, risking being isolated and alienated from the social system of the prison: a report by the Prison Reform Trust (Talbot, 2008) reported that prisoners with learning disabilities were likely to spend time on their own. Absence of social network support has potential to hinder adjustment to prison life, also noted in Wooldredge and Steiner (2016), and presents as a barrier to participation to prison programmes including education.

Prison education:

This study found low level engagement in educational courses and participants reported unwillingness to undertake learning as a formal process based on beliefs about efficacy in reading and writing. Some of these women viewed prison education in terms of their negative early school experiences: engagement in prison education has been linked to prisoner's experiences before imprisonment (Duguid & Pawson, 1998), for example, negative experiences of compulsory education (Maclachlan et al., 2008; Kilgore, 2001). Additionally, education is classified as purposeful activity and attendance is prioritised and often enforced, importing a sense of institutional control over prisoner choices. Hence, providing education in prison is complicated because prisons are by design, restrictive and controlling (Munoz, 2009). This may have had a negative impact on how these women experienced formal prison education, viewing it with suspicion, questioning its motives whilst evaluating it as part of a system which seeks to control their lives, punishing them for their offences. Intense monitoring and control have been highlighted within the prison structure

resulting in a lack of trust for the system (Leibling & Arnold, 2012) and continuous scrutiny (Sykes, 1958). Furthermore, participants reported that prison education teachers did not provide for the women's learning because their teaching styles were unsuitable, concluding that these teachers did not understand their dyslexic difficulties. There are studies which have emphasised the role of teachers in the academic trajectory of individuals with dyslexia (e.g. Humphrey, 2002), linking students' academic competence to teachers' attitude (e.g. Goddard et al., 2004).

Centrality of literacy support in prison:

Participants expressed importance of support for reading and writing in prison. Some of them reported engagement with the Toe by Toe reading programme, noting the success which they achieved with the scheme. Toe by Toe is a prisoner mentorship programme where fellow inmates, who are fluent readers, support those who are not proficient readers. This scheme has potential to drive prisoners towards a sense of solidarity and independence, as professionals are viewed as authority figures; peer-mentoring interventions have been viewed as a source of empowerment (e.g. Syed & Blanchette, 2000). Furthermore, it is possible that their shared experience of being in prison made this scheme a preferred form of support for reading and writing. Additionally, evidence in this present study shows that informal forms of support from fellow inmates and prison officers ameliorated some of the problems associated with completing reading and writing tasks, for example, in completing the canteen forms, applications for visits and reading lawyers' letters. This suggests that these women found hands-on support beneficial to participation in prison social life: benefits of peer support provisions have been acknowledged by HM Inspectorate of Prison, particularly for female prisoners (HM Inspectorate of Prisons, 2014). This study has shown that whilst the prison provides reading and writing within the educational

curriculum, prisoners defer to support which applies directly to practical issues which they consider important in managing their time in prison, including reading legal documents and completing request forms. Hence, this study adds to knowledge on how creating conditions for specific reading and writing support can enable access to participation in prison systems which mandate literacy skills.

Having discussed the main findings, I will be outlining the limitations of the study in the next section.

5.3 Limitations of the study

Findings in this study have provided an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of female dyslexic offenders' reading and writing attitude, showing links which this may have with how they attribute causes for success and failure in reading and writing as well as their overall dyslexic experiences and early schooling. Nonetheless, there are limitations to the research: these are outlined in this section.

I was working in the prison establishment where the interviews were conducted at the time of the research project and some of the participants were known to me. This may have presented a limitation relating to power differentials during the interviews, with the potential of influencing how the participants responded to the interview questions. For example, some of the women may have provided biased responses believing that these will be favourable to the research or they may have withheld some information if they thought it would lead to undesirable consequences within the prison. Therefore, I took steps to mitigate this by making the intent of my research clear, sharing the reasons for conducting the study and the research

questions which form its framework (I have discussed the steps which I took to limit power differential issues in the methodology chapter).

Another limitation was that the items on the attribution questionnaire were pre-set. Consequently, the women's answers were not spontaneous: this may have been limiting as they did not provide a rationale for their choice of answers. Although the questionnaire instrument was developed after the two semi-structured interviews, the multiple choice items may not have accurately covered the breadth of the women's opinions and beliefs in relation to their attributions for reading and writing performances. Consequently, the participants' responses may have been constrained and I did not probe for further information. Future studies should adopt an extended list of factors, as well as ask participants to name other factors which may not have been included in the list.

Data in this study comprise information from the perspective of female dyslexic adult offenders, with possible limitation of range of views relating to the phenomenon. Therefore, interviewing teachers and offender programme leaders could have widened the scope of this enquiry, providing different perspectives. Nevertheless, the research questions were directly related to the participants' personal experiences, and data from their interviews helped to answer these.

There were limitations linked to conducting research in prisons, for example, challenges in gaining access and absence of control over the parameters of the research. The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) research committee set out clear guidelines on types of researches which could be undertaken in its prisons, stipulating that the research must be useful to NOMS and should not be a burden on its staff and operational delivery. My initial challenge was the procedural

risk which was linked to obtaining the necessary approvals from National Offender Management Service (NOMS) research committee; in this aspect my application faced intense scrutiny. Before I gained approval, there were considerable negotiations with both NOMS and the prison research site, who requested changes and clarifications in relation to my research application: these had potential to limit the scope of my interviews because I became cautious in developing my questions, ensuring that they fitted within the NOMS guidelines.

The dates for the interviews had to be brought forward because a major change was taking place in the prison which was my research site: this presented time constraints, limiting the length of time each interview could last. Although I interviewed each participant on two separate occasions and administered the attribution question on the third occasion, the time frame between each meeting was shortened because these women could have been transferred to another prison or even released, presenting a sense of urgency. Ideally, I would have preferred longer time intervals between the three interviews for each participant. Nonetheless, I gathered rich data which had enabled the answering of my research questions.

It was important to consider the welfare of the participants: as discussed in the literature, most women in prison have had traumatic experiences not only before imprisonment but also possibly whilst in prison. Some of them may have been experiencing trauma because of separation from their children. This had potential to interfere with the interview process, affecting their level of involvement and the answers which they gave to the interview questions. However, I aimed to minimise the possibility of creating causes for additional trauma arising from my interviews by paying attention to my questioning techniques as well as being empathetic. It was also important to demonstrate genuine interest in the stories which they told.

As I had noted, my literature search did not reveal studies on dyslexia in female offenders: this presented as a limitation because I did not have the theoretical foundation to build upon in order to achieve my research objective. However, discovering this limitation helped with the identification of a literature gap and the need for my research.

Whilst this study was not intended to encapsulate the experiences of all dyslexic offenders in prison, the analysis did not fully cover how some of the participants' characteristics may have impacted their reading and writing attitude. Also, outcomes may have varied if dyslexic offenders from different ethnic, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds were interviewed. Nevertheless, my findings present valuable insight into the wider types of outcomes which relate to individuals with dyslexia within the prison population, clearly signposting the main dimensions of a framework for reflecting and understanding the reading and writing attitude of female dyslexic offenders.

5.4 Implications of the findings

This study provides an up-to-date description of how female dyslexic offenders explain their own dyslexia and contributes to the limited literature on dyslexia in the adult prison population, particularly women.

There are reports which have suggested a more robust approach within the criminal justice systems in order to meet the needs of women in prison (e.g. the Corston Report, 2011; Bloom et al., 2006). Hence, in constructing this research, it was important to focus on female offenders in order to address a gap in the literature relating to female dyslexic offenders. Consequently, this research is particularly

relevant for policy directive, practice and research in view of the movement which is focused on a joined-up offender management through the journey of the offender, with reintegration strategies beginning in prison and continuing in partnership with other agencies when they are released into their communities (Reform Justice, 2012). In the next section, I will be presenting the implications of this study for policy, practice and research.

5.4.1 Recommendation for policy

Findings from this study suggest that there are insufficient levels of support for female dyslexic offenders in prison, particularly in light of the systemic requirements for skills in reading and writing as a means to full participation in everyday prison life. The push to improve standards in prison administrative procedures necessitate completion of paper work from canteen forms to a range of application forms as well as maintaining writing correspondences with family, friends and solicitors. Participants rely on informal and inconsistent forms of support to complete their paper work, because they lack skills in reading and writing. This calls for development of clear guide-lines for the prison service in providing dyslexia-friendly approaches which would include regularly providing help and support for completion of paper-work, creating opportunities for the women to ask questions and guaranteeing privacy. Furthermore, the guidelines should clearly present actions which would ensure compliance with the legal obligations which would afford equality of opportunities for all prisoners. In this way, current equality legislation would be more rigorously implemented, ensuring access to rights and dyslexia support services in prisons. For example, provisions in the Equality Act 2004 and the Public

Sector Equality Duty 2011 include a requirement to make reasonable adjustments as a means to accommodating the needs of individuals with dyslexia.

Furthermore, in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty 2011, the design of policy, including prison internal policy relating to service delivery for dyslexic prisoners should be reviewed routinely, ensuring that members of staff pay attention to how their behaviours can impact female dyslexic offenders, particularly if changes are being introduced. Additionally, how the prison meets obligation to eliminate systemic discrimination against dyslexic prisoners is unclear. Therefore, it is important that prisons consider the types of investment which would improve the chances of success for dyslexic prisoners, both in education and training, enabling a constructive use of time in prison.

Also, consideration should be given to the establishment of equitable, accessible and evidence-based policy, taking into consideration the unique profile of women in prison. This should encompass the provision of both embedded and individualised practical support whilst identified existing good practice with collaborative support systems should be adapted and streamlined to suit the needs of this group of prisoners. As I have already discussed, women in prison are typically victims of abuse and are affected by imprisonment in specific ways: hence, prison practitioners should ensure that interventions are designed to empower and enable female dyslexic offenders to self-advocate, confronting discrimination and exhibiting agency in matters which concern them.

5.4.2 Recommendations for practice:

The findings in this study suggest that considerable modifications are required for the ways in which education and support for dyslexic offenders are developed and implemented in prison, making considerations for the unique profile of female dyslexic offenders. Hence, the following recommendations for practice are put forward:

There is need for prison educators to adopt robust support strategies which are focused on eliminating barriers, and attend to the socio-emotional impacts of dyslexia by fostering relaxed and informal learning spaces which can help to dispel the effects of negative school experiences. It is important, through practice, to give consideration to interventions which are focused on potential emotional support needs, helping these individuals to access tools and accommodation which can enable them to become independent learners, and compensating for their difficulties. Dyslexic prisoners should be encouraged and enabled to articulate their needs and preferences regarding barriers presented by lack of skills in reading and writing: these should inform practice as recommended within learner-focused research i.e. Time to Learn: Prisoners Views on Prison Education (Prison Reform Trust, 2003).

It is recommended that access to dyslexia diagnosis is widened within the prison system and prisons should implement a clear structure for prison officers to meet prisoner requests for referral to Additional Learning Support (ALS), whilst encouraging and helping dyslexic prisoners to access formal support. This may necessitate specialist training for these officers. It is further suggested that prison officers follow up on referrals to ensure positive outcomes.

I recommend a widening of dyslexia provision in prisons by significantly increasing resources for teachers, including expanding the Continued Professional Development (CPD) to cover teachings on dyslexia, ensuring that teachers are familiar with the most up-to-date information and research on dyslexia. Also, training on dyslexia should be offered as part of the teacher training provision: this would increase professional confidence as well as improve support provision for prisoners with dyslexia.

Prison educators and offender rehabilitation course leaders should be encouraged to develop innovative ways to meet curricular outcomes by creating engaging learning environments which enable academic connections and learning. It is important to cater for learners' interests and abilities, focusing on their emotional and developmental needs, and taking into consideration their prior negative educational experiences. Educational practitioners should adopt conventional and successful dyslexia intervention programmes and pedagogic best practices, incorporating them into their teaching and course delivery sessions. Prison educators should take into consideration the psycho-social and physical aspects of imprisonment on these inmates, being aware of the range of possible reasons for attending education which are unique to prisons as opposed to conventional educational environments. For women in prison, the stresses resulting from adaptation to imprisonment are uniquely different from male prisons, thus prison pedagogy should be adjusted to take into account the tensions associated to such stresses as well as embrace the specific learning needs of this group of learners.

5.4.3 Recommendations for research

My literature search revealed that empirical studies on dyslexic offenders in general and female dyslexic offenders in particular are very limited. Therefore, in order to develop realistic policy strategies, inclusive support systems and increased participation for this group of participants, there needs to be a prioritisation of studies which would provide insight into forms of interventions and support which can be provided for these individuals.

I propose that future studies should use a pilot study as this may enable the researcher to become better informed and prepared if any challenges arise during interviews. Also, a pilot study has potential to increase confidence in the research instruments by identifying design flaws, informing the development of data collection and analysis plan, thereby enhancing reliability and validity in the study. Furthermore, pilot studies can provide preliminary data and insight into the main study and its potential results.

This present study should be extended to include other factors which may influence or interact with how offenders may experience dyslexia and how these may link to their life trajectory. Hence, future research should extend to a more diverse group of dyslexic offenders from a wider demographic taking into consideration race, ethnicity, gender, offending background and class. Furthermore, longitudinal studies should be conducted as these can provide insight into the place of reading and writing in their lives after imprisonment and in the community, and how this may link to their future goals and/or reoffending. This could offer some insight into the specific behavioural effects of poor reading and writing skills, including how this

group of women navigate activities in reading and writing in different situations, over time, from time in prison to time in the community, upon release from prison.

Future studies should investigate prison education in order to understand issues which may impact teaching and learning in prisons for individuals with dyslexia as well as pedagogical practices which are specific to the prison context and for prison-based teachers. There should be an exploration of how pedagogical framework, which is applied universally, fits into the prison-based educational programmes and fosters agency, problem-solving and resilience. Differences in prison pedagogical practices and classroom management techniques should be explored in order to understand the power relations which may present in the education of dyslexic prisoners and the prison power structures. Other aspects of the prison, such as the physical environment, social systems and management structure, could be examined and analysed in relation to strategies for re-engaging dyslexic learners who had negative educational experiences.

Future research should evaluate the role of prison education in facilitating acquisition of reading and writing skills for dyslexic inmates. This may highlight systemic issues within the prison, including how the prison institution interferes with participation in prison education, as well as motivational characteristics of dyslexic offenders which may impact participation in prison education. Interviews with prison officers, governors and senior managers may provide additional insight into access to and participation in education.

Summary: Chapter Five

I drew my study together in this chapter, presenting my reflections, an in-depth interpretation, and an analysis and synthesis of the main findings. These are

presented in the context of my research questions, literature review, theories and concepts. I also discussed the transferability of my results to broader populations or other settings and conditions, as well as the limitations of my study. Furthermore, I outlined the implications of my findings, providing insight into the significance of my work for policy and practice, as well as making recommendations for future research in this area. Overall, this chapter provided reasons and arguments for the concluding statements which outlined the original contribution of my study to the literature.

References

Abramson, L.Y., Seligman, M.E.P., & Teasdale, J. D. (1978). Learned helplessness in humans: Critique and reformulation. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 87(1),* 49-74.

Adams, R.G., & Blieszner, R. (1995). Aging well with friends and family. *American Behavioural Scientist, 39(2),* 209-224.

Aiken, L. (2002). *Attitudes and related psychosocial constructs: Theories, assessment and research.* Sage Publications.

Aikman, C. (1985). *Writing anxiety: Barrier to success* (Conference presentation). National Adult Education Conference, Milwaukee W1, November 6-10.

Ajzen, I. (2001). Nature and operation of attitudes. *Annual Review of Psychology, 52(1),* 27-58.

Alexander J., & Filler, R. (1976). *Attitudes and reading.* Newark, Del.: International Reading Association.

Alexander, J.E., & Cobb, J. (1992). Assessing attitudes in middle and secondary schools and community colleges. *Journal of Reading, 36(2),* 146-149.

Allport, G.W. (1935). Attitudes. In C. Murchison (Eds.), *Handbook of Social Psychology* (pp. 798-844). Clark University Press.

Alvermann, D.E. (2002). Effective literacy instruction for adolescents. *Journal of Literacy Research, 34(2),* 189-208.

Alvermann, D.E., & Guthrie, J.T. (1993). *Themes and directions of the National Reading Research Center: Perspectives in reading research, No. 1.* National Reading Research Center.

Alvidrez, J., & Weinsten, R.S. (1999). Early teacher perceptions and later student academic achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 91(4),* 731.

Anastasi, A. (1990). *Psychological testing*. New York: Macmillan.

Anderman, E.M., & Wolters, C.A. (2006). Goals, values and affect: Influences on student motivation. In P.A. Alexander & P.H. Winnie (Eds.), *Handbook of educational psychology (2nd ed.,* pp. 369-389). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

Anderson, C.A. (1991). How people think about causes: Examination of the typical phenomenon organisation of attribution for success and failure. *Social Cognition, 9(4),* 295-329.

Anderson, P.L., & Meier-Hedde, R. (2001). Early case reports of dyslexia in the United States and Europe. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 34(1)*, 9-21.

Anderson, R.C., Wilson, P.T., & Fielding, L. G. (1988). Growth in reading and how children spend their time out of school. *Reading Research Quarterly, 23,* 285-303.

Anstey, M., & Bull, G. (2004). Literacy as a social practice. *The Literacy Labyrinth*, 56-74.

Anthony, G., & Walshaw, M. (2007). *Effective pedagogy in mathematics*. New Zealand Ministry of Education.

Aponik, D.A., & Dembo, M.H. (1983). LD and normal adolescents' causal attributions of success and failure at different levels of task difficulty. *Learning Disability Quarterly, 6(1),* 31-39.

April, K.A., Dharani, B., & Peters, K. (2012). Impact of locus of control expectancy on level of well-being. *Review of European Studies, 4(2),* 124-137.

Armstrong, D., & Humphrey, N. (2009). Research section: Reactions to a diagnosis of dyslexia among students entering further education: Development of the 'resistance-accommodation' model. *British Journal of Special Education*, *36(2),* 95-102.

Askov, E.N., & Fishbach, T.J. (1973). An investigation of primary pupils' attitudes toward reading. *The Journal of Experimental Education, 41(3),* 1-7.

Assouline, S. G., Colangelo, H., Ihrig, D., & Forstadt, L. (2006). Attributional choices for academic success and failure by intellectually gifted students. *Gifted Child Quarterly, 50(4),* 283-294.

Asunta, T. (2003). *Knowledge of environmental issues: Where pupils acquire information and how it affects their attitudes, opinions and laboratory behaviour* (No.221). Faculty of Education of the University of Jyvaskyla, Jyvaskyla.

Attride-Stirling, J. (2001). Thematic networks: An analytic tool for qualitative research. *Qualitative Research, 1(3),* 385-405.

Ayres, L. (2008). Semi-structured interview. *The Sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods*, *1*, 810-811.

Babbie, E (2005). *The basics of social research (*3rd ed.). Thomson: Wadsworth.

Bailey, K.D. (1994). *Typologies and taxonomies: An introduction of classification techniques.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Balfour, G., & Comack, E. (2006). *Criminalising women: Gender and (in) justice in neo-liberal times.* Fernwood Books Limited.

Bamford, J., & Day, R. (1998). Teaching reading. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 18*, 124-141.

Bank, M., & Woolfson, L. (2008). Why do students think they fail? The relationship between attributions and academic self-perceptions. *British Journal of Special Education, 35(1),* 49-56.

Bar-Tal, D., & Darom, E. (1979). Pupils' attributions for success and failure. *Child Development, 50(1),* 264-267.

Bartlett, L. (2005). Identity work and cultural artefacts in literacy learning and use: A sociocultural analysis. *Language and Education, 19(1),* 1-9.

Battistutta, L., Commmissaire, E., & Steffgen, G. (2018). Impact of the time of diagnosis on the perceived competence of adolescents with dyslexia. *Learning Disability Quarterly, 41(3),* 170-178.

Bauman, Z. (2001). *The individualised society*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Baumeister, R.F. (2011). Self and identity: A brief overview of what they are, what they do, and how they work. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, 1234(1),* 48-55.

Bazeley, P. (2007). *Qualitative data analysis with Nvivo.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Bell, S., McPhillips, T., & Doveston, M. (2011). How do teachers in Ireland and England conceptualise dyslexia? *Journal of Research in Reading, 34(2),* 171-192.

Bempechat, J., Nakkula, M.J., Wu, J.T., & Ginsburg, H.P. (1996). Attributions as predictors of mathematics achievement: A comparative study. *Journal of Research and Development in Education, 29(2),* 53-59.

Bennett, S., & Murphy, S. (1997). *Psychology and health promotion*. Open University Press. Buckingham.

Berkeley, S., Mastropieri, M.A., & Scruggs, T.E. (2011). Reading comprehension strategy instruction and attribution retraining for secondary students with learning and other mild disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 44(1),* 18-32.

Bernard, H.R. (2002). *Research methods in anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative methods*, (3rd ed.). AltaMira press, Walnut Creek, Carlifornia.

Berzonsky, M.D., Branje, S.J., & Meeus, W. (2007). Identity-processing style, psychosocial resources and adolescents' perceptions of parent-adolescent relations. *The Journal of Early Adolescence, 27(3),* 324-345.

Birch, C. (2013). *Researching learning cultures and educational identities in communities: The impact of adult learning*. Leicester: NIACE.

Bishop, A.G., & League, M.B. (2006). Identifying a multivariate screening model to predict reading difficulties at the onset of kindergarten: A longitudinal analysis. *Learning Disability Quarterly, 29(4),* 235 – 252.

Bishop, D.V.M. (2010). Overlaps between autism and language impairment: Phenomimicry or shared etiology? *Behavioural Genetics, 40(5),* 618-629.

Bishop, D.V.M. (2014). Ten questions about terminology for children with unexplained language problems. *International Journal of Language and Communications Disorders, 49 (4)*, 381-415.

Black, I. (2006). The presentation of interpretivist research. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal, 9(4),* 319-324.

Blaikie, N. (2000). *Designing social research: The logic of anticipation.* Cambridge: *Polity*.

Blandul, V.C. (2010). International approaches to inclusion of children with special educational needs in mainstream education. *Problems of Education in the 21st Century, 21,* 29-36.

Blevins, K.R., Johnson Listwan, S., Cullen, F.T., & Lero Jonson, C. (2010). A general strain theory of prison violence and misconduct: An integrated model of inmate behaviour. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice, 26(2),* 148-166.

Bliuc, A.M., Ellis, R.A., Goodyear, P., & Hendres, D.M. (2011). Understanding student learning in context: Relationships between university students' social identity, approaches to learning and academic performance. *European Journal of Psychology of Education, 26(3),* 417-433.

Bloom, B., Owen, B., & Covington, S. (2005). *Gender-responsive strategies for women offenders: A summary research, practice, and guiding principles for women offenders*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections.

Bodill, K., & Roberts, L.D. (2013). Implicit theories of intelligence and academic locus of control as predictors of studying behaviour. *Learning and Individual Differences, 27,* 163-166.

Boland, T. (1988). The development of reading attitude in primary school: A longitudinal approach. *Journal of Educational Research, 13,* 3-15.

Boruchovitch, E. (2004). A study of causal attributions for success and failure in mathematics among Brazilian Students. *Interamerican Journal of Psychology, 38 (1),* 53- 60.

Bower, H.A., & Griffin, D. (2011). Can Epstein model of parental involvement work in a high-minority, high-poverty elementary school? A case study*. Professional School Counselling, 15(2),* 77-87.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3(2),* 77-101.

Breckler, S.J., & Berman, J.S. (1991). Affective responses to attitude objects: Measurement and validation. *Journal of Social Behaviour and Personality, 6(3),* 529-544.

Brewer, J., & Hunter, A. (2006). *Foundations of multimethod research: Synthesising styles.* Thousand Oaks, London: Sage Publications.

Bristol, T., & Fern, E.F. (2003). The effects of interaction on consumers' attitudes in focus groups. *Psychology and Marketing, 20 (5),* 433-454.

British Dyslexia Association (BDA). (2009). What is dyslexia? In: I. Smythe (Eds.), *The British Dyslexia Association Employment and Dyslexia Handbook 2009.* Bracknell: British Dyslexia Association.

British Dyslexia Association. (2018). https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk

British Educational Research Association (BERA 2004). Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (online). http://www.bera.as.uk/publications/guideline.

British Psychological Society. (2009). *Code of ethics and conduct.* The British Psychological Society.

Broeder, P., & Stokmans, M. (2013). Why should I read? A cross-cultural investigation into adolescents' reading socialisation and reading attitude. *International Review of Education, 59(1),* 87-112.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (Ed.). (2005). *Making human beings human: Bioecological perspectives on human development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Brooks-Gordon, B., & Bainham, A. (2004). Prisoners' families and the regulation of contact. *The Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law, 26(3),* 263-280.

Brown, M. (2006). Gender, ethnicity and offending over the life Course: Women's pathways to Prions in the Aloha State. *Critical Criminology, 14(2),* 137-158.

Brown, C. (2006). *Social psychology.* Sage Publications.

Bruck, M. (1992). Persistence of dyslexics' phonological awareness deficits. *Developmental Psychology, 28(5),* 874-886.

Bruning, R., & Horn, C. (2000). Developing motivation to write. *Educational Psychologist, 35(1),* 25-37.

Bryman, A. (2006). Integrating quantitative and qualitative research: How is it done? *Qualitative Research, 6(1),* 97 – 113.

Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods* (4th ed*.).* Oxford University Press.

Burden, R. (2005). *Dyslexia and self-concept: Seeking a dyslexic identity.* Wiley-Blackwell.

Burden, R. (2008). Is dyslexia necessarily associated with negative feelings of self-worth? A review and implications for future research. *Dyslexia, 14(3),* 188-196.

Burden, R., & Burdett, J. (2005). Factors associated with successful learning in pupils with dyslexia: A motivational analysis. *British Journal of Special Education, 32 (2),* 100-104.

Burden, R., & Burdett, J. (2007). What's in name? Students with dyslexia: Their use of metaphor in making sense of their disability. *British Journal of Special Education, 34(2),* 77-82.

Butkowski, I.S., & Willows, D.M. (1980). Cognitive-motivational characteristics of children in reading ability: Evidence for learned helplessness in poor readers. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 72(3),* 408-422.

Byrne, M.W. (2005). Conducting research as a visiting scientist in a women's prison. *Journal of Professional Nursing, 21(4),* 223 – 230.

Cameron, L., & Murphy, J. (2007). Obtaining consent to participate in research: The issues involved in including people with a range of learning and communication disabilities. *British Journal of Learning Disabilities, 35(2),* 113-120.

Campbell, J., Gilmore, L., & Cuskelly, M. (2003). Changing student teachers' attitude towards disability and inclusion. *Journal of Intellectual and Development Disability, 28(4),* 369-379.

Carroll, J.M., & Iles, J.E. (2006). An assessment of anxiety level in dyslexic students in higher education. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 76(3),* 651-662.

Carson, D., Gilmore, A., Perry, C., & Gronhaug, K. (2001). *Qualitative marketing research.* Sage Publications.

Cassell, C., & Symon, G. (2004). *Essential guide to qualitative methods in organisational research.* Sage Publications.

Cassidy, S., & Eachus, P. (2000). Learning style, academic belief systems, self-report student proficiency and academic achievement in higher education. *Education Psychology, 20(3),* 307-322.

Cassidy, L., Reggio, K., Shaywitz, B.A., Holahan, J.M., & Shaywitz, S.E. (2021). Dyslexia in incarcerated men and women: A new Perspective on reading disability in the prison population. *Journal of Correctional Education, 72(2),* 61-81.

Caulfield, L., & Hill, J. (2014). *Criminological research for beginners: A student's guide.* Routledge.

Chamberlain, A. (2016). Embodying prison pain: Women's experiences of self-injury in prison and the emotions of punishment. *Theoretical Criminology, 20(2),* 205-219.

Chapman, J. W., & Tunmer, W. E. (2003). Reading difficulties, reading related self-perceptions and strategies for overcoming negative self-beliefs. *Reading and Writing Quarterly, 19(1),* 5-24.

Chen, Y., Lai, Y., & Lin, C. (2014). The impact of prison adjustment among women offenders: A Taiwanese perspective. *The Prison Journal, 94(1),* 7-29.

Christian, J. (2005). Riding the bus: Barriers to prison visitation and family management strategies. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice, 21(1),* 31-48.

Clark, V.L.P., & Creswell, J.W. (2008). *The mixed methods reader*. Sage Publications.

Clemmer, D. (1958). *The prison community* (2nd ed.). New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2000). *Research methods in education* (5th ed.). London: Routledge.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education (6th ed.).* London: Routledge.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research methods in education (7th ed.).* New York: Routledge.

Cohen, S. (2004). Social relationships and health. *American Psychologist, 59(8),* 676-684.

Coll, C.G., Miller, J.B., Fields, J.P., & Mathews, B. (1998). The experiences of women in prison: Implications for service and prevention. *Women and Therapy, 20(4),* 11-28.

Compas, B., Friedland-Bandes, R., Bastein, R., & Adelman, H. (1981). Parent and child causal attributions related to the child's clinical problem. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, 9(3)*, 389-397.

Compton-Lilly, C. (2006). Identity, childhood culture and literacy learning: A case study. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy, 6(1),* 57-76.

Connell, A., & Farrignton, D. (1996). Bullying amongst incarcerated young offenders: Developing an interview schedule and some preliminary results. *Journal of Adolescence, 19(1)*, 75-93.

Coolican, H. (2017). *Research methods and statistics in psychology* (4th ed.). Psychology Press.

Copper, P., & Jacobs, B. (2011). *From inclusion to engagement: Helping students engage with schooling through policy and practice.* Chichester: Wiley- Blackwell.

Cooper, R., & Miles, T.R. (2011). *Revised Adult Dyslexia Organisation Screening. Outsider Software Website.* http://outsidersoftware.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/RevisedADOScreening.pdf.

Corkett, J., Hein, S., & Parrila, R. (2008). Compensating for reading difficulties: A qualitative investigation of university students' experiences of influential personal characteristics. *Exceptionality Education International, 18(2),* 51-68.

Corston, J. (2007). *The Corston Report: A review of women with particular vulnerabilities in the criminal justice system.* London: Home Office.

Corston, J. (2011). *Women in the penal system: Second report on women with particular vulnerabilities in the criminal justice system.* London: The Howard League for Penal Reform.

Cory, R.C. (2005). *Identity, support and disclosure: Issues facing university students with invisible disabilities* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York, USA.

Costelloe, A. (2014). Learning for liberation, teaching for transformation: Can education in prison prepare prisoners for active citizenship? *Irish Journal of Applied Social Studies, 14(1)*, 30-36.

Craske, M. L. (1988). Learned helplessness, self-worth motivation and attribution retraining for primary school children. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 58(2),* 152-164.

Creswell, J.W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches (1st ed.).* Thousand Oaks, CS: Sage Publications.

Creswell, J.W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches (2nd ed.).* London: Sage Publications .

Creswell, J.W. (2014). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications .

Creswell, J.W., & Poth C.N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches (4th Ed.).* Thousand Oak, CA: Sage Publications.

Crewe, B. (2007). Power, adaptation and resistance in a late-modern men's prison. *British Journal of Criminology, 47(2),* 256-275.

Critchley, M., & Critchley, E.A. (1978). *Dyslexia defined*. London: Heinemann Medical Books.

Crombie, M.A. (2002). *Dyslexia – the new dawn: Policy practice provision and management of dyslexia from pre-five into primary* (Unpublished PhD thesis). University of Strathclyde, Glasgow.

Cross, K.P. (1981). *Adults as learners: Increasing participation and facilitating learning.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Crotty, M (2003). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process.* London: Sage Publications.

Cunningham, A. (2000). Adolescent female aggression: Proposal for a research agenda. In A.L. Cummings & A.W. Leschied (Eds.), *Research and treatment for aggression with adolescent girls* (pp. 187-208). Edwin Mellen Press.

Dale, M., & Taylor, B. (2001). How adults make sense of their dyslexia. *Disability and Society, 16(7),* 997-1008.

Darbyshire, P., MacDougall, C., & Schiller, W. (2005). Multiple methods in qualitative research with children: More insight or just more? *Qualitative Research, 5(4),* 417-436.

Data Protection Act (1998): https://www.gov.uk/data-protection/the-data-protection-act

Day, R.R., & Bamford, J. (2000). Reaching reluctant readers. *University of Hawai'i Working Papers in English as a Second Language, 19(2).*

Denzin, N. (1970). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods.* Chicago: 111. Aldine.

Denzin, N.K. (2001) The reflexive interview and a performative social science, *Qualitative Research, 1(1),* 23-46.

Denzin, N.K. (2009). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociology methods.* Aldine Transaction Publishers.

Denzin, N.K., & Lincoln, Y.S. (2011). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. Sage Publications.

Dey, I. (1993). *Qualitative data analysis: A user friendly guide for social scientists.* London: Routledge.

DfEE. (2000). *Improving prisoners' learning and skills: A new strategic partnership.* Nottingham: DfEE.

DfES/DWP. (2005): *Reducing re-Offending through skills and employment: Next steps.* Government Green Paper. DfES: London.

Dickhauser, C., Dickhauser, O., & Buch, S.R. (2011). Achievement after failure: The role of achievement goals and negative self-related thoughts. *Learning and Instruction, 21(1),* 152-162.

Diener, C.I., & Dweck, C.S. (1980). An analysis of learned helplessness: II. The processing of success. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 39(5),* 940-952.

Dillman, D.A. (2007). *Mail and internet surveys: The tailored design method*. Hoboken, NJ: John and Wiley Sons.

Drake, D.H., Darke, S., & Earle, R. (2015). Prison life, sociology of: Recent perspectives from the United Kingdom. In J. Wright (Eds.), *International*

encyclopaedia of social and behavioural sciences (2nd ed., pp. 924-929). Oxford: Elsevier.

Duda, J.L. (1986a). A cross-cultural analysis of achievement motivation in sport and the classroom. In L. VanderVelden & J. Humphrey (Eds.), *Current selected research in the psychology and sociology of sport* (pp. 115-132). NY: AMS Press.

Duguid, S., & Pawson, R. (1998). Education, change and transformation: The Prison experience. *Evaluation Review, 22(4),* 470-495.

Dweck, C.S., & Reppucci, N.D. (1973). Learned helpless and reinforcement in children. *Journal of Personality and Social psychology, 25(1),* 109.

Eagly, A.H., & Chaiken, S. (1993). *The psychology of attitudes.* Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers.

Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R., & Lowe, A. (2002). *Management research: An introduction*. London: Sage Publications.

Eccles, J.S., & Wigfield, A. (2002). Motivational beliefs, values and goals. *Annual Review of Psychology, 53(1),* 109-132.

Edgar, K., & O'Donell, I. (1998). Assault in prison: The victim's contributions. *British Journal of Criminology, 38(4)*, 635-50.

Edwards, J. (1994). *The scars of dyslexia: Eight case studies in emotional reactions.* Cassell: London.

Einser, E. (1998). *The enlightened eye: Qualitative inquiry and the enhancement of educational practice.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Elgar, B. (2008). Research involving prisoners: Consensus and controversies in international and European regulations. *Bioethics,* 22(4), 224-238.

Elliott, J., & Place, M. (2004). *Difficulties in children*. London: Routledge.

Elliott, J.G., & Grigorenko, E.L. (2014). *The dyslexia debate*. Cambridge University Press.

Elliott, J.G., & Gibbs, S.G. (2008). Does dyslexia exist? *Journal of Philosophy of Education, 42(3-4),* 475-491.

Elliott.J, (2005). The dyslexia debate continues. *The Psychologist, 18(12),* 728-729.

Epstein, J.L. (1991). Effects on student achievement of teachers' practices of parent involvement. In S.B. Silvern (Eds.), *Advances in reading/language research: A research annual, Vol. 5. Literacy through family, community and school interaction (pp. 261-276)*. Elsevier Science/JAI Press.

Estrada, F., & Nilsson, A. (2012). Does it cost more to be a female offender? A life-course of childhood circumstances, crime, drug abuse and living conditions. *Feminist Criminology, 7(3),* 196-219.

Exley, S. (2003). The effectiveness of teaching strategies for students with dyslexia based on their preferred learning styles. *British Journal of Special Education, 30(4),* 213-220.

Fair, H. (2009). International review of women's prisons. *Prison Service Journal, 194(3),* 3-8.

Faircloth, B.S. (2009). Making the most of adolescence: Harnessing the search for identity to understand classroom belonging. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 24(3),* 321-348.

Falsafi, L. (2010). *Learner identity: A sociocultural approach to how people recognise and construct themselves as learners* (Doctoral thesis, University of Barcelona, Barcelona).

Fantuzzo, J., McWayne, C., Perry, M.A., & Childs, S. (2004). Multiple dimensions of family involvement and their relations to behavioural and learning competencies for urban low-income children, *School Psychology Review, 33(4),* 467-480.

Farmer, M., Riddick, B., & Sterling, C. (2002). *Dyslexia and inclusion: Assessment and support in higher education.* Whurr: London.

Farmer, T., Robinson, K., Elliott, S.J., & Eyles, J. (2006). Developing and implementing a triangulation protocol for qualitative health research. *Qualitative Health Research, 16(3),* 377 – 394.

Fazio, R.H., & Olson, M.A. (2003). Implicit measures in social cognition research: Their meaning and use. *Annual Review of Psychology, 54(1),* 297-327.

Ferguson, D.L. (1993). Something a little out of the ordinary: Reflections on becoming an interpretivist researcher in special education. *Remedial and Special Education, 14(4),* 35-43.

Filce, H.G., & LaVergne, L. (2015). Absenteeism, educational plans and anxiety among children with incontinence and their parents. *Journal of School Health, 85(4),* 241-250.

Filippello, P., Sorrenti., Larcan, R., & Rizzo, A. (2013). Academic underachievement, self-esteem and self-efficacy in decision making. *Mediterranean Journal of Clinical Psychology, 1(3),* 1-11.

Finn, J.D., & Rock, D.A. (1997). Academic success among students at risk of school failure. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 82(2),* 221 – 234.

Firth, N. (2010). A resilient response to dyslexia/specific learning disabilities: International best practice environments and programs. *Australian Journal of Dyslexia and Other Learning Disabilities, 5,* 3 – 11.

Fisher, D., Sax, C., Rodifer, K., & Pumpian I. (1999). Teachers' perspectives of curriculum and climate change. *Journal for a Just and Caring Education, 5(3),* 256-268.

Fiske, S.T., & Taylor, S.E. (1991). *Social cognition.* New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

Ford, M.E. (1987). Process contributing to adolescent social competence. In M.E. Ford & D.H. Ford (Eds.), *Humans as self-constructing living systems: Putting the framework to work (pp.* 199-233). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Friborg, O., Hjemdal, O., Rosenvine, J.H., & Martinussen, M. (2003). A new rating scale for adult resilience: What are the central protective resources behind healthy adjustment? *International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research, 12(2),* 65 – 76.

Frieze, D.W., & Snyder, H.N. (1980). Children's beliefs about the causes of success and failure in social setting. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 72(2),* 186-196.

Fulk, B.M., Brigham, F.J., & Lohman, D.A. (1998). Motivation and self-regulation: A comparison of students with learning and behaviour problems. *Journal of Remedial and Special Education, 19(5),* 300-309.

Furlong, J. (2013). *Education - an anatomy of the discipline: Rescuing the university project?* London: Routledge.

Gaddes, W.H., & Edgell, D. (1994). *Learning disabilities and brain function: A neuropsychological approach*. Springer-Verlag: New York.

Gall, M.D., Borg, W.R., & Gall, J.P. (1996*). Educational research: An introduction.* Longman Publishing.

Galletta, A. (2013). *Mastering the semi-structured interview and beyond.* New York University Press.

Garland, D. (2010). *The culture of control:* Oxford University Press.

Gee, J.P. (2001). Reading as situated language: A sociocognitive perspective. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 44,* 741-725.

Gee, J.P. (2004). *Situated language and learning: A critique of traditional schooling*. Routledge: London.

Gehring, T., & Eggleston, C. (2007). *Teaching within prison walls: A thematic history*. California State University.

Ghaith, G.M. (2003). Relationship between reading attitudes, achievement and learners' perceptions of their jigsaw II cooperative learning experience. *Reading Psychology, 24(2),* 121.

Gibby-Leversuch, R., Hartwell, B.K., & Wright, S.M. (2021). Dyslexia, literacy difficulties and the self-perceptions of children and young people: A systematic Review. *Current Psychology*, *40(11),* 5595–5612.

Gibson, S., & Kendall, L. (2010). Stories from school: Dyslexia and learners' voices on factors impacting on achievement. *Support for Learning, 25(4),* 187-193.

Given, S., & Court, D. (2010). Coping strategies of high school students with hearing disabilities: A longitudinal qualitative study and grounded theory. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 23(3),* 283-303.

Glazzard, J. (2010). The impact of dyslexia on pupils' self-esteem. *Support for Learning, 25 (2),* 63-69.

Goddard, R.D., LoGerfo, L., & Hoy, W.K. (2004). High school accountability: The role of perceived collective efficacy. *Educational Policy, 18(3),* 403-425.

Goffman, E, (1990). *Stigma: Notes from the management of spoiled identity*. London: Penguin Books.

Goffman, E. (1961). *Asylums: Essay on the social situation of mental patients and other inmates.* New York: Doubleday.

Goldberg, R., Higgins, E., Rasking, M., & Herman. K. (2003). Predictors of success in individuals with learning disabilities: A qualitative analysis of a 20-year longitudinal study. *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice, 18(4),* 222 – 236.

Gordon, H.R.D., & Weldon, B. (2003). The impact of career and technical educational programs on adult offenders: Learning behind bars. *Journal of Correctional Education,* 54*(4),* 200-209.

Gordon, R., & Gordon, M. (2006). *The turned off child*: *Learned helplessness and school failure.* American Book Publishing.

Graham, S. (1991). A review of attribution theory in achievement contexts. *Educational Psychology Review, 3(1),* 5-39.

Graham, S., & Perin, D. (2007). A meta-analysis of writing instruction for adolescent students. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 99(3),* 445-476.

Graham, S., Berninger, V., & Fan, W. (2007). The structural relationship between writing attitude and writing achievement in first and third grade students. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 32(3),* 516-536.

Graham, S., Harris, K., & Mason, L. (2005). Improving the writing performance, knowledge and self-efficacy of struggling young writers: The effects of self-regulated strategy development. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 30(2),* 207-241.

Greaney,V., & Neuman, S.B. (1990). The functions of reading: A cross-cultural perspective. *Reading Research Quarterly, 25(3),* 172-195.

Greenwood, G.E., & Hickman, C.W. (1991). Research and practice in parent involvement: Implication for teacher education. *The Elementary School Journal, 93(3),* 279 – 288.

Gregg, N. (2009). *Adolescents and adults with learning disabilities and ADHD: Assessment and accommodation.* Guildford Press.

Greve, W. (2001). Imprisonment of juvenile and adolescents: Deficits and demands for research. *Applied Developmental Science, 5,* 21-36.

Griffith, J. (1996). Relation of parental involvement, empowerment and school traits to student academic performance. *Journal of Educational Research, 90(1),* 33-41.

Grimes, P., Millea, M.J., & Woodruff, T.W. (2004). Grades – who's to blame? Student evaluation of teaching and locus of control. *Journal of Economic Education, 35(2),* 129-147.

Gullone, E., Jones, T., & Cummins, R. (2000). Coping styles and prison experience as predictors of psychological well-being in male prisoner. *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law, 7(1),* 170-181.

Guthrie, J.T., & Wigfield, A. (2000). Engagement and motivation in reading. In M.L. Kamil, P.B. Mosenthal, P.D. Pearson, & R. Barr (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research* (Vol. 3, pp. 403-422). Mahwah, NJ, Erlbaum.

Gwernan-Jones, R., & Burden, R.L. (2010). Are they just lazy? Student teachers' attitudes about dyslexia. *Dyslexia, 16(1),* 66-68.

Hall, L.A. (2012). The role of reading identities and reading abilities in students' discussions about texts and comprehension strategies. *Journal of Literacy Research, 44(3),* 239-272.

Hall, L.A., Burns, L.D., & Edwards, E.C. (2011). *Empowering struggling readers: Practice for the middle grades*. Guildford Press: London.

Hall, S.P., & Brassard, M.R. (2008). Relational support as a predictor of identity status in an ethnically diverse early adolescent sample. *The Journal of Early Adolescence, 28(1),* 92-114.

Harden, A., & Thomas, J. (2005). Methodological issues in combining diverse study types in systematic reviews. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 8(3),* 257-271.

Harner, H.M., & Riley, S. (2013). The impact of incarceration on women's mental health: Responses from women in a maximum-security prison. *Qualitative Health Research, 23(1),* 26-42.

Harrell-Levy, M.K., & Kerpelman, J.L. (2010). Identity process and transformative pedagogy: Teachers as agents of identity formation. *Identity, 10(2),* 76-91.

Hart, C.B. (1995). A primer in prison research. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice, 11(3),* 165-176.

Harvey, J. (2005). Crossing the boundary: Transition of young adults into prison, In A. Liebling & S. Mauruna, (Eds.), *The Effects of Imprisonment.* Portland: William Publishing.

Hashemian, M., & Heidari, A. (2013). The relationship between L2 learners' motivation/attitude and success in L2 writing. *Procedia-Social and Behavioural Sciences, 70,* 476-489.

Hatch, J.A. (2002). *Doing qualitative research in education settings.* State University of New York Press.

Hau. K., & Salili, F. (1993). Measurement of achievement attribution: A review of instigation methods, question contents and measurement formats. *Educational Psychology Review, 5 (4),* 377 – 422.

Heider, F. (1958). *The psychology of interpersonal relations*. New York: Wiley.

Heiervang, E., Stevenson, J., Lund, A., & Hugdahl, K. (2001). Behaviour problems in children with dyslexia. *Nordic Journal of Psychiatry, 55 (4),* 251-256.

Heiman, T., & Kariv, D. (2004). Coping experience among students in higher education*. Educational Studies, 30(4),* 441-455.

Hellendoorn, J., & Ruijssenaars, W. (2000). Personal experiences and adjustment of Dutch adults with dyslexia. *Remedial and Special Education, 21(4),* 227 – 239.

Her Majesty Inspectorate of Prisons. (2004). *Expectations criteria for assessing the conditions in prisons and treatment of prisoners.* London: Home Office.

Herzog, H. (2012). *Interview location and its social meaning.* The Sage handbook of interview research: The complexity of the craft, 207-218.

Hesse-Biber, S.N., & Leavy, P. (2011). *The practice of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, DA: Sage Publications.

Hill, N.E., Bromell, L., Tyson, D.F., & Flint, R. (2007). Developmental commentary: Ecological perspectives on parental influences during adolescence. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology, 36(3),* 367-377.

Hiroto, D.S., & Seligman, M.E. (1975). Generality of learned helplessness in man. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 31(2),* 311-327.

HM Government. (2006). *Reducing re-offending through skills and employment: Next Steps.* Nottingham: DFES Publications.

HM Government. (2005). *Reducing reoffending through skills and employment.* London, TSO.

HM Inspectorate of Prisons. (2014). *Expectations: Criteria for assessing the treatment of and conditions for women in prisons*. London: HMIP

HM Inspectorate of Prisons. *Annual report: 2020 to 2021*.

HM Prison Service, Department for Education and Skills, Youth Justice Board, National Probation Service, Learning and Skills Council and JobcentrePlus. (2004). *The offenders' learning journey.* London: HMSO.

HM Prison Service, Women's Policy Group. (2000). *Working with women prisoners.* London Home Office.

HM, Inspectorate of Prisons. (2007). *Time out of cell – A short thematic review.* HM Inspectorate of Prisons: London.

HM, Inspectorate of Prisons and OFSTED. (2022): *Prison education: A review of reading education in prisons.*

Hogg, M.A., & Vaughan, G.M. (2002). *An introduction to social psychology* (3rd ed.). Harlow: Pearson Education.

Hoien, T., & Lundberg, I. (2000). *What is dyslexia? Dyslexia: From theory to intervention (1-20).* Springer, Dordrecht.

Hooper, C.A. (2003). *Abuse, interventions and women in prisons: A literature review*. London: Home Office/HM Prison Service.

Hornblum, A.M. (1997). They are cheap and available: Prisoners as research subjects in twentieth century America. *British Medical Journal, 315*, 1437 -1441.

Hornby, G. (2015). Inclusive special education: Development of a new theory for the education of children with special educational needs and disabilities. *British Journal of Special Education, 42(3),* 234-256.

Hornstra, L., Denessen, E., Bakker, J., Van Den Bergn, L., & Voetgen, M. (2010). Teacher attitudes toward dyslexia: Effects on teacher expectations and the academic achievement of students with dyslexia. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 43(6),* 515-529.

Houck, K.D., & Looper, A.B. (2002). The relationship of parenting stress to adjustment among mothers in prison*. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 72(4),* 548-558.

Howard, R., Karatzias, T., Power, K., & Mahoney, A. (2017). From childhood trauma to self-harm: An investigation of theoretical pathways among female prisoners. *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy, 24(4),* 942-951.

Humphrey, N. (2002). Teacher and pupil ratings in self-esteem in developmental dyslexia. *British Journal of Special Education, 29(1),* 29-36.

Humphrey, N., & Mullins, P.M. (2002a) Personal constructs and attribution for academic success and failure in dyslexia. *British Journal of Special Education, 29 (4),* 196-203.

Humphrey, N., & Mullins, P.M. (2002b) Self-concept and self-esteem in developmental dyslexia. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs, 2(2).*

Hunter, A., & Brewer, J.D. (2015). Designing multimethod research. In *the Oxford handbook of multimethod and mixed methods research inquiry.*

Ingesson, G. (2007). *Growing up with dyslexia: Cognitive and psychosocial impact and salutogenic factors*. Department of Psychology, Lund University.

International Dyslexia Association. (2016). *Dyslexia assessment: What is it and how can it help?* International Dyslexia Association. Dyslexiaida.org/dyslexia-assessment-what-is-it and how-can-it-help.

Ireland, J.L. (2000). Bullying among prisoners: The ecology of survival. *Aggression and Violent Behaviour: A Review Journal, 5(2),* 201-15.

Ireland, J., & Archer, J. (1996). Descriptive analysis of bullying in male and female adult prisoners. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology, 6(1),* 35-47.

Ivey, G., & Broaddus, K. (2001). Just plain reading: A survey of what makes students want to read in middle school classrooms. *Reading Research Quarterly, 36(4),* 350-377.

Jacobsen, B., Lowery, B., & DuCette, J. (1986). Attributions of learning disabled children. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 78(1),* 59-64.

Jenkins, R. (2008). *Social identity* (3rd ed.). Routledge, Taylor and Frances Group: London, England.

Johnson, R. (2002). *Hard time: Understanding and reforming the prison* (3rd ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Jonassen, D.H. (2004). *The handbook of research for educational communication and technology (*2nd ed*.)*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

Jones, L.O., Varberg, J., Manger, I., Eikeland, O.J., & Ashjournsen, A. (2012). Reading and writing self-efficacy of incarcerated adults. *Learning and Individual Differences, 22(3),* 343-349.

Jussim, L., & Harber, K.D. (2005). Teacher expectations and self-fulfilling prophecies: Knowns and unknowns, resolved and unresolved controversies. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 9(2),* 131-155.

Jussim, L., Nelson, T.E., Manis, S., & Soffin, S. (1995). Prejudice, stereotypes and labelling effects: Sources of bias in person perception. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 68(2),* 228.

Kalemi, G., Michopoulos, I., Edstathiou, N., Tzeferakis, G., Gkioka, S., Gournellis, R., & Douzenis, A. (2019). Self-esteem and aggression in women: Differences beween female prisoners and women without criminal records. *Women and Health, 59(10),* 1199-1211.

Kaplan, A., & Flum, H. (2009). Motivation and identity: The relations of action and development in educational contexts – an introduction to the special issue. *Educational Psychologist, 44(2),* 73-77.

Kaplan, L.S., & Owings, W.A. (2013). *Culture re-boot: Reinvigorating school culture to improve student outcomes*. Corwin Press.

Kauffman, G. (2006). Authoring ourselves as readers and writers. *Language Arts, 83(6),* 502-504.

Kauggman, J.M., & Badar, J. (2014a). Instruction, not inclusion, should be the central issue in special education: An alternative view from the USA. *Journal of International Special Needs Education, 17(10),* 13-20.

Kauffman, J.M., & Hallahan, D.P. (2005). *The illusion of full inclusion: A comprehensive critique of a current special education bandwagon* (2nd ed.). Austin, TX: Pro-ED.

Keith, T.Z., Keith, P.B., Troutman, G.C., Bickley, P., Trivette, P., & Singh, K. (1993). Does parental involvement affect eighth-grade student achievement? Structural analysis of national data. *School Psychology Review, 22(3),* 474 – 496.

Kelman, H.C. (2006). Interests, relationships, identities: Three central issues for individuals and groups negotiating their social environment. *Annual Review of Psychology, 57,* 1-26.

Kent, R.L., & Martinko, M.J. (1995). The measurement of attributions on organisational research. In M.J. Martinko (Eds.), *Attribution theory: An organisational perspective* (pp. 17-34). Delray Beach, FL: St, Lucie Press.

Kerka, S. (1995). *Prison literacy programs.* Eric Digest, No. 159.

Kilgore, D.W. (2001). A group learning intervention into how women learn empathy in prison*. Adult Education Quarterly, 51(2),* 146-164.

Kinderman, T.A. (2007). Effects of naturally existing peer groups on changes in academic engagement in cohort of sixth graders. *Child Development, 78(4),* 1186-1203.

King, R.D., & Wincup, E. (2008). The process of criminological research. In R.D. King & E. Wincup (Eds.), *Doing research on crime and justice.* Oxford University Press: Oxford.

Kirby, A., Williams, W.H., Clasby, B., Hughes, N., & Cleaton, M.A. (2020). Understanding the complexity of neurodevelopmental profiles of females in prison. *International Journal of Prisoner Health, 17(4),* 425-438.

Kirby, J.R., Ball, A., Geier, B.K., Parrila, R., & Wade-Woolley, L. (2011). The development of reading interest and its relations to reading identity. *Journal of Research in Reading, 34(3),* 263-280.

Kirk, J., & Reid, G. (2001). An examination of the relationship between dyslexia and offending in young people and the implication for the training system. *Dyslexia, 7(2),* 77-84.

Kirkpatrick, M.A., Stant, K., Downes, S., & Gaither, L. (2008). Perceived locus of control and academic performance: Broadening the construct's applicability. *Journal of College Student Development, 49(5),* 486-496.

Kistner, J.A., Osborne, M., & LeVerrier, L. (1988). Causal attributions of learning-disabled children: Developmental patterns and relation to academic progress. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 80(1),* 82-89.

Knudson, R.E. (1995). Writing experiences, attitudes and achievement of first to sixth graders. *The Journal of Educational Research, 89(2),* 90-97.

Krauss, S.E. (2005). Research paradigms and meaning making: A primer. *The Qualitative Report, 10(4),* 758-770.

Krueger, R.A., & Casey, M.A. (2014). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research.* Sage Publications.

Kuh, G.D. (2009). What student affairs professionals need to know about student engagement. *Journal of College Student Development, 50(6),* 683-706.

Kuhn, T. (1962). *The structure of scientific revolutions* (1st ed.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Kush, J.C., Watkins, W.M., & Brookhart, M.S. (2005). The temporal interactive influence of reading achievement and reading attitude. *Educational Research and Evaluation, 11(1),* 29-44.

Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing*. Los Angeles, California: Sage Publications.

Lackaye, T.D., & Margalit, M. (2006). Comparisons of achievement, effort and self-perceptions among students with learning disabilities and their peers from different achievement groups. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 39(5),* 432-446.

Lambert, S.D., & Loiselle, C.G. (2008). Combining individual interviews and focus groups to enhance data richness. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 62(2),* 228 – 237.

Lauchlan, F., & Boyle, C. (2014). To label or not to label: Is this the question? *International Journal of Communication Language Disorders, 49(4),* 399-400.

Lazarus, B.D., & Callahan, T. (2000). Attitudes toward reading expressed by elementary school students diagnosed with learning disabilities. *Reading Psychology, 21(4),* 271-282.

Leech, M., & Cheney, D. (2002). The Prisons Handbook. *The Police Journal, 75.*

Lefcourt, H.M. (1976). *Locus of control: Current trends in theory and research.* Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum.

Lefcourt, H.M. (1991). Locus of control. In J.P. Robinson, P.R. Shaver, & Wrightsman (Eds.), *Measures of social psychological attitudes, Vol, 1. Measures of personality and social psychological attitudes* (pp. 413-499). Academic Press.

Leki, I., & Carson, J.G. (1997). Completely different worlds: EAP and the writing experiences of ESL students in university courses. *TESOL Quarterly, 31(1),* 39-70.

Lerner, R.M., Lerner, J.V., Almerigi, J.B., Theokas, C., Phelps, E., Gestsdottir, S., & Smith, L.M. (2005). Positive youth development, participation in community youth development programs and community contributions from fifth-grade adolescents: Findings from the first wave of the 4-H study of positive youth development. *The Journal of Early Adolescence, 25(1),* 17-71.

Ley T.C., Schaer, B.B., & Dismukes, B.W. (1994). A longitudinal study of the reading attitudes and behaviours of middle school students. *Reading Psychology, 15(1),* 11-38.

Libbey, H.P. (2004). Measuring student relationships to school: Attachment, bonding, connectedness and engagement. *Journal of School Health, 74(7),* 274-283.

Licht, B.G., Kistner, J.A., Ozkaragoz, T., Shapiro, S., & Clausen, L. (1985). Causal attributions of learning disabled children: Individual differences and their implications for persistence. *Journal of Education Psychology, 77(2),* 208-216.

Liebling, A. (2004). The late modern prison and the question of values. *Current Issues in Criminal Justice, 16(2),* 202-219.

Likupe, G., & Mwale, M. (2016). The study of attributions of low achievers and high achievers about the perceived causes of their success and failure: The case of

adolescent students in secondary schools – Malawi. *Journal of Child Adolescent Behaviour 4(5),* 1000312.

Lin, A. (Ed.). 2008). *Problematising identity: Everyday struggles in language, culture, and education.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Lincoln, Y.S., & Guba, E.G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage Publications.

Lincoln, Y.S., Lynham, S.A., & Guba, E.G. (2011). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions and merging confluences, revisited. *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research, 4(2),* 87-128.

Linnenbrink, E., & Pintrich, E. (2002). Motivation as an enabler for academic success. *School Psychology Review, 31(3),* 313-327.

Lisle, K., & Wade, T.J. (2014). Does the presence of a learning disability elicit a stigmatisation? *British Journal of Education, Society and Behavioural Science, 4(2),* 211-225.

Litner, B., Mann-Feder, V., & Guerard, G. (2005). Narratives of success: Learning disabled students in university. *Exceptionality Education Canada, 15(1),* 9–24.

Logan. L., Medford, E., Hughes, N. (2011). The importance of intrinsic motivation for high and low ability readers' reading comprehension performance. *Learning and Individual Differences, 21(1),* 124-128.

Long, L., Macblain. S., & Macblain, M. (2007). Bridging the holistic and academic divide: Beyond the mechanics of learning to read. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 51(2),* 124-134.

Luke, K.P. (2002). Mitigating the ill effects of maternal incarceration on women in prison and their children. *Child Welfare, 81(6),* 929-948.

Luthar, S.S., Cicchetti, D., & Becke, B. (2000). The construct of resilience: A critical evaluation and guidelines for future work. *Child Development*, *71(3),* 543-562.

Lyon, G.R., Shaywitz, S.E., & Shaywitz, B.A. (2003). A definition of dyslexia. *Annals of Dyslexia, 53(1),* 1-14.

Macdonald, S.J. (2010). Towards a social reality of dyslexia. *British Journal of Learning Disabilities, 38(4),* 271-279.

Macdonald, S.J. (2009). Windows of reflection: Conceptualising dyslexia using the social model of disability. *Dyslexia, 15(4),* 347-362.

Macdonald, S.J. (2012). Biographical pathways into criminality: Understanding the relationship between dyslexia and educational disengagement. *Disability and Society, 27(3),* 427-440.

Macher, D., Paechter, M., Papoursek, I., & Ruggeri, K. (2012). Statistics anxiety, trait anxiety, learning behaviour and academic performance. *European Journal of Psychology of Education, 27(4),* 483-498.

MacKenzie, N., & Knipe, S. (2006). Research dilemmas: Paradigms, methods and methodology. *Issues in Educational Research, 16,* 1-15.

Maclachlan, K., Hall. S., Tett, I., Crowther, J., & Edwards, V. (2008). Motivating adult learners to persist, progress and achieve: Literacies learners at risk of non-completion of learning targets. *Edinburgh, Scottish Government, Directorate of Lifelong Learning.*

Macphail, A. (2001). Nominal group technique: A useful method of working with young people. *British Education Research Journal, 27(2),* 161-170.

Maehr, M.L., & Nicholls, J.G. (1980). Culture and achievement motivation: A second look. *Studies in Cross-cultural Psychology, 2,* 221-267.

Maeve, M.K. (1998). Methodological issues in qualitative research with incarcerated women. *Family and Community Health, 21(3),* 1-15.

Maier, S.F., & Seligman, M.E. (1976). Learned helplessness: Theory and evidence. *Journal of Experimental Psychology:* General*, 105(1),* 3-46.

Maio, G.R., & Olson, J.M. (2000). *Why we evaluate: Functions of attitudes.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Manfredo, M.J., & Dayer, A.A. (2004). Concepts for exploring the social aspects of human-wildlife conflict in a global context. *Human Dimensions of Wildlife, 9(4),* 1-20.

Marks, L.I. (1998). Deconstructing locus of control: Implications for practitioners*. Journal of Counselling and Development, 76(3),* 251-260.

Markus, H., & Nuris, P. (1986). Possible selves. *American Psychologist, 41(9),* 954-969.

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. (2016). *Designing qualitative research* (6th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Martens, P., & Adamson, S. (2001). Inventing literate identities: The influence of texts and contexts. *Literacy Teaching and Learning: An International Journal of Early Reading and Writing, 5(2),* 27-50.

Masny, D., & Foxall, J. (1992). *Writing apprehension in L2. Office of educational research and improvement, Washington DC.* (ED 352844). Eric document reproduction service.

Mathewson, G.C. (1994). Model of attitude influence upon reading and learning to read. In R.B. Ruddell, M.R. Ruddell, & H. Singer (Eds.), *Theoretical models and processes of reading* (4th ed., pp. 1131 - 1161). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Mawby, R.I. (1982). Women in prison: A British study. *Crime and Delinquency, 28(1),* 24-39.

Maxwell, J.A. (2010). Using numbers in qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 16(6),* 475-482.

McCarthey, S.J., & Moje, E.B. (2002). Identity matters. *Reading Research Quarterly, 37(2),* 228-238.

McCarthy, S.J. (2001). Identity construction in elementary readers and writers. *Reading Research Quarterly, 36(2),* 122-151.

McCracken, G. (1988). *The long interview* (Vol. 13). Sage Publications.

McDermott, R., Goldman, S., & Varenne, H. (2006). The cultural work of learning disabilities. *Educational Researcher, 35(6),* 12-17.

McEwen, M.K. (2003). New perspectives on identity development. In S.R. Komives, D.B. Woodard Jr., & Associates, *Student services: A handbook for the profession*, (4th ed., pp. 203-233). San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

McGrady, H., Lerner., & Boscardin, M. (2001). The educational lives of students with learning disabilities. In P. Rodis, A. Garrod, M.L. Boscardin, (Eds.), *Learning disabilities and life stories* (pp. 177-193). Needham Heights MA: Allyn & Bacon.

McGuire W.J. (1969).The nature of attitudes and attitude change. In G. Lindzey & E. Aronson (Eds.), *The handbook of social psychology*, (Vol. 3, pp. 136 – 314). New York: Rinehart and Winston.

Mckenna, M.C. (1994). Toward a model of reading attitude acquisition. In E.H. Cramer & M. Castle (Eds.), *Fostering the life-long love of reading: The affective domain in reading education* (pp. 18-40). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

McLafferty, E., & Farley, A.H. (2006). Analysing qualitative research data using computer software. *Nursing Times, 102(24),* 34-36.

McNabb, T. (2003). Motivational issues: Potential to performance. In N. Colangelo & G. A. Davis (Eds.), *Handbook of gifted education* (3rd ed., pp. 417 – 423). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

McNulty, M.A. (2003). Dyslexia and the life course. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 36(4),* 363-381.

Merriam, S.B. (2002). Introduction to qualitative research. *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis, 1(1),* 1-17.

Merriam, S.B., & Tisdell, E.J. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation.* John Wiley and Sons.

Meyer, M. (2000). Between theory, method and politics: Positioning of the approaches to CDA. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Methods of critical discourse analysis,* (pp 14-31). London: Sage Publications.

Meyer, S.J., Fredricks, L., Borden, C.M., & Richardson, P.L. (2010). Implementing postsecondary academic programs in state prisons: Challenges and opportunities. *Journal of Correctional Education,* 148-184.

Mihandoost, Z., Elias, H., Nor, S., & Mahnud, R. (2010). The effectiveness of the intervention programme on the attitude and self-concept of students with dyslexia. *Journal of American Science, 6(12),* 1181 -1191.

Miles, E. (1995). Can there be a single definition of dyslexia? *Dyslexia, 1(1),* 37-45.

Mills, A., & Codd, H. (2008). Prisoners' families and offender management: Mobilizing social capital. *Probation Journal, 55(1),* 9-24.

Mills, T.R. (2006). *Fifty years in dyslexia research*. John Wiley and Sons.

Mingers, J. (2001). Combining IS research methods: Towards a pluralist methodology. *Information Systems Research, 12(3),* 240-259.

Ministry Of Justice. (2010). *Breaking the cycle: Effective punishment, rehabilitation and sentencing of offenders.* Ministry of Justice: London.

Ministry Of Justice. (2021). *Technical document: Prison education statistics April 2019 to March 2020.*

Ministry Of Justice. (2012b). *Prisoners' childhood and family backgrounds.* Ministry of Justice: London.

Ministry Of Justice. (2021). *Official statistics bulletin, Prison population figures: 2021.*

Mishna, F. (2003). Learning disabilities and bullying: Double jeopardy. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 36(4),* 336-347.

Mitchell, D. (2005). *Contextualising inclusive education.* London Routledge.

Mizokawa, D.T., & Hansen-Krening, N. (2000). The ABCs of attitudes toward reading: Inquiring about the reader's response. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 44(1),* 72-79.

Moje, E.E., & Luke, A. (2009). Literacy and identity: Examining the metaphors in history and contemporary research. *Reading Research Quarterly, 44(4),* 415-437.

Morken, F., Jones, L.O., & Helland, W.A. (2021). Disorders of language and literacy in the prison population: A scoping review. *Education Sciences, 11(2),* 77.

Molloy, L.E., Gest, S.D., & Rulison, K.L. (2010). Peer influences on academic motivation: Exploring multiple methods of assessing youths' most "influential" peer relationships. *The Journal of Early Adolescence, 31(1),* 13 – 40.

Moody, K.C., Holzer, C.E. 3rd., Roman, M.J., Paulsen, K.A., Freeman, D.H., Haynes, M., & James, T.N. (2000). Prevalence of dyslexia among Texas prison inmates. *Texas Medicine, 96(6),* 69-75.

Morgan, E., & Klein, C. (2001). *The dyslexic adult in a non-dyslexic world.* London: Whurr Publications.

Morgan, W. (1997). Creating criminals! Why are so many criminals dyslexic? (Unpublished dissertation). University of London.

Morgan, W.P. (1896). A case of congenital word blindness. *British Medical Journal*, *2(1871)*, 1378.

Morita, N. (2004). Negotiating participation and identity in second language academic communities. *Tesol Quarterly, 38(4),* 573-603.

Morrison, D.E. (1998). *The search for a method: Focus groups and the development of mass communication research.* University of Luton Press.

Morse, J.M., & Field, P.A. (1995). *Qualitative research methods for health professionals* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Mortimore, T. (2003). *Dyslexia and learning style: A practitioner's handbook.* London: Whurr.

Moser, D.J., Arndt, S., Kanz, J.E., Benjamin, M.L., Bayless, J.D., Reese, R.L., Paulsen, J.S., Flaum, M.A. (2004). Coercion and informed consent in research involving prisoners. *Comprehensive Psychiatry, 45(1),* 1-9.

Munoz, V. (2009). The right to education of persons in detention. *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, United National Rights Council.*

Murray, C., & Malmgren, K. (2005). Implementing a teacher-student relationship program in high-poverty urban school: Effect on social, emotional, and academic adjustment and lessons learned. *Journal of School Psychology, 43(2),* 2137-152.

Myers, M.D. (2008). *Qualitative research in business and management.* Sage Publications.

Nalvany, B.A., & Carawan, L.W. (2011). Perceived family support and self-esteem: The meditational role of emotional experience in adults with dyslexia. *Dyslexia, 18(1),* 58-74.

Nawaz, S. (2011). The relationship of parental and peer attachment bonds with the identity development during adolescence. *FWU Journal of Social Sciences, 5(1),* 104-119.

Negy, C.; Woods, D.J.; & Carlson, R. (1997). The relationship between female inmates' coping and adjustment to a minimum-security prison. *Criminal Justice and Behaviour, 24(2),* 224-233.

Nelson, R.M., & Debacker, T.K. (2008). Achievement motivation in adolescents: The role of peer climate and best friends. *Journal of Experimental Education, 76(2),* 170-189.

Neuman, W.L. (2014). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (7th ed.). Pearson Education, London.

Nicholson, R.I., & Fawcett, A.J. (1990). Automaticity: a new framework for dyslexia research? *Cognition, 35(2),* 159-182.

Nickerson, R.S. (1998). Confirmation bias: A ubiquitous phenomenon in many guises. *Review of General Psychology, 2(2),* 175-220.

Noddings, N. (2005a). *The challenge to care in schools: An alternative approach to education* (2nd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.

Norton, B. (1997). Language, identity and ownership of English. *TESOL Quarterly, 31(3),* 409-429.

Olson, D.E., & Lurigo, A.J. (2014). The Long-term effects of prison-based drug treatment and aftercare services on recidivism, *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation, 53(8),* 600-619.

Oppenheim, A.N. (1992). *Questionnaire design, interviewing and attitude measurement*. Continuum: London, U.K.

Osterman, K.F. (2000). Students' need for belonging in the school community. *Review of Educational Research, 70(3),* 323-367.

Ostrom, T.M. (1969) The relationship between affective, behavioural and cognitive components of attitude. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 5(1),* 12-30.

Owen, B., Wells. J., & Pollock, J. (2017*). In search of safety: Confronting Inequality in women's imprisonment.* University of California Press.

Palenzuela, D.L. (1984). Critical evaluation of locus of control: Toward a reconceptualisation of the construct and its measurement. *Psychological Reports, 54(3),* 683-709.

Palmer, D.J., Drummond, F., Tollison, P., & Zinkgraff, S. (1982). An attributional investigation of performance outcomes for learning-disabled and normal-achieving pupils. *The Journal of Special Education, 16(2),* 207-219.

Paterson, D. (2007). Teachers' in-flight thinking in inclusive classrooms. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 40(5),* 427-435.

Patrick, B.C., Skinner, E.A., & Connell, J.P. (1993). What motivates children's behaviour and emotion? Joint effects of perceived control and autonomy in academic domain. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 65(4),* 781-791.

Patton, M.Q. (1999). Enhancing the quality and credibility of qualitative analysis. *Health Services Research, 34(5 Pt2),* 1189 – 1208.

Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Paulaus, R.D., & Dzindolet, M.T. (1993). Reactions of male and female inmates to prison confinement: Further evidence for a two-component model. *Criminal Justice and Behaviour, 20(2),* 149-166.

Pearl, R., Bryan, T., & Donahue, M. (1980). Learning disabled children's attributions for success and failure. *Learning Disability Quarterly, 3(1),* 3-9.

Perry, R.P., & Penner, K.S. (1990). Enhancing academic achievement in college students through attributional retraining and instruction. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 82,* 262-271.

Peters, S. J. (2003). *Inclusive education: Achieving education for all by including those with disabilities and special education needs. Washington, D.C. The World Bank,* 26690, 1-133.

Peterson, R.A. (2000). *Constructing effective questionnaires (1st ed.).* Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Petscher, Y. (2010). A meta-analysis of the relationship between student attitudes towards reading and achievement in reading. *Journal of Research in Reading, 33(4),* 335-355.

Pihi, R.O., & McLarnon, L.D. (1984) Learning disabled children as adolescents. *Journal of Learning of Learning Disabilities, 17(2),* 96-100.

Pintrich, P.R. (2003). A motivational science perspective on the role of student motivation in learning and teaching contexts. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 95(4),* 667 – 686.

Pintrich, P.R., & Schunk, D.H. (2002). *Motivation in education: Theory, research and applications* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice-Hall.

Plewis, I., & Mason, P. (2005). What works and why: Combining quantitative and qualitative approaches in large-scale evaluations*. International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 8(3),* 185-194.

Pollack, D.E. (2005). *Dyslexia, the self and higher education: Learning life histories of students identified as dyslexic*. London: Trentham Books Ltd.

Pollack, J.M. (2002). *Women, prison and crime*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Polychroni, F., Koukoura, K., & Anagnoustou, I. (2006). Academic self-concept, reading attitude and approaches to learning of children with dyslexia: Do they differ from their peers? *European Journal of Special Needs Education, 21(4),* 415-430.

Pont, J. (2008). Ethics in research involving prisoners. *International Journal of Prisoners Health, 4(4),* 184-197.

Ponterotto, J.G. (2013). Qualitative research in multicultural psychology: Philosophical underpinnings, popular approaches and ethical consideration. *Qualitative Psychology, 1(s),* 19-32.

Pope, C., Ziebland, S., & Mays, N. (2000). Qualitative research in healthcare: Analysing qualitative data. *British Medical Journal, 320,* 114-116.

Preece, S. (2009). Multilingual identities in higher education: Negotiating the “mother tongue”, ‘posh’ and ‘slang’. *Language and Education, 24(1),* 21-39.

Prison Education Trust. (2018). Should prison education be different for women?

Prison Reform Trust. (2020). Who we are? http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/WhoWeAre

Pumfrey, P.D., & Reason, R. (1991). *Specific learning difficulties (dyslexia).* London: Routledge.

Punch, K. (2005). *Introduction to social research: Quantitative and qualitative approaches.* London: Sage Publications.

Quinlan, C. (2022). Women’s imprisonment in Britain and Ireland. *The Prison Journal, 102(2),* 134 – 153.

Rack, J. (2005). *The incidence of hidden disabilities in the prison population*. Egham, Surrey: Dyslexia Institute.

Ramus, F. (2014). Should there really be a ‘Dyslexia debate’? *Brain, 137(12),* 3371-3374.

Raskind, M.H., Goldberg, R.J., Higgins, E.L., & Herman, K.L. (1999). Patterns of change and predictors of success in individuals with learning disabilities: Results with a twenty-year longitudinal study. *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice, 14(1),* 35-49.

Rassart, J., Luyckx, K., Appers S., Goossens, E., Moons, P., & i-Detach Investigators, (2012). Identity dynamics and peer relationship quality in adolescents

with a chronic disease: The sample case of congenital heart disease. *Journal of Developmental and Behavioural Paediatrics, 33(8),* 625-632.

Reid, G., & Kirk, J. (2001). *Dyslexia in adults: Education and employment*. Wiley.

Reiff, H.B., Gerber, P.J., & Ginsberg, R. (1997). *Exceeding expectations: Successful adults with learning difficulties*. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed Inc.

Reis, S.M., Colbert, R.D., & Hebert, T.P. (2004). Understanding resilience in diverse, talented students in an urban high school. *Roeper Review, 27(2),* 110-120.

Richards, L. (2002). *Introducing NVivo: A workshop handbook (Rev.ed.).* Doncaster, Victoria, Australia: Qualitative Solutions and Research.

Riddick, B. (2001). Dyslexia and inclusion: Time for a social model of disability perspective? *International Studies in Sociology of Education, 11(3),* 223-236.

Riddick, B. (2003). Experiences of teachers and trainee teachers who are dyslexic. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 7(4),* 389-402.

Riddick, B. (2010). Living with dyslexia : *The social and emotional consequences of specific learning difficulties/disabilities* (2nd ed.). Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Riddick, B. (1996). *Living with dyslexia: The social and emotional consequences of specific learning difficulties.* London, Routledge.

Riddick, B. (2000). An examination of the relationship between labelling and stigmatisation with special reference to dyslexia. *Disability and Society, 15(4),* 653-667.

Riddick, B., Farmer, M., & Sterling, C.M. (1997). *Students and dyslexia: Growing up with a specific learning difficulty*. Wiley-Blackwell.

Riddick, B., Sterling, C., Farmer, M., & Morgan, S. (1999). Self-esteem and anxiety in the educational histories of adult dyslexic students. *Dyslexia, 5(4),* 227-248.

Riley, T., & Ungerleider, C. (2012). Self-fulfilling prophecy: How teachers' attributions, expectations and stereotypes influence the learning opportunities afforded Aboriginal students. *Canadian Journal of Education, 35(2),* 303-333.

Ritchie, J., & Lewis, J (2003) *Qualitative Research Practice*. Sage Publications, London.

Roberts, L., & Indermaur, (2008). The Ethics of Research with Prisoners. *Current Issues in Criminal Justice, 19(3),* 309-326.

Robinson, H.M., & Weintraub, S. (1973). Research related to children's interests and to developmental values in reading. *Library Trends, 22,* 81-108.

Rogers, H., & Saklofske, D.H. (1985). Self-concepts, locus of control and performance expectations of learning disabled children. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 18(5),* 273-278.

Rotter, J.B. (1966). Generalised expectancies for internal versus external reinforcement. *Psychological Monographs, 80(1),* 1-28.

Rotter, J.B. (1990). Internal versus external control of reinforcement: A case history of a variable. *American Psychologist, 45(4),* 489-493.

Rowan, L. (2014). University transition experiences of four students with dyslexia in New Zealand. *Australian Journal of Learning Disabilities, 19(2),* 129-136.

Rubin, A.T. (2017). Resistance as agency? Incorporating the structural determinants of prisoner behaviour. *British Journal of Criminology, 57(3),* 644-663.

Ryan, M., & Anstey, M. (2003). Identity and text: Developing self-conscious readers. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy, 26(1),* 9-22.

Salisbury, E.J., & van Voorhis, P. (2009). Gendered pathways: A qualitative investigation of women probationers' paths to incarceration. *Criminal Justice and Behaviour, 36(6),* 541-566.

Salonen, P., Lepola, J., & Niemi, P. (1998). The development of first graders' reading skill as a function of pre-school motivational orientation and phonemic awareness. *European Journal of Psychology of Education, 13(2),* 155-174.

Sandelowski, M. (1995). Sample size in qualitative research. *Research in Nursing and Health, 18(2),* 179-183.

Sandelowski, M. (1995). Triangles and crystals: On the geometry of qualitative research. *Research in Nursing and Health, 18(6),* 569 – 574.

Sandelowski, M. (2000). Combining qualitative and quantitative sampling, data collection and analysis techniques in mixed-methods studies. *Research in Nursing and Health, 23(3),* 246 – 255.

Sandelowski, M. (2001). Real qualitative researchers do not Count: The use of numbers in qualitative research. *Research in Nursing and Health, 24(3),* 230-240.

Schachter, E.P., & Ventura, J.J. (2008). Identity agents: Parents as active and reflective participants in their children's identity formation. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 18(3),* 449-476.

Scheleider, J.L., Velez, C.E., Krause, E.D., & Gillham, J. (2014). Perceived psychological control and anxiety in early adolescents: The mediating role of attributional style. *Cognitive Therapy and Research, 38(1),* 71-81.

Schiefele, U., Schaffner, E., Moller, J., & Wigfield, A. (2012). Dimensions of reading motivation and their relation to reading behaviour and competence. *Reading Research Quarterly, 47(4),* 427-463.

Schostak, J., & Schostak, J. (2007). *Radical research: Designing, developing and writing research to make a difference.* Routledge.

Schunk, D.H., & Meece, J.L. (2006). Self-efficacy development in adolescence. *Self-efficacy of Adolescents, 5(1),* 71-96.

Schunk, D.H., & Zimmerman, B.J. (2006). Competence and control beliefs: Distinguishing the means and ends. In P.A. Alexander & P.H. Winne (Eds.), *Handbook of educational psychology* (p.349-367). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

Schunk, D.H., & Zimmerman, B.J. (Eds.). (1998). *Self-regulated learning: From teaching to self-reflective practice.* Guilford Press.

Schwandt, T. A. (2007). *The Sage Dictionary of qualitative inquiry (*3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Seale, C. (2000). Using computers to analyse qualitative data. In D. Silverman (Eds.), *Doing qualitative research: A practical Handbook* (pp. 154-174). London: Sage Publications.

Selenius, H., Daderman, A.M., Meurling, A.W., & Levander, S. (2006). Assessment of dyslexia in a group of male offenders with immigrant backgrounds undergoing a forensic psychiatric investigation. *The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry and Psychology, 17(1),* 1-22.

Seligman, M.E.P., & Maier, S.F. (1967). Failure to escape traumatic shock. *Journal of Experimental Psychology, 74(1),* 1-9.

Semin, E.B. (1980). A gloss on attribution theory. *The British Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology,* 19*,* 291-300.

Sfard, A., & Prusak, A. (2005). Telling identities: In search of an analytic tool for investigating learning as a culturally shaped activity. *Educational Researcher, 34(4),* 14-22.

Sharp, S.F., & Marcus-Mendoza, S.T. (2001). It's a family affair: Incarcerated women and their families. *Women and Criminal Justice, 12(4),* 21-49.

Shaywitz, S., & Shaywitz, B. (2005). Dyslexia (Specific reading disability). *Biological Psychiatry, 57(11),* 1301-1309.

Shepherd, S., Fitch, T.J., Owen, D., & Marshall, J.L. (2006). Locus of control and academic achievement in high school students. *Psychological Reports, 98(2),* 318-322.

Siderisdis. G.D., Mouzai, A., Simos, P., & Protopapas, A. (2006). Classification of students with reading comprehension difficulties: The roles of motivation, affect and psychopathology. *Learning Disability Quarterly, 29(3),* 159-180.

Silverman, M., & Vega, M. (1990). Reactions of prisoners to stress as a function of personality and demographic variables. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, 34,* 184-196.

Singer, E. (2005). The Strategies adopted by Dutch children with dyslexia to maintain their self-esteem when teased at school. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 38(5),* 411-423.

Singer, E. (2007). Coping with academic failure, a study of Dutch children with dyslexia. *Dyslexia, 14(4),* 314-333.

Singh, V., & Ghai, A. (2009). Lived realities of children with disabilities. *Disabilities and Society, 24(2),* 129-145.

Singleton, C., Horne, J., & Simmons, F. (2009). Computerised screening for dyslexia in adults. *Journal of Research in Reading, 32(1),* 137-152.

Skilton-Sylvester, E. (2002). Should I stay or should I go? Investigating Cambodian women's participation and investment in adult ESL programs. *Adult Education Quarterly, 53(1),* 9-26.

Smith, C. (2000). Healthy prisons: A contradiction in terms? *The Howard Journal of Criminal Justice, 39(4),* 339-353.

Smith, F.C. (2008). Literacy identity development. *Literacy Learning: The Middle Years, 16(1),* 47-51.

Smith, J.H., Fawcett, A.J., Nicolson, R.I., & Fisk, J.E. (2004). Dyslexic students have more everyday cognitive lapses. *Memory, 12 (2),* 174-182.

Smith, M.C. (1990). ‘A longitudinal investigation of reading attitude development, from childhood to adulthood’. *Journal of Educational Research, 83(4),* 215-219.

Smith, M.C. (1988). A longitudinal study of the development of reading comprehension skills, metacognitive reading skills and reading attitude: Childhood to adulthood. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison.

Smythe, I., & Everatt, J. (2001), Adult checklist, British Dyslexia Association. http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/common/ckeditor/filemanager/userfiles/adult-checklist.pdf.

Snowling, M., Dawes, P., Nash, H., & Hulme, C. (2012). Validity of a protocol for adult self-Report of dyslexia and related difficulties. *Dyslexia, 18(1),* 1-15.

Snowling, M.J. (2000). *Dyslexia* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Blackwell.

Snowling, M.J. (2013). Early identification and interventions for dyslexia: A contemporary view. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs, 13(1),* 7-14.

Sorrenti, L., Filippello, P., Buzzai, C., Butto, C., & Costa, S. (2018). Learned helplessness and mastery orientation: The contribution of personality traits and academic beliefs. *Nordic Psychology, 70(1),* 71-84.

Spekman, N.J., Herman, K.L., & Vogel, S.A. (1993). Risk and resilience in individuals with learning disabilities: A challenge to the field. *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice, 8(1),* 59-65.

Spira, E.G., Bracken, S.S., & Fischel, E.J. (2005). Predicting improvement after first-grade reading difficulties: The effects of oral language, emergent literacy and behaviour skills. *Developmental Psychology, 41(1),* 225-234.

Spreen, O. (1981). The relationship between learning disability, neurological impairment and delinquency: Results of a follow-up. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases, 168(12),* 791-799.

Stack-Cutler, H.L., Parrila, R.K., & Torppa, M. (2014). Using a multidimensional measure of resilience to explain life satisfaction and academic achievement of adults with reading difficulties. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 48(6)*, 646-657.

Stampoltzis, A., & Polychronopoulou, S. (2009). Greek university students with dyslexia: An interview study. *European Journal of Special Needs Education, 24(3),* 307-321.

Stampoltzis, A., Tsitsou, E., Pleshi, H.M., & Kalouri, R. (2017). Personal, educational and psychological characteristics of university students with dyslexia and matched controls: A pilot study. *Innovative Practice in Higher Education, 3(1).*

Stanovich, K.E. (1996). Toward a more inclusive definition of dyslexia. *Dyslexia, 2(3),* 154-166.

Stark, R., Roberts, L., & Corbett, M. (1996). *Contemporary social research methods with social research using Microcase (with workbook, CD-ROM and Infotrac)*. MicroCase Corporation.

Steinbeig, L., & Morris, A.S. (2001). Adolescent development. *Annual Review of Psychology, 52(1),* 83-110.

Stevenson, D., & Baker, D. (1987). The family-school relation and the child's school performance. *Child Development, 58(5),* 1348-1357.

Stipek, D.J. (1993). *Motivation to learn: From theory to practice* (2nd ed.). Needlam Heights, MA: Ally & Bacon.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, (1998). *Basics of qualitative research techniques*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Sui-Chu, E.H., & Willms, J.D. (1996). Effects of parental involvement on eight-grade achievement. *The Sociological Quarterly, 69(2),* 126-141.

Sultan, F.E., Long, G.T., & Kiefer, S.A. (1986). The application of psychodidactic support groups to facilitate female offenders' adjustment to prison. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training, 23(3),* 469-471.

Sundberg, D. (2007). From pedagogik to educational science? Higher education reform, institutional settings and the formation of the discipline of educational sciences in Sweden. *European Educational Research Journal, 6(4),* 393 – 410.

Sutherland, S.K., & Singh, N.N. (2004). Learned helplessness and students with emotional or behavioural disorders: Deprivation in the classroom. *Behavioural Disorders, 29(2),* 169-181.

Swanson, S.R., & Kelley, S.W. (2001). Service recovery attributions and word-of-mouth intentions. *European Journal of Marketing, 35,* 194-211.

Syed, F., & Blanchette, K. (2000a). *Results of an evaluation of the peer support programme at Joliette Institution for Women.* Correctional Service of Canada, Research Branch.

Sykes, G.M., & Messinger, S.L. (1960). The inmate social system. In R.A. Cloward, D.R. Cressey, G.H. Glosser, R. McCleery, L.E. Ohlin, G.M. Sykes, & S.L. Messinger (Eds*.), Theoretical studies in social organisation of the prison* (pp. 5-19). New York: Social Science Research Council.

Sykes, G.M. (1958). *The society of captives.* Princeton University Press.

Talbot, J. (2008). *Prisoners' voices: Experiences of the criminal justice system by prisoners with learning disabilities and difficulties.* Prison Reform Trust.

Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C.B. (1998). *Mixed methodology: Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches* (Vol. 46). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Taylor, C. (2014). *Brain cells: Listening to prisoner learners* (3rd ed.). Prison Education Trust.

Taylor, L.M., Hume. I.R., & Welsh, N. (2010). Labelling and self-esteem: The impact of using specific vs. generic labels. *Educational Psychology, 30(2),* 191-202.

Taylor, S., & Littleton, K. (2006). Biographies in talk: A narrative-discursive research approach. *Qualitative Sociology Review, 2(1),* 22-38.

Taylor, S.J., & Bogdan, R. (1998). *Introduction to qualitative research methods: A guidebook and resource* (3rd ed.). New York: Wiley.

Teale, W.H., & Lewis, R. (1981). The nature and measurement of secondary school students' attitudes towards reading. *Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts, 21(2),* 94-102.

Terry, W.S., & Burns, J.S. (2001). Anxiety and repression in attention and retention. *The Journal of General Psychology, 128(4),* 422 – 432.

Thomas, E. (2007). Student engagement and learning in a community-based arts class. *Teachers College Record, 109(3),* 770-796.

Thompson, N. (2000*). Understanding Social Work: Preparing for Practice.* Macmillan Press.

Thomson, M. (2003). Monitoring dyslexic's intelligence and attainments: A follow-up study. *Dyslexia, 9(1),* 3-17.

Topping, K. (2012). Conceptions of inclusion: Widening ideas. In C. Boyle & K. Topping (Eds.), *What Works in Inclusion*? (pp. 9-18). England: Open University Press.

Thurmond, V.A. (2001). The point of triangulation. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship, 33(3),* 253-258.

Torgesen, J.K. (1982). The learning disabled child as an inactive learner: Educational implications. *Topics in Learning and Learning Disabilities, 2(1),* 45-52.

Trammel, R. (2009). Relational violence in women's prison: How women describe interpersonal violence and gender. *Women and Criminal Justice, 19(4),* 267-285.

Usher, E.L., & Pajares, F. (2008). Sources of self-efficacy in school: Critical review of literature and future directions. *Review of Educational Research, 78(4),* 751-796.

Valas, H. (2001). Learned helplessness and psychological adjustment: Effects of learning disabilities and low achievement. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, 45(2),* 101-114.

van Schooten, E., & de Glopper, K. (2002). The relation between attitude toward reading adolescent literature and literacy reading behaviour. *Poetics, 30(3),* 169-194.

van Voorhis, F.L. (2003). Interactive homework in middle school: Effects on family involvement and science achievement. *The Journal of Educational Research, 96(6),* 323-338.

Vellutino, F.R., Fletcher, J.M., Snowling, M.J., & Scanlon, D.M. (2004). Specific reading disability (dyslexia): What have we learned in the last four decades? *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 45(1),* 2-40.

Victori, M. (1999). An analysis of writing knowledge in EFL composing: A case study of two effective and two less effective writers. *System, 27(4),* 537-555.

Wadlington, E.M., & Wadlington, P.l. (2005). What educators really believe about dyslexia. *Reading Improvement, 42(1),* 16-33.

Waldie, K., & Spreen, O. (1993). The relationship between learning disabilities and persisting delinquency. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 26(6),* 417-423.

Walker, E., Deane, H., & Petterson, G. (2006). *Maximising the benefits of OLASS for female offenders: An evaluation of the issues.* Learning and Skills Network.

Walker, J.M.T., Shenker, S.S., & Hoover-Dempsey, K.V. (2010). Why do parents become involved in their children's education? Implication for school counsellors. *Professional School Counselling, 14(1),* 27-41.

Webber, M. (2008). The role of education in ethnic identity development: The hybrid Maori/Pakeha experience. In C. Rubies-Davies & S. Rawlinson (Eds.), *Challenging Thinking about Teaching and Learning* (pp. 115-124). Nova Science Publishers: Hauppauge, NY.

Weiner, B (2010). The development of an attribution-based theory of motivation: A history of ideas. *Educational Psychologist, 45(1),* 28 – 36.

Weiner, B. (1972). An attribution theory, achievement motivation and the educational process. *Review of Educational Research, 42(2),* 203-215.

Weiner, B. (1974). *Achievement motivation and attribution theory.* General Learning Press.

Weiner, B. (1979). A theory of motivation for some classroom experiences. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 71 (1),* 3-25.

Weiner, B. (1985). An attributional theory of achievement motivation and emotion. *Psychological Review, 92(4),* 548-573.

Weiner, B. (1986). *An Attributional Theory of Motivation and Emotion*. Springer-Verlag.

Weiner, B. (1990). Searching for the roots of applied attribution theory. In S. Graham & V.S. Folkes (Eds.), *Attribution theory: Application to achievement, mental health and interpersonal conflict* (pp. 1-13). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Weiner, B. (1992). *Human motivation: Metaphors, theories and research.* Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Weiner, B. (1995). *Judgements of responsibility: A foundation for theory of social conduct.* New York: Guilford Press.

Weiner, B. (2000). Attributional thoughts about consumer behaviour. *Journal of Consumer Research, 27(3),* 382-387.

Weiner, B., Graham, S., & Chandler, C. (1982). Pity, anger and guilt: An attributional analysis. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulleting, 8(2),* 226-232.

Weiner, B., Russell, D., & Lerman, (1979). The cognition-emotion process in achievement-related contexts. *Journal of Personality Social Psychology, 37(7),* 1211-1220.

Wellington, J., & Szczerbinski, M. (2007). *Research methods for the social sciences*. London: Continuum.

Wenger, E. (1999). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning and identity*. Cambridge University Press.

Wentzel, K.R. (2009). Peers and academic functioning at school. In K.H. Rubin, W.M. Bukowski, & B. Laursen (Eds.), *Handbook of peer interactions, relationships and groups* (pp. 531-547). The Guildford Press.

Wentzel, K.R. (1999). Socio-motivational processes and interpersonal relationships: Implication for understanding motivation at school. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 91(1),* 76-97.

Werner, E.E. (1992). The children of Kauai: Resiliency and recovery in adolescence and adulthood. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 13(4),* 262-268.

Werner, E.E. (1993). Risk and resilience in individuals with learning disabilities: Lessons learned from the Kauai longitudinal study. *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice, 8(1),* 28-34.

Wigfield, A., & Wagner, A.L. (2005). Competence, motivation and identity development during adolescence. In A.J. Elliot & C.S. Dweck (Eds.), *Handbook of competence and motivation* (pp. 222-239). Guilford Publications.

Wilder, S. (2014). Effects of parental involvement on academic achievement: A meta-synthesis. *Educational Review, 66(3),* 377-397.

Williams, M., & Burden, R. (1997). *Psychology for language teachers: A social constructivist approach*. Cambridge University Press.

Wolff, U., & Lundberg, I. (2003). A technique for group screening for dyslexia among adults. *Annals of Dyslexia, 53(1),* 324-339.

Wong, B.Y. (2003). General and specific issues for researchers' consideration in applying the risk and resilience framework to the social domain of learning disabilities. *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice, 18(2),* 68-76.

Wooldredge, J., & Steiner, B. (2016). Assessing the need for gender-specific explanations of prisoner victimisation. *Justice Quarterly, 33(2),* 209-238.

Wortham, S. (2006). *Learning identity: The joint emergence of social identification and academic learning.* Cambridge University Press.

Yanow, D., & Schwartz-Shea, P. (2014). *Interpretation and method: Empirical research methods and the interpretive turn (2nd ed.).* London & New York: M.E. Sharpe & Routledge.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Semi-structured Interview Guide (Interview 1)

Category	Questions
Personal Questions School environment (Morgan, 1997; Macdonald, 2012; Rack, 2005; Selenius et al., 2006; Kirk & Reid, 2001; Waldie & Spreen, 1993; Wortham, 2006; Wenger, 1999; Sfard & **Prusak**, 2005; Falsafi, 2010; Gee, 2001; Bauman, 2001; Hall, 2012; Moje & Luke, 2009; Smith, 2008; McCarthy, 2001; Alvermann, 2002; Moje & Luke, 2009)	Tell me about your early schooling. How did you like school? Tell me about your engagement with reading and writing in primary school/secondary school. Tell me about any reading and/or writing exams you did. Tell me about other exams you did. Tell me about any qualifications you obtained. Please describe yourself: - How do you see yourself as a learner/student? - What are some of the things you enjoy doing? - How do you think your teachers would describe you? - How do you think your family would describe you?
Learning Behaviours (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Weiner, 1974, 1979, 1986; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002; Schunk & Zimmerman, 2006; Palmer et al., 1982; Sideridis et al., 2006; Humphrey & Mullins, 2002a; Burden & Burdett, 2005)	How would you describe yourself as a student? Tell me about the subjects you enjoyed. Tell me about the subjects you did not enjoy. Tell me about your reading and writing in these subjects. Tell me about what you do when you do not do as well as you would like to in your classwork. Why do you think you have not done as well as you would have liked to? Is there anything you would have done differently? Do you ever have any trouble understanding anything the teacher said or taught? Tell me about what you do when you are having trouble understanding something the teacher said or taught.

	Why do think you are having this trouble? Tell me about how you feel when you get the answers right in your classwork. Why do you think you got the answers right? Tell me about how you feel when you do not get the answers right in your classwork. Why do you think you got the answers wrong? Tell me about any help you received from your teachers. Tell me about whether you could have performed better. If so how? If not why?
Relationships with others (Kaplan & Flum, 2009; Wigfield & Wagner, 2005, McDermott et al., 2006; Wentzel, 2009; Adams & Blieszner, 1995; Edwards, 1994; Riddick, 1996; Humphrey, 2002, Glazzard, 2010; Mishna, 2003; Singer, 2005; Libbey, 2004, Ingesson, 2007; McNulty, 2003; Gibson & Kendall, 2010; Honstra et al., 2010; Morita, 2004; Goddard et al., 2004; Gwernan-Jones & Burden, 2010; Noddings, 2005a, Anthony & Walshaw, 2007)	How would you describe the role of others in relation to your learning? Family, friends, teachers, peers and any others
Views about and attitudes to literacy (reading and writing) Schiefele et al., 2012; Smith, 1990; Graham et al., 2005; Day & Bamford, 2000; Smith, 1990; Kush et al., 2005; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Aiken, 2000; knudson, 1995; graham et al., 2007; Polychroni et al., 2006; Mohandoost et al., 2010; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002'; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002; Gee, 2001, 2004; Bauman, 2001; Hall 2012; Weiner, 1974; Mathewson; 2004)	Tell me how you feel about your reading and writing. Can you tell me about your reading and writing now? Tell me how you feel when you complete a reading and/or a writing task successfully. Why do you think you succeeded at this? Tell me how you feel when you complete a reading and/or a writing task unsuccessfully. Why do you think you did not succeed at this? How do these experiences relate to your attitude to reading and writing? Tell me about how you try to complete reading and writing class work that you find difficult. What do you think is the cause of this difficulty?

Literacy practice in prison Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Weiner, 1974, 1979, 1986; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002; Schunk & Zimmerman, 2006; Palmer et al., 1982; Sideridis et al., 2006; Humphrey & Mullins, 2002a; Burden & Burdett, 2005; Morgan, 1997)	Tell me about activities that you have to engage in within the prison which require reading and writing. Do you have any difficulties completing any of these activities which require reading and writing? If yes, why do you think you have these difficulties? How do you feel when you are not able to complete these activities? Why do you think you are not able to complete these activities? How do you feel when you are able to complete these activities? Why do you think you are able to complete these activities? Tell me about how you attempt to complete a reading and/or writing task which is unfamiliar How do you feel if you complete a reading and/or a writing activity successfully? Why do you think you succeeded at these activities? How do you feel if you do not complete a reading and/or a writing activity successfully? Why do you think you did not succeed at this? Do you think you will complete it successfully next time? If yes, why? If no, why? How do these experiences relate to your motivation to improve your reading and writing? Tell me about any support you have received with your reading and writing in prison?
Future plans (Lyons et al., 2003; Hoein & Lundberg, 2000, Weiner, 1974,1979,1986)	Tell me about any plans you may have with regards to improving your reading and writing. How do you think that improving your reading and writing skills will make things better?

Appendix 2: Semi-structured interview Guide (interview 2)

(Interview 2) (Riddick, et a., 1997; Battistutta et al., 2018; Dale & Taylor, 2001; Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005; Burden & Burdett, 2007; Burden, 2008; McNulty, 2003; Ingesson, 2007; Rowan, 2014; Glazzard, 2010; Morgan & Klein, 2000; MacDonald, 2010; Reid & Kirk, 2001; Riddick, 2000; Taylor et al., 2010; Gibson & Kendell, 2000; Armstrong & Humphrey, 2009; Elliot & Gibbs, 2008; Pollack, 2005; Humphrey & Mullins, 2002b; Stampoltzis & Polychronopoulou, 2009; Singer, 2007)

How and when did you discover that you have dyslexia?

What was your reaction to having dyslexia?

What was the reaction of your family to you having dyslexia?

In your own words, describe dyslexia.

What is it like to have dyslexia?

If you could describe dyslexia as a thing how would you describe it?

Did dyslexia cause any problems during your school years?

If yes, tell me about these problems.

How did you cope with the problems?

What was your teacher's attitude?

Did you receive any support?

Does dyslexia cause any problems now? (In prison)

If yes, tell me about these problems.

How do you cope with the problems?

Is there any support available?

What is the attitude of others? – teachers, prison staff, programme leaders, friends, peers.

Appendix 3: Attribution Questionnaire (Interview 3) (Weiner, 1974, 1986, 2000; Likupe & Mwale, 2016; Bempechat et al.,1996)

These questions, regarding the reasons dyslexic offenders give for their successes or failures at literacy practices, have been based on Weiner's (1985) categories of attribution – ability, effort, task difficulty and luck. The scenarios describe literacy practice in prisons.

1. If you did well in a class task, it may be because:

you were lucky/the test was easy/you tried hard/you are good at tests.

2. If your teacher asked you to read out loud in class and you read clearly without missing a word, it may be because:

you were lucky/it was easy/you tried hard/you are good at reading out loud.

3. If you got a low mark in a writing task, it may be because:

you were unlucky/the question was difficult/you didn't try hard/you are not good at writing.

4. Do you think you will get a better mark next time in a writing task you did not do well in?

if you are lucky/if the question is not hard/if you try harder/you are not good at writing any way.

5. Your teacher said a reading task you completed is not good. It may be because:

you are poor at reading/you are lazy at reading/the reading task is too difficult for you/bad luck - most of your unsure answers were wrong.

6. Your teacher said a writing task you completed is not good. It may be because:

you did not practise writing/the task was difficult for you/bad luck – the teacher does not like you/you are poor at writing

7. You could totally understand the reading material in a prison programme you have to complete. It may be because:

the reading material is easy for you/good luck – you are familiar with the material/you are good at reading/you work really hard at reading.

8. Your friend sent you a letter. You understood it but you couldn't respond. It may be because:

you find responding to letters difficult/you are poor at writing/you rarely write/bad luck – something unexpected happened when you wanted to reply.

9. Your lawyer sent you a letter. You couldn't understand it. It may be because:

the words are difficult for you to read/you are poor at reading/you didn't take your time to read it/bad luck – you got distracted when you were reading it.

10. You passed your writing exam. It may be because:

you are good at writing/the writing task was easy/you always practised writing/it was a task you were familiar with.

11. You passed your reading exam. It may be because:

you are good at reading/the reading task was easy/you always practised reading/you are familiar with the reading materials.

12. You did not complete an offender programme. It may be because:

it had reading and writing parts/you are not good at reading and writing/the reading and writing parts were difficult/you did not try hard enough/bad luck - the tasks were unfamiliar.

Appendix 4: Semi- structured interviews - Codes and Themes

INTIAL CODES	INTIAL THEMES	REVISED	FINAL THEMES
Main school Special school Positive memories of school Negative memories of school	Memories of early schooling Learner identity	Self-identification as a student	School experiences Relationships with significant others
Issues of being bullied Issues of bullying others Disruptive behaviour Expelled from school Dropping out of school Truancy	School behaviour School attendance	Fitting in Learning identity	
Subjects enjoyed Subjects not enjoyed Exams completed and outcomes	Learning/achievements in school	Attitude to learning	
Friendship Peer comparisons	Experiences of being ridiculed	Peer relationships in early school	
Teacher's attitude Name calling by teachers Help from teachers Negative views of one to one Positive views from one to tone Help from one to one teachers	Role of teachers/support teachers Teachers' knowledge of dyslexia Teaching techniques Reaction to helpful teachers	Relationship with teachers/support	

INTIAL CODES	INTIAL THEMES	REVISED	FINAL THEMES
Engagement in reading and writing in school Why can't I read and write Reasons for not enjoying reading and writing	Reflections on success or failure in reading and writing Barriers to reading and writing	Blaming dyslexia	Attributions Reading and writing attitude Understanding of dyslexia Environmental factors
Reasons for success in reading and writing Reasons for failure in reading and writing Strengths in other areas Attitude to barrier to learning	Reading and writing identity Help from others	Understanding of learning difficulties Self-denigration resulting from dyslexia Resilience	
Attitude to failure in reading and writing Attitude to difficult reading and writing tasks Attitude to success in reading and writing Reading and writing in prison Attitude to easy reading and writing tasks	Addressing success/failure in reading and writing Help from prison staff	Coping strategies for reading and writing difficulties Development of reading and writing attitude	
Attitude to reading and writing in prison Apathy arising from learning difficulty Self-concept related to reading and writing Self-perception as a student	Socioemotional issues	Reading and Writing Learned helplessness Learned helplessness/Resilience	
Age at which dyslexia was discovered Describing dyslexia Positive to being dyslexic Relief on being diagnosed Attitudes of resilience Attitude of learned helplessness	Life before diagnoses Understanding of dyslexia Reaction to diagnoses	Dyslexia label Thoughts on dyslexia Dyslexia label	

INTIAL CODES	INTIAL THEMES	REVISED	FINAL THEMES
Relief on being diagnosed Attitudes of resilience Attitudes of learned helplessness	Dyslexic label Reading and writing in prison	Resilience Learned helplessness	School Experiences of being dyslexic Being dyslexic as an adult
Attitude of others to your learning difficulties in prison Perception of other prisoners about your learning difficulties Reaction of others to your dyslexia	Help from others in prison Consequences of being dyslexic in prison How do others view your dyslexia Bullying/fear of bullying in prison	Being dyslexic in prison Disclose or conceal dyslexia	
Relationship between early school experiences and attitude to reading and writing in prison Reflection on importance of reading and writing	Value placed on reading and writing presently Skills in reading and writing and employment	Early schooling versus education in prison	Reading and writing attitude Attributions

Appendix 5 - Fig: Annotated Semi-structured Interview 1 notes

Category	***Questions***
Personal Questions – School environment	**Tell me about your early schooling.** **Primary:** it was hard. Lots of one to one. I couldn't learn the alphabets and words. I always put the letters wrong and I wasn't happy when we had to read. **Secondary:** bullying started. I started taking time off and left school for some months – can't remember how long. Came back but was messing about instead of putting my head down. I just didn't want to be there. **Why did you not want to be there?** I didn't like school – both primary and secondary – because I didn't believe I fitted in. I was bullied and there were lots of arguing. Always involved in fights and arguments. **Were you bullied in both primary and secondary school?** Yes and it got bad in secondary. **If you could change a thing about school what would that be?** To be smart like other kids, to understand what the teacher is saying and to not be the odd one out. **Tell me about your reading and writing in primary school/secondary school?** **Primary**: Couldn't read and write at all. Everything was in drawing and I couldn't draw. I was getting help but I still couldn't grasp it. **Secondary**: Had support and had the drive at the beginning of secondary school but when the novelty wore off I didn't feel like doing it

	and I couldn't be bothered. My best friend died in car crash and made me very sad because she was the only person I played with. The bullying did not help and I had to fight for myself. **Can you tell me why you couldn't be bothered?** I was struggling and learning was hard – I have **dyslexia** and reading was very hard - **dyslexia** was always in the way … will never go away – I couldn't learn the alphabets and this made me anxious. Also if I showed that I cared, the kids will make it bad for me. **Tell me about any reading and/or writing exams you did?** I didn't do the exams. **Please describe yourself:** – How do you see yourself as a learner? **Primary School**: not bothered – didn't care – nothing made sense. Not motivated because no matter how I tried I was not doing it the correct way like mixing up the letter and not learning the alphabets and the times table. **Secondary**: Not driven – wanted to but couldn't be bothered. I felt different when it came to reading and writing and when I tested for **dyslexia**, they found I had it. It made me understand that I would never be like the others. This also made me lose motivation and focus. **What were some of the things you enjoyed doing?** **Primary**: PE **Secondary**: Maths and cooking **What made these enjoyable for you?** Not reading and writing. – **How do you think your teachers would describe you?** Primary: Naughty, awkward. Secondary: Trouble – expelled from a few schools because of fights and arguments. Ridiculous not behaving in school. Was bullied at first but turned this around and became the bully. Taunted by the others when I didn't read properly and get the answers right. – **How do you think your family would describe you?** Mum: Was fed up with me because I was excluded and then expelled in a few schools - Had good intentions but all went pear shaped.

	Siblings: Always mocking about, not taking anything serious.
Learning Behaviours	**Tell me about the subjects you enjoyed.** PE, maths **Tell me about the subjects you did not enjoy.** English, history, science, RE, French. If I can't read English, how can I read French? I used to rock backwards and forwards till I was sent out of the class. **Tell me about any reading and writing you had to do in these subjects.** Not good. I didn't even understand half the words they were coming up with. Writing was not good. I lost concentration. I get upset and aggravate till I was sent out of the class. Liked to do things to get on **teacher's nerves** till she sends me to the head teacher's room. The head teacher will send me to another room where I sit and draw. Didn't see the point. **Why did you not see the point?** I always struggled and **because I have dyslexia**, my mind cannot take reading like the others. I always thought if it is going to be like this, then what's the point in being in school. **Tell me about what you do when you do not do as well as you would like to in your classwork.** I will become aggravated because I know that if someone read it to me I would do better. In school I say I understand words even when I haven't understood them because I didn't want people to think that I couldn't

understand because there was a lot of bullying and I was always in trouble

Why do you think you have not done as well as you would have liked to?

Because I couldn't read and without one to one it was very hard. The girl next to me would read to me and because I didn't want her to think I was thick, I would say I understood. I would then look over her shoulder and copy her work. **The reading didn't allow me to do well** and truanting also.

Is there anything you would have done differently?

Yea – on one hand I could have stuck it out at school. I was always the centre all arguments but looking back should have put my head down and let them argue. I should have taken the chances given to me. I was easily led and got in arguments in school because of name calling – calling me thick – because I couldn't read like others. But then I have **dyslexia** and no matter what I do I won't be a very good reader and my spelling will always be bad. The other kids didn't know how I was feeling, having **dyslexia**.

Do you ever have any trouble understanding something the teacher said or taught?

Certain words – if she didn't explain them to me. Other children would understand them and I wouldn't.

Tell me what you do when you are having trouble understanding something the teacher said or taught?

I rock back and forward, rip papers – anything to get out of the class. If I continue aggravating, the teacher will send me out of the class. If I can't

	spell words I copy the girl next to me. **Why do think you are having this trouble?** **Because rather than say I don't understand, I will keep talking or making noise. Dyslexia makes it hard for spelling and understanding words.** **Tell me about how you feel when you get the answers right in your classwork.** Very good. Makes me want to continue. **Why do you think you got the answers right?** Because I have had one to one and it's been explained to me a lot better. **Tell me about how you feel when you do not get the answers right in your classwork.** Upset and switch off. If my mark is read out to the class, it makes me very angry. I start aggravating people because they would start laughing at me. **Why do you think you got the answers wrong?** Because there was no proper explanation - If teacher thinks I understand like the others and they don't take time to teach me properly. **Tell me about the help you received from your teachers.** **Primary: they sorted out one to one support.** **Secondary: one to one support and laptop which spelt words. One to one brought me back to the alphabets until I understood all of**

	that. **Tell me about whether you could have performed better. If so how? If not why?** Nothing. Dyslexia will never go away but one to one teacher helped me – one to one will help me to do better – without it I won't be able to do the work.
Relationships with others	**How would you describe the role of others in relation to your learning?** – Family: 2 younger sisters in same school. I had to look after them and my sisters always caused arguments. Dad didn't play a part – couldn't read and write. Mum wanted me to do well but after being suspended and expelled a few times her focus moved from me to my two younger ones. – Friends: same boat- went to school for the sake of it. Didn't learn anything from them. – Teachers: One to one teacher was good and helped more than others. During detention she would bring in books – nursery books and gave lots of attention … to help me (alphabets) - gave us a lot of help. – Peers: They were laughing at me, saying, "you're an idiot" they said "don't talk to me – you're dumb." I felt horrible and it depressed me. Made me feel really dumb. – any others. None.

Views about and attitudes to reading and writing	**Tell me how you felt about your reading and writing in school.** Aggravated because kids younger than me could read and they could spell all the words and unless I copied from them, I wouldn't get all the words. Bad because I wanted to be able to do reading and writing. **Can you tell me about your reading and writing now?** I am still not confident about my reading and writing – I ask my roommates and officers to help me. But I have made some progress and some exams in Foundation English – the teachers help you and support. **I'm taking small steps and I don't mind starting from the basics.** **What exams did you do?** Entry 1, 2 and 3. **Tell me how you feel when you complete a reading and/or a writing task successfully.** **Real good. Makes me feel intelligent and not dumb. I can do the work like others. If I get it right, I want to continue.** **Why do you think you succeeded at this?** **Because I did it wrong and someone corrected me. It's not down to me because I always know I can't do it on my own.** **Tell me how you feel when you complete a reading and/or a writing task unsuccessfully.** Fed up because I know I couldn't do it and even when I was committed to do it I couldn't do it. I feel dumb and stupid. **Why do you think you did not succeed at this?** Because I can't do it because I couldn't read it - **dyslexia** – it makes everything difficult. It stops you and you can't be like others. It was the same in school, my spelling is always bad and I still can't get my head round it. **How do these experiences relate to your attitude to reading and writing?** Aggravates me and knocks my confidence because I can't write what is in my mind. I wouldn't want to do anymore. I used to truant when I had spelling test. Because even nursery book – I couldn't read it. When I get confident that I can do something and I'm not able to do it, it would turn me off for a couple of days **Tell me about how you try to complete reading and writing work that you find difficult in Foundation English class?** I will ask someone to explain it and even when I get the answer will ask them to spell it. In Foundation English, the teacher gets us to work together and we are all the same level. I know some of the girls have **dyslexia** too. **What do you think is the cause of this difficulty?** Because even though I know the answer and it's in my head I can't write it on paper - if I get it on paper it's not the same as what I think. I know what I want to say but I can't write it on paper.

Literacy practice in prison	**Tell me about activities that you have to do within the prison which require reading and writing.** Everything – book a visit, numbers on your pin, solicitor's letter, family, apply for work. If there are problems outside you don't want someone else to read it to you- like letters from your children. Some of the words in the canteen are difficult to read **Do you have any difficulties completing any of these activities which require:** **Reading**: I have made some progress in prison. I use the coloured overlay and it makes it clearer for me to be able to read it but I read it over and over and I try to sound the word. Sometimes, it comes out right and sometimes, it comes out wrong. **Writing**: my spelling is not great and I get letters mixed up. I get aggravated and rip the paper. I get **my roommates and officers to help me**. Writing is very hard for me. **How do you feel when you are not able to complete these activities in prison?** Embarrassing because I can't do them even though I'm a grown woman. When I write a letter I've to **get someone to re-read it**. It's like a puzzle – to work out what I'm trying to say on paper. **Why do you think you are not able to complete these activities?** Because my reading and writing are not good. I can't spell the words and when I practice, I aggravate when it all comes out wrong. **How do you feel when you are able to complete these activities?** When I finished the Foundation English, I thought it was a joke because I never thought I could do it. I lost the will to believe I could do it. I was surprised I could do it. **Why do you think you are able to complete these activities?** My teachers were very good. They explained everything to me and didn't embarrass me in the class. This made me come to class because I was comfortable in the class. Also the special teacher did one to one with me. **Tell me about how you attempt to complete a reading task which is unfamiliar – which you're seeing for the first time.** I try my best – if not I ask for help from anybody – teachers, other women. I use the coloured overlay and this makes it better. **Tell me about how you attempt to complete a writing task which is unfamiliar – which you have not done before** I write it many times before I get it. Sometimes, I get frustrated and rip the paper or I stop or I leave the class. **How do you feel if you complete a reading activity successfully?** Great because I can actually do them. Because I have asked for help. I give it my last shot and if it comes out wrong, I ask for help and I get it right. **How do you feel if you complete a writing activity successfully?** Very excited because my spelling is really bad and it puts me off writing.

	Why do you think you succeeded at these activities? – Reading: Because I asked for help if I tried and couldn't do it. – Writing: because I asked for help or I copied from somebody. **How do you feel if you do not complete a reading activity successfully?** Anger – I need to do it again and do it again until I get it right. Sometimes it may be because of difficulties with trying to explain the answers. **How do you feel if you do not complete a writing activity successfully?** Frustrated and angry. My spelling let me down. **Why do you think you did not succeed at these activities?** – Reading: Because I can't read some words. – Writing: because of my spelling. **How do these experiences relate to your motivation to improve your reading and writing?** Because I failed for a long time it didn't bother me but because I see some people in prison reading and writing I have the drive to improve my reading and writing. **Tell me about any support you have received with your reading and writing in prison?** ALS, Sharon Trust Reading Plan, the officers – bring me in a room and read it to me - also my room mates and other girls on the landing.
Future plans	**Tell me about any plans you may have with regards to improving your reading and writing.** I will be able to get a job, pass my driving theory test, interviews, office work. Reading and writing play a big role in people's lives. Bail hostels – they do day programmes- I have told my probation officer that I would like to continue with my reading and writing when I get out. Hostel do reading and writing classes. **How do you think that improving your reading and writing skills will make things better?** Pick up newspaper, kids' letter from school without asking someone reading it for you. Even here, I have to get someone to read my boyfriend's letter – it's so embarrassing and they get to know your story.

Key : Colour codes for interview data

Pink	Perceptions on Self-efficacy in reading, writing and learning/psychosocial/emotions
Green	Comparison with peers
Grey	Negative school behaviour/bullying/fights/truancy
Deep Blue	Resilience
Yellow	Role of teachers, support teachers, prison staff, help from others
Turquoise	Impact of dyslexia/Reading and writing attitude/ learned helplessness/lack of motivation/learning behaviour/Apathy
Red Writing	Positive self-belief
Orange Writing	Dyslexia
Red	Self-denigration, impact of dyslexia, reflections on doing things differently
Purple	Help for prison room-mates/disclosing or concealing dyslexia in prison
Bright Green	Family relations, perceptions of family
Burgundy	Help with reading and writing in prison
Green Writing	Attributions

Appendix 6 - Fig: Annotated Semi-structured Interview 2 notes

How and when have discovered that you have dyslexia?

How? I was told in school. They did a test and gave me a laptop that talks back and I got one to one every school I went. First primary school, then high school (secondary school).

When and what age? Year 4 in primary school, 9 years old.

What was your reaction to you having dyslexia?

I felt better because I thought I was thick but I felt better because now I know that there was something holding me back. I was upset because being so young I didn't know what dyslexia was – this was in primary school. In secondary school, I was tested and told again about dyslexia. They explained it all to me. When they explained it well enough I felt a lot better knowing .

Did you understand the explanation?

Not all of it but I kind of felt that it was about my reading and spelling.

What was the reaction of your family to you having dyslexia?

My dad has it. My mum thought I was lazy and that was why I played truancy; she understood it a little better because my dad has it.

In your own words, describe dyslexia.

Can't really explain it. Sometimes I can read a word and all the letters are there, I know what I want to say but then I can't get it out or if I write a sentence, it doesn't make sense. When I write my sister, when I ring her she will say it took her two days to understand my letter.

What is it like to have dyslexia?

It's hard because no matter how much you try you still can't do it. It's like a goal because even when you're so near, it's hard for me to get it. It can be frustrating because when I get a letter from a solicitor/family and ask someone to read it. I often make the excuse that I don't have my glasses even

though I don't wear glasses. It can really upset you and set you back because no matter how hard you try you just don't get it.

If you could describe dyslexia as a thing how would you describe it?

It's frustrating and aggravates you. It makes you very embarrassed and stresses you out. I'll not do the TSB course because there's a lot of reading and writing and you have to read out some of the words to the other girls. This will aggravate me and I'll break out in sweats.

Did dyslexia cause any problems during your school years?

Primary: bullying – because I couldn't read and write well –other kids kept calling me names – thick, stupid, dumb.

Secondary: It was worse because other subjects – history, French when I couldn't even read English. I spent a lot of time in the headmistress's office because of bad behaviour. I couldn't do the class work so to get out of the class I'll aggravate the teacher. The **teacher didn't want me there**. Also I moved school a few times and this made it difficult to settle.

Tell me about the problems caused by dyslexia.

It upset me a lot. I made that I didn't care but I was hurt because I wasn't like the other kids who had no problems with learning. I got into a lot of trouble because of this and my mum would ground me and that aggravated me more. Instead of being bullied, I became the bully and I got into fights. I couldn't read.

How did you cope with these problems?

I just turned into a bully and became worse than the others. I wouldn't pay attention in any of the classes. When I started bullying, all I wanted was for the teacher to send me to the headmistress. I wouldn't work hard at anything because it was too hard and I wasn't making progress. Getting into trouble distracted from my reading and writing problems. Dyslexia makes everything difficult.

What was your teacher's attitude?

I had one teacher who would help me more than other teachers. During detention, she would bring books – nursery books and give you lots of attention. Some of them would see you as part of the

bullying group where you didn't want to take part in class work but disturb the class. They won't bother with you or ask you how you're getting on.

Did you receive any support?

Yes – I got a lot of one to one – like to learn the alphabets and sounds and reading. I made progress with the one to one teacher and built trust and I worked hard for her. She wouldn't embarrass me like ask me to read in front of 10 people. She took the time and explained everything clearly. She was there to help you and not tell you what to do.

Does dyslexia cause any problems now? (In prison)

Yes – I'm doing Shannon Trust Reading Plan. I've done it for 6 months and I'm only on the 2nd book. For years it set me back – I have to put it to the back of my mind that I don't need to read and write - but now I want to read and write. It can dishearten you a lot.

Tell me about these problems which dyslexia causes you in prison

It's embarrassing – can't read solicitor's letter/family letters and then there are stuff you don't want others to read. **I did the TSB programme because it's part of my sentence plan,** but I only went twice because you have to read your work in front of others. I didn't continue. It's embarrassing when you can't read. The girls help me to fill apps.

How do you cope with the problems of reading and writing problems in prison?

If I have good relationship with another roommate I get her to complete my app or I get officers to help. Prisoners may tell others if they get to read your letters for you so for my letters, I will wait until I'm able to get an officer to help. The girls help me to fill in the apps. I don't feel good about asking them to do it for me but I have to because I can't do it myself. Key worker will help to read letters and write solicitors letters.

What will happen if the other prisoners tell others?

They will become nasty and think that you're a no-gooder. They will whisper behind your back and that is uncomfortable. They will look down on you and disrespect you.

Is there any support for reading and writing in prison?

ALS teacher, Shannon Trust Reading Plan, homework club.

What is the attitude of others?

teachers: very good. I got a lot of attention, help, understanding. Foundation English teacher was very helpful and asked me how I was doing.

prison officers: yes –Officers would help me with apps and with legal work – fill in apps

programme leaders: Drug programmes; exams in education; anger management – teachers were good. Sit with you to fill in your papers and if you said you didn't want to read it out they would allow it. Instead of reading it out you act it out or do pictures. The only programme that I couldn't do was TAB programme because of reading my work in front of others. Phoenix futures- key workers very good, will help read letters from solicitors and help you write solicitors' letters and fill in apps.

friends: one of the girls helps me a lot and has been very understanding - talk to her I when I can't do the apps or read a book- she will talk to me instead of me getting upset. She would explain.

peers : I don't really ask them. I just keep myself to myself. In education, I had to ask the teacher to read something and other students made unpleasant remarks - she is not going to be good in this class.

Key : Colour codes for the interview data

Pink	Perceptions on Self-efficacy in reading, writing and learning/psychosocial/emotions
Green	Comparison with peers
Grey	Negative school behaviour/bullying/fights/truancy
Deep Blue	Resilience
Yellow	Role of teachers, support teachers, prison staff, help from others
Turquoise	Impact of dyslexia/Reading and writing attitude/ learned helplessness/lack of motivation/learning behaviour/Apathy
Red Writing	Positive self-belief
Orange Writing	Dyslexia
Red	Self-denigration, impact of dyslexia, reflections on doing things differently
Purple	Help for prison room-mates/disclosing or concealing dyslexia in prison
Bright Green	Family relations, perceptions of family
Burgundy	Help with reading and writing in prison
Green Writing	Attributions

Appendix 7 - Fig: Attribution Questionnaire Notes

These questions, regarding the reasons dyslexic offenders give for their successes or failures at literacy practices, have been based on Weiner's (1985) categories of attribution – ability, effort, task difficulty and luck. The scenarios describe literacy practice in prisons.

1.If you did well in a class task, it may be because:
you were lucky/**the test was easy**/you tried hard/you are good at tests.

2.If your teacher asked you to read out loud in class and you read clearly without missing a word, it may be because:
you were lucky/**it was easy**/you tried hard/you are good at reading out loud.

3.If you got a low mark in a writing task, it may be because:
you were unlucky/**the question was difficult**/you didn't try hard/you are not good at writing.

4.Do you think you will get a better mark next time in a writing task you did not do well in?
if you are lucky/if the question is not hard/If you try harder/**you are not good at writing any way.**

5.Your teacher said a reading task you completed is not good. It may be because:
you are poor at reading/you are lazy at reading/**the reading task is too difficult for you**/bad luck - most of your unsure answers were wrong.

6.Your teacher said a writing task you completed is not good. It may be because:
you did not practise writing/**the task was difficult for you**/bad luck – the teacher does not like you/you are poor at writing

7.You could totally understand the reading material in a prison programme you have to complete. It may be because:
t**he reading material is easy for you**/good luck – you are familiar with the material/you are good at reading/you work really hard at reading.

8.Your friend sent you a letter. You understood it but you couldn't respond. It may be because:
you find responding to letters difficult/you are poor at writing/**you rarely write**/bad luck – something unexpected happened when you wanted to reply.

9.Your lawyer sent you a letter. You couldn't understand it. It may be because:
the words are difficult for you to read/you are poor at reading/you didn't take your time to read it/bad luck – you got distracted when you were reading it.

10.You passed your writing exam. It may be because:
you are good at writing/the writing task was easy/you always practised writing/it was a task you were familiar with.

11.You passed your reading exam. It may be because:
you are good at reading/the reading task was easy/**you always practised reading**/you are familiar with the reading materials.

12.You did not complete an offender programme. It may be because:

it had reading and writing parts/you are not good at reading and writing/the reading and writing parts were difficult/you did not try hard enough/**bad luck - the tasks were unfamiliar**.